

The BSI guide to standardization – Section 1: Working with British Standards

④ What are the different types of standard?

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BSI
British Standards

This series of guides is for members of BSI's technical committees and anyone interested in the development of standards. It is designed to accompany BS 0 - A standard for standards and gives you information on:

- ① the benefits of being involved in standardization
- ② how to work with BSI
- ③ how standards are created
- ④ different types of standards and related publications
- ⑤ legal aspects, training and European Directives
- ⑥ background, history and helpful links

British (BS), European (EN) and international standards (ISO/IEC) are developed according to strict rules to ensure that they are transparent and fair. They are developed through the technical committee process — see How are standards created?

The standards infrastructure is responsible for producing:

- full consensus documents, i.e. standards; and
- partial consensus documents.

Full consensus standard

- British Standard (BS), which can take the form of a specification, method of test, vocabulary, code of practice or guide
- European standard (EN)
- international standard — International Organization for Standardization (ISO) or International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC)

Related publications

- Draft for development (DD)
- Guide — European Committee for Standardization CEN/CLC, or ISO
- Technical specification — CEN/CLC/TS, ISO or IEC/TS
- Technical report — CEN/CLC/TR, ISO or IEC/TR

It can take time to develop consensus standards and for the agreement to go through public review. For some users of standards, particularly those in fast-changing technology sectors, it may be more important to agree on a technical solution and publish it quickly before going through the checks and balances needed to become a full British Standard. Therefore, BSI, CEN/CENELEC and ISO/IEC have developed a range of products which are not full standard but allow publication before full consensus. These publications are:

- Published document (PD)
- Privately subscribed standard (PSS)
- Publicly available specification (PAS)
- International publicly available specification (ISO/PAS)
- European or international workshop agreements (CWA/IWA/ITA)

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Intro

Definitions

Standards and related publications

Category	Features	Benefits	Approval	Timescales
Full consensus standards				
Specification BS, EN, ISO, IEC	Detailed document outlining performance and/or design and/or service requirements that need wide consensus.	Controls variety so products, systems and services can be more easily designed, developed, made, specified, bought and understood. Detailed documents which are clear about products, systems, services and materials help specifiers to make comparisons.	Committee prepared and approved, with public consultation.	12 months for national, up to 3 years for others
Method BS, EN, ISO, IEC	Detailed document that focuses on the way products and materials are tested or the way they are specified.	Knowing how to test and ensuring that like products pass such tests is important to manufacturers, suppliers, customers and those who have to verify conformity of products against specifications. These documents say what should be done to prove the integrity of products.	Committee prepared and approved, with public consultation	12 months for national, up to 3 years for others
Vocabulary BS, EN, ISO, IEC	Referenced/indexed document defining terms used in a sector or technology.	Facilitates understanding of terms and their definitions for all standards used in a sector or technology	Committee prepared and approved, with public consultation	12 months for national, up to 3 years for others
Code of practice (CoP) BS	Guidance and recommended options, including wide range of subjects from outline design to workmanship and safe practice	Covering wide subject matter, they provide accessible information and give authoritative guidance to good practice in a technology or sector. Useful for designers, project managers and building managers.	Committee prepared and approved, with public consultation.	12 months
Guide BS	Provides general guidance with recommendations and background information. Tends to be less specific and more discursive than a code of practice.	Guidance across an industry/subject area, with in-depth explanations and examples based on scenarios	Committee prepared and approved, with public consultation.	12 months
Drafts for development DD	Not a formal standard, but released early in a product or technology cycle when guidance is urgently needed	Gives customers insight into a new/developing technology or product, enabling them to plan business development. Also provides an opportunity for users to feed back information.	Committee prepared and approved.	12 months or less

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Category	Features	Benefits	Approval	Timescales
Related publications				
Technical report from CEN/CLC and ISO/IEC PD/TR	Additional information from that published in international standards (e.g. data collection)	Gives customers information needed to support other standards in that field	Committee prepared and approved. May be implemented as a PD.	Up to 3 years
(Formal) published document PD	Supporting document produced by committee for information only. Includes guidance, reports and recommendations.	Can be read alongside other publications to provide insight in an integrated way	Committee prepared and approved, with public consultation if needed. Can be full or partial consensus document.	12 months
Technical specification from CEN/CLC and ISO/IEC – TS	Document establishing a norm where there is insufficient support for a full standard or where the state-of-the-art is not stable. Cannot conflict with an existing international standard but may compete with another TS.	Gives customers insight into a forthcoming specification or other formal document, enabling them to plan business activities. In the case of competing TSs, enables the market to decide on a definitive standard.	Committee prepared and approved, with public consultation. May be implemented as a DD.	Up to 3 years
BSI publicly available specification PAS	Industry-sponsored standard produced at speed as it does not require full consensus and has dedicated resource. Can be detailed and solution-specific.	Produced quickly, can be tailored to specific solutions and does not need to incorporate broader views. May be offered at review stage as a possible BS. If accepted, faster BS adoption should be enabled since the standard has already undergone some consultation and already follows BS 0-2.	Developed and approved by BSI with industry, government or professional association sponsorship, with some consultation.	6-9 months

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Category	Features	Benefits	Approval	Timescales
Related publications (continued)				
Privately subscribed standard PSS	Industry-sponsored standard normally for private use by the sponsor	Customer gains expert knowledge to help develop internal documentation or standardization. The process provides access to experts on BSI committees if the sponsor is accepted.	BSI/Client prepare and approve document.	3-12 months
CWA/IWA or ITA	CEN Workshop Agreement (CWA) sponsored by industry. IWA is an International (ISO) Workshop Agreement. ITA is an Industry Technical Agreement (IEC).		Workshop prepared and approved.	6-18 months
ISO/IEC PAS (no CEN equivalent)	Intermediate specification published before the development of a full ISO standard. Developed within committee structure or, in IEC, may be developed in collaboration with an external organization. May be implemented as a PD.	Provides insight into a forthcoming specification or other formal document, enabling customers to plan business activities. May come from a committee or from an external source.	Committee (Working Group) prepared and approved.	Varies