



## CPADS Toolkit for PEP-AH Members

This toolkit provides guidance for PEP-AH members to monitor alcohol and other drug use on their campuses by participating in the Canadian Postsecondary Education Alcohol and Drug Use Survey (CPADS). The toolkit was developed by the Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction (CCSA) in collaboration with PEP-AH members and Health Canada. CCSA consulted with PEP-AH student leaders and administrators on toolkit content in winter 2019. CCSA worked with Health Canada throughout the conception and development of CPADS and this toolkit. The toolkit will be updated as CPADS protocols change over time.

The toolkit is organized in three sections.

**Section 1: How to Build Buy-in for CPADS** explains the importance of monitoring alcohol and substance use on campus. Particular emphasis is placed on the importance of monitoring alcohol items included in CPADS and their value to PEP-AH members.

**Section 2: How to Participate in CPADS** provides information and tools to participate in CPADS on campus. It focuses on how to establish a team and an institution contact, set goals for CPADS data on campus, and plan to share and use results with key audiences.

**Section 3: How to Share and Use CPADS Results** helps your team to unpack CPADS results and develop key messages, and provides tools to share and use CPADS data with key audiences on campus and in your community. It also provides guidance to debriefing the process and continuing to monitor alcohol and substances.

### About the Canadian Postsecondary Education Alcohol and Drug Use Survey

CPADS is an online survey developed by Health Canada for undergraduate students between 17 and 25 years of age who attend Canadian universities and colleges. CPADS collects data about what substances student use, how much and how often students use substances, and what harms associated with alcohol and substance use they experience. Specific CPADS topics include:

- Alcohol: public education, prevalence, patterns, harms, protective behaviours
- Cannabis: public education, prevalence and harms
- Road safety: alcohol- and cannabis-impaired driving
- Psychoactive pharmaceuticals: prevalence and problematic use
- Illegal drugs: prevalence and harms
- Vaping (tobacco) and e-cigarette use
- Other: use of naloxone, new psychoactive substances, drug experimentation, etc.

More details on CPADS:

- The survey targets full-time and part-time students attending Canadian university undergraduate, college, and certificate programs.



- The total number of students that will be contacted at participating institutions ranges from 2,500 to 10,000 students, depending on the size of the institution.
- Health Canada will support institutions in obtaining all approvals from institutional research ethics boards and administering the online survey.
- A web link to the survey will be sent to a randomly selected sample of students via the students' e-mail addresses, but a link can also be posted on the institution's website.
- The survey takes students approximately 20 minutes to complete and all responses are anonymous.
- Within six months of data collection, all participating institutions with sufficient responses will receive a report summarizing the results for their institution with comparisons to overall estimates.

### ***The Making of the Alcohol Section of CPADS***

In September 2016, CCSA was mandated by Health Canada to develop options and provide recommendations about the alcohol-related content of CPADS. To complete this task, CCSA reached out to members of PEP-AH's Data Management Working Group to identify campus members' needs, expectations and recommendations for questions in CPADS related to alcohol. The Working Group was thoughtful about ensuring that data collected through CPADS would help administrators, educators and those working in the postsecondary education environment to develop appropriate interventions to reduce alcohol-related harms among students. In the end, it was agreed that survey items in the alcohol section of CPADS would include:

- Alcohol use
- Alcohol related harms due to own or others' drinking
- Use of alcohol-related protective behavioural strategies
- Alcohol literacy
- Price of alcohol consumption
- Affordability of excessive drinking

### ***The Value of CPADS***

National CPADS data provides Health Canada, provinces, communities and postsecondary institutions with timely and reliable data about Canadian students' alcohol and other substance use and related harms. Institution-specific reports provide Canadian postsecondary institutions with data that is highly detailed and valuable data (see [Section 1: How to Build Buy-in for CPADS](#)). CPADS data is collected every two years in November (starting in 2019) from a national sample of students at universities, colleges and postsecondary institutes.

With a clear fit between the alcohol content of CPADS and PEP-AH Framework, we encourage all PEP-AH members to take part in the survey. E-mail [CPADS@advanis.net](mailto:CPADS@advanis.net) for more information, including a research protocol, and answers to specific questions about the survey.



## Section 1: How to Build Buy-in for CPADS

This section reviews the importance of monitoring alcohol and substance use. It highlights how alcohol monitoring integrates with the [PEP-AH Framework](#), and how CPADS data can be shared and used on campus. If you already have agreement to participate in CPADS on your campus, [Section 2](#) and [Section 3](#) may be more immediately useful to you.

### *Why Participate in CPADS?*

Campus data is essential to assess what's happening on campus and to plan, implement and evaluate initiatives. Are students drinking or using substances? What, when, where and how much? Do they experience negative consequences? The best initiatives to address alcohol and substance use are data-driven. That is why monitoring alcohol and substance use on campus is essential to reducing harms (see [PEP-AH Framework](#), 3.1).

Monitoring alcohol and substance use on campus SHOWS you:

- What substances students use;
- How much and how often students use substances;
- Harms associated with alcohol and substance use; and
- Trends over years.

Monitoring alcohol and substance use on campus helps you PLAN:

- Campus-based prevention initiatives. If you find out that students on your campus drink more spirits than beer, this could help your team to develop key messages and reinforce planned alcohol campaigns. Local data could also help to correct common misperceptions around students' alcohol consumption.
- Community-based policies and initiatives. For example, in the community of Sherbrooke, partners came together to address alcohol harms in young people by collecting and sharing data from multiple sources to better understand the issue. This data led to the identification and the implementation of several local interventions. (See [Youth Alcohol Use and Its Harms: Case Study in the Community of Sherbrooke](#) for more details.)
- Staff training to address substance use and harms. If, for instance, CPADS data show that academic harms from alcohol use are high on your campus, this will help your institution to better allocate resources and improve campus services that students need.

Monitoring alcohol and substance use on campus helps you EVALUATE:

- Progress towards alcohol-related targets on campus. For example, if your campus has adopted targets to reduce all harms associated with students' alcohol use, documenting harm-related indicators over years will ensure that you have the right resources and are using the right tools to meet your targets.
- Interventions related to specific substances. For instance, if an initiative on campus encourages students to avoid drinking games or use alternative coping mechanisms than using alcohol and cannabis, participating in CPADS will allow you to add unique survey items about these initiatives and assess results. (For more details, see [Request Additional CPADS Items](#), see page 5.)



Monitoring alcohol and substance use on campus helps you ENGAGE students by:

- Presenting students with facts about alcohol and substances on their campus. Such facts should help to boost student support for preventive initiatives based on accurate information for your campus.

Do you still need to convince colleagues and students? Share the call to action we have provided for PEP-AH members: Build a data driven approach to alcohol and other substances using CPADS. (For detailed questions and considerations, [Use CPADS Data to Plan](#) and [Use CPADS Data to Evaluate](#) on pages 9–10.)

## Section 2: How to Participate in CPADS

Everyone is on board and your campus has agreed to participate in CPADS. What's next? This section shares the steps and actions you need to take before data collection to ensure that you will get the most out of it.

### *Establish a Team and Institution Representative*

To plan participation in CPADS and use of CPADS data, we suggest that you continue working with your existing PEP-AH campus team and identify or add a dedicated CPADS representative. (See [Engaging a Dedicated Team](#) in PEP-AH's *A Guide to Help Reduce Alcohol Harms on Campus* for more details about campus teams and engaging students.)

With the support of Health Canada, a CPADS representative will:

1. Be the main point of contact for planning implementation of CPADS and for inquiries about the survey received from students or staff.
2. Obtain institution approvals to participate in CPADS. If the approval of a research ethics board is required at your institution, Health Canada will support your institutional representative in getting approval by providing all the details that must be submitted.
3. Work with the registrar to request enrollment data and a sample of student e-mails. Establish a timeline for contacting the student sample via e-mail with survey invitations. Health Canada will provide support to complete this step as some implementation details are specific to institutions (e.g., sample size requirements).

We suggest complementing the PEP-AH campus team with additional members, including:

- Internal research staff who could help to plan participation in CPADS;
- Various student leaders (student housing staff, peer health educators, etc.) who could help to bring students' perspective on alcohol and other substance use;
- Health promotion staff who could help integrate CPADS data in planned campaigns and other initiatives on campus;
- Campus services staff who could help to consider results and implications for services to enhance student experience; and
- Communications staff who could help to build key messages and communicate CPADS results on campus.



Once your team is established and all members have had the opportunity to get familiar with CPADS, review the survey items and work together to define optimal ways of using CPADS data on your campus. Consider key audiences and potential facilitators and barriers to sharing and using CPADS data. Note your answers in the [CPADS Data Planning Worksheet](#).

### **Request Additional CPADS Items**

Every participating institution has the opportunity to add survey items to CPADS. Your team can add up to one minute of additional survey items, which is approximately two to three additional survey questions in most cases. Additional questions, while not mandatory, are an excellent opportunity to survey students about specific campaigns, services, initiatives or policies on your campus. For example, if your campus ran a campaign about [Canada's Low-Risk Alcohol Drinking Guidelines](#) with planned outcomes of increasing student awareness and knowledge of the guidelines, you can add items to survey students about these specific outcomes.

If you would like to include additional survey items, make sure that your institutional CPADS representative informs Health Canada, and that the additional items are submitted to your campus research ethics board with the CPADS core survey items. Questions specific to an institution also require Health Canada approval before being added to the CPADS survey.

### **Personalize Survey Communication**

To facilitate a high survey response rate, consider personalizing survey invitations to students. This shows students that the survey is credible and that student participation is valued.<sup>1,2</sup> Consider the following features:

- **Signature:** The e-mail should be signed by a credible student leader, a student services representative or a member of your campus senior leadership team (e.g., president, general secretary, registrar) with their official signature including institution and partner logos, if applicable.
- **Incentives:** If your campus decides to offer incentives (see below), ensure that any mention of prizes in the e-mail subject line will not flag an anti-spam filter through your institution's email service. Be clear about what the incentives will be, when they will be received and how they will be distributed on campus.
- **Institution resources:** Each institution will be invited to provide a contact list of campus-specific supports (e.g. crisis line, support centre). Contact information for these resources will be programmed into the survey at various points so that any student who requires support after responding to the survey can seek assistance or reach out for more information.

### **Promote Survey Participation**

Students are often asked to respond to surveys and can experience survey fatigue. Activities to promote CPADS on campus or to motivate respondents to take the survey can help increase the

---

1 University of Ottawa. (2019). *Conducting surveys*. Retrieved from <https://www.uottawa.ca/institutional-research-planning/surveys/conducting-surveys>

2 Institute for Work and Health. (2006). *From research to practice: A knowledge transfer planning guide*. Retrieved from <https://www.iwh.on.ca/tools-and-guides/from-research-to-practice-kte-planning-guide>



response rate and enhance the statistical power of the data collected. Here are some examples of initiatives that institutions could engage in to promote the survey among students:

- **Social media promotion:** Post short messages about the value of taking part in CPADS to improve student services and wellness.
- **Engagement of student associations and interested stakeholders:** Seek to engage student leaders and interested stakeholders who are uniquely positioned to promote student participation in the survey.
- **Incentives:** Incentives are a valuable tool to demonstrate appreciation for a respondent's time spent completing the survey. Ideas for incentives include:
  - Gift cards to local stores (grocery stores, campus book stores)
  - Free entry to institution events (sporting events, entertainment)
  - Coupon or voucher for free meal or meals on campus

A few points to consider if you are planning to provide incentives for students to complete CPADS:

- **Authorization:** If you plan to provide incentives for students to complete CPADS you will need formal buy-in from your institution (e.g., funds, authorizations). Also be aware that while Health Canada fully funds the implementation cost of CPADS, this funding does not include provisions for direct incentives to participants or for promotional activities.
- **Target sample:** Offering incentives will most likely increase the number of students in your institution's sample who will complete the survey. Contact Health Canada to inform them about your intention to offer incentives so that they can adjust the target sample accordingly.
- **Distributing incentives:** A Health Canada representative will provide the campus CPADS representative with a list of the ID number for all the students who completed the survey. The CPADS representative will match the ID numbers to the original e-mail addresses that were used for survey dissemination and contact students with details on how to claim their incentive. Consider finance department policies on your campus for distributing incentives.<sup>3</sup>

### **Plan How You Will Use and Disseminate CPADS Findings**

Results dissemination will start at least six months after data collection is completed. In the meantime, you should plan how you will use and disseminate CPADS findings on your campus. Your team members should carefully review the survey items and the example of an institution-specific report provided by Health Canada (also available by contacting [CPADS@advanis.net](mailto:CPADS@advanis.net)). This information should help your team to agree on key elements of a successful dissemination strategy including:

- Target audiences for CPADS key messages on your campus and in your community;
- Preferred style, tone, message sender, vehicle and format of your key audiences;<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> University of Ottawa. (2019). *Conducting surveys*. Retrieved from <https://www.uottawa.ca/institutional-research-planning/surveys/conducting-surveys>

<sup>4</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2011). *Introduction to program evaluation for public health programs: A self-study guide*. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/eval/guide/cdcevalmanual.pdf>





- Potential events where CPADS findings could be shared on campus (e.g., orientation week, mental health and wellness week, or high-risk events such as Halloween and St. Patrick's Day); and
- Key stakeholders on campus and in your community who are likely to use CPADS findings to inform, plan or evaluate their work.

To record these decisions, use the [CPADS Data Planning Worksheet](#).

## Section 3: How to Share and Use CPADS Findings

### *Unpack Your CPADS Data*

Within six months of CPADS data collection, Health Canada will share the CPADS institution report with your institution. Note that if your respondent sample is too small to produce a full summary report, you will be contacted by Health Canada early on to discuss reporting options, including the possibility of merging your results with those of other institutions or of only reporting on high level estimates.

It is advisable to share the report with your team and set a timeline to review the data. Once your team has reviewed the report, meet as a group to discuss and identify findings that are:

- Essential to share with students;
- Necessary to share with health promotion, campus services, administrative staff and the campus community as a whole;
- Remarkable to your team; and
- Easy to understand.

Use these results to inform the development of key messages.

### *Develop Key Messages*

Consider the questions below to choose CPADS findings that will make good key messages to share on campus:

- **Is the finding clear for your targeted audiences?** Do not assume that a reader has technical, statistical or research knowledge to interpret CPADS data. Modify the wording to be more transparent for your audiences, if needed.
- **Are the implications easily understood?** You might need to add an explanatory line of text to unpack the implications of a result for your audience.<sup>5</sup>
- **Is this a positive finding?** Focus on results that indicate strengths and progress as well as healthy behaviours (e.g., proportion of students alternating non-alcoholic with alcoholic drinks, eating before drinking and planning to get home safely).
- **How do findings compare with students perceptions?** Use the results to reduce harmful misperceptions of peer norms and, in turn, reduce risky drinking among students on campus.

---

<sup>5</sup> Institute for Work and Health. (2006). *From research to practice: A knowledge transfer planning guide*. Retrieved from <https://www.iwh.on.ca/tools-and-guides/from-research-to-practice-kte-planning-guide>



- **How will your audiences react?** Consider the potential reactions of critical audiences. Ensure that a possible key message is not offending, confusing or calling unwanted attention to an audience or group of stakeholders.
- **How does the finding compare to national data?** Consider the implications of findings that differ significantly from the national averages presented in your institution's report.

Steps to consider in further refining and testing draft key messages:

1. Restate results in clear, short, accurate statements.
2. Test potential key messages with communications staff and researchers on campus. Together, they can help your team develop balanced, useful and accurate messages.
3. Test key messages on people who are not familiar with CPADS data or substance use to make sure the messages are clear to anyone.
4. Group messages together. Consider grouping by specific substances, patterns of use, harms and protective strategies.
5. Share your draft key messages with stakeholders and audiences for discussion and feedback (see next section).

Record your draft key messages in the [CPADS Data Worksheet](#).

### **Engage Stakeholders with CPADS Data**

Share the CPADS institution report and draft messages with stakeholders on campus. These stakeholders might include administrators, faculty, student leaders, health promoters and others, such as communications staff and institutional research staff. Review and discuss data and key messages at a stakeholder meeting. Use this occasion to invite stakeholders to consider how results should be shared more widely.

Steps for the stakeholder meeting:

1. Distribute copies of the CPADS institution report to all stakeholders. Share draft key messages via handouts, posters or a presentation.
2. Prepare questions for stakeholders. Ask how to frame CPADS key messages, how different groups might react to CPADS data, and how to share results to drive action and awareness on campus.
3. Close the session by summarizing what you have heard from the group and what will be the next steps to share CPADS findings on campus.

### **Share Key Messages through Products and Events**

Share CPADS data via knowledge sharing events such as forums, debates and symposiums, and knowledge products such as infographics, social media content and posters on campus. Multiple products and events help ensure that key messages are shared effectively. Ensure that all products and events help your team achieve the goals you set for CPADS data on your campus. Match the tone, style, messages source and format of products to your identified audiences.<sup>6</sup> Finally, ensure

---

<sup>6</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2011). *Introduction to program evaluation for public health programs: A self-study guide*. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/eval/guide/cdcevalmanual.pdf>





that your team uses CPADS data products to direct students to campus services and other resources that can help them address their own and their peer's substance use.

Events are a good opportunity to connect directly with stakeholders to discuss findings as well as explore the implications and use of CPADS data on campus.<sup>7</sup> You might consider engaging the larger campus community with CPADS data through a campus and community coalition. As a PEP-AH member, you can also plan to share your CPADS key messages at events like PEP-AH's annual conference or the PEP-AH regional symposiums where other member campuses could help your team to consider different possibilities for using your data. Use the [CPADS Data Worksheet](#) to plan and consider how products and events can help your team achieve your goals for CPADS data.

### **Use CPADS Data to Plan**

Use CPADS data to identify needs and plan initiatives on campus. Continue to engage audiences who address substance use and harms on campus using CPADS data. Some key questions to consider with stakeholders:

- Are staff adequately trained to address alcohol use and harms on campus given the CPADS findings? Are there campus services that need to be implemented or reinforced with more staffing and funding based on the findings for your institution?
- Are additional alcohol and substance use initiatives needed on campus based on CPADS findings? See [PEP-AH Framework](#) for suggested evidence-based initiatives and [A Guide to Help Reduce Alcohol Harms on Campus](#) for suggestions on assessing needs on campus. See the PEP-AH collection of already implemented initiatives (available soon on PEP-AH website).
- Do CPADS results suggest specific prevention and harm reduction campaigns? Are there key messages that can be integrated into an existing prevention campaign? Are there protective behaviour strategies that are underused and could be encouraged?
- Are there policies that might help address specific issues identified within the CPADS results for your institution? These might include ways that alcohol is marketed and sold on campus, student housing policies or event planning. See the [PEP-AH Framework](#) for more details on availability, marketing and pricing initiatives.
- Are there community initiatives that can address any areas of concern in the CPADS data? See [Youth Alcohol Use and Its Harms: Case Study in the Community of Sherbrooke](#) for examples of data-driven community responses to alcohol harms.

Track how your team will follow up with key audiences about the use of CPADS data on the [CPADS Data Worksheet](#).

### **Use CPADS Data to Evaluate**

Use the CPADS data to help evaluate alcohol and substance use initiatives on campus.

- Use the CPADS results to document alcohol indicators that will help to evaluate overall campus targets (e.g., targeted reductions in harms from alcohol use).

---

<sup>7</sup> Ontario Centre of Excellence for Child and Youth Mental Health. (2014). *Knowledge mobilization toolkit*. Retrieved from <http://www.kmbtoolkit.ca/the-toolkit>



- Use CPADS alcohol survey items or subscales (including items added by your team during the planning phase) to assess the success of campus alcohol initiatives. For instance, if a health promotion initiative aimed to help students avoid drinking games, the CPADS item that asks students about drinking games would serve as one outcome measure. If a health promotion initiative targeted several protective behavioural strategies, the overall protective behavioural strategies subscale in CPADS might form a valid indicator. See the [PEP-AH Outcomes and Indicators Resource](#) for more information on measuring outcomes and indicators.

PEP-AH's [A Guide to Help Reduce Alcohol Harms on Campus](#) contains additional guidance and worksheets for planning initiatives with a logic model and evaluating campus alcohol initiatives using outcomes and indicators.

### ***Consider a CPADS Data Sharing Agreement***

Consider requesting a CPADS data sharing agreement. The agreement with Health Canada allows for access to your institution's CPADS dataset. It also provides an opportunity for researchers on campus who would like to conduct their own research projects or explore further issues associated with students' use of alcohol and other substances. Such activities could reveal further useful insights. Contact Health Canada (e-mail [CPADS@advanis.net](mailto:CPADS@advanis.net)) for more details.

### ***Debrief the Survey Process***

Debrief the process of planning, participating, sharing and using CPADS data to capture lessons learned.<sup>8</sup> Consider what went well, key stakeholders and potential improvements as part of your debrief. Capture your thoughts using the questions provided in the [CPADS Data Worksheet](#) for later reference. Your team can also use the [Plan-Do-Study-Act Worksheet](#) and other planning and implementation resources found in the PEP-AH's [A Guide to Help Reduce Alcohol Harms on Campus](#) to improve your approach to participating in CPADS and sharing results.

### ***Continue to Monitor Alcohol and Other Substance Use***

Health Canada will continue to administer CPADS every two years as part of national surveillance efforts under the [Canadian Drugs and Substances Strategy](#). The survey is a valuable opportunity to understand issues associated with postsecondary students' alcohol and substance use. It is also a unique tool to plan and evaluate related initiatives and activities on campus. Work with your colleagues to ensure continued participation in CPADS. Monitoring alcohol and substance use is essential to ensure that all students have the environment and support they need to reach their full potential.

---

<sup>8</sup> Rohner, C.D., Sandmayer, J., Foster, M. (2017). *Campus climate survey toolkit*. Salem, OR: Oregon Attorney General's Sexual Assault Task Force. Retrieved from <http://oregonsatf.org/cctoolkit/>