EVALUATING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEMS IN QUÉBEC COLLEGES

Guidelines and Framework
Second edition
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June 2015
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Foreword

The revision of this document is part of the follow-up to the validation phase of the evaluation of the effectiveness of the quality assurance systems of Québec’s colleges carried out by the Commission d’évaluation de l’enseignement collégial in four colleges during fall 2014. To conclude this process, the Commission produced a summary report1 outlining the main findings derived from consultations on the auditing process as well as courses of action to consider subsequent to the first audit cycle. Among the proposed actions, revising the Guidelines and Framework document (March 2013) seemed necessary in order to clarify the expectations of the Commission and provide guidelines for producing the self-evaluation report by the colleges.

This is the context in which the current edition was produced. The changes made to the original version mainly involve a lightened presentation of criteria and a clarification of the concepts selected and of the elements in support of the Commission’s rulings in order to ensure clear understanding on the part of the reader. Since the validation process confirmed the relevance of the basic elements of the audit, the Commission has maintained the components constituting the quality assurance system being audited as well as the criteria used to evaluate its effectiveness. Finally, Appendix D has been expanded to become a guide aimed at orienting the colleges in their self-evaluation process and the production of their report.

Introduction

During the first two decades of the Commission’s existence, institutions in the Québec college network have developed an array of mechanisms to ensure quality in both their programs of study and their delivery as well as in the evaluation of student achievement. They have also begun to measure, in the ongoing pursuit of quality assurance, the effectiveness of these mechanisms themselves. In addition, as part of their responsibilities, cégeps have adopted institutional strategic plans, including success plans, and reviewed the effectiveness of mechanisms that ensure quality management in executing these plans. Subsidized private colleges have also taken similar steps regarding success plans. Furthermore, as part of their institutional evaluation, colleges revisited their mission, organizational and management methods, planning and evaluation processes, outcomes, and internal communication practices.

Established in 1993, the Commission d’évaluation de l’enseignement collégial has always operated with a vision that colleges—bolstered by the knowledge and experience acquired and enriched over the years through evaluations carried out both by the Commission and on their own initiative—would ultimately develop an institutional culture of self-evaluation. Faithful to its mission, the Commission is proposing a new evaluation approach that marks a major departure from how it assumes its mandate and how colleges exercise their responsibilities in regards to evaluation. With this approach, the Commission is shifting its focus from evaluating the quality and implementation of programs of study and the effectiveness of policies and plans, to evaluating the effectiveness of the quality assurance system in each institution.

The broad framework of this new approach is in keeping with the Commission’s desire to move forward with its evaluation practices, while recognizing the expertise that colleges have developed over the years. The efforts of a working committee, comprised of representatives from the Commission and colleges, helped establish the conceptual frameworks that are guiding this new approach.

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2. In compliance with the 2002 Act to amend the General and Vocational Colleges Act and the Act respecting the Commission d’évaluation de l’enseignement collégial, all cégeps are required to adopt a strategic plan and submit a copy to the Commission d’évaluation de l’enseignement collégial.

3. As stipulated in Schedule 039 of the Régime budgétaire et financier des établissements privés d’ordre collégial, private institutions that submit their success plan to the Ministère de l’Éducation, de l’Enseignement supérieur et de la Recherche and to the Commission receive funding allocated for the implementation of this plan.

4. Intended for both public and private colleges that offer programs of study leading to a Diploma of College Studies (DEC).
framework for this new operation, identify the components of the quality assurance systems in colleges, and define the various elements—including the Commission’s expectations—of the implementation of the operation.

In preparing the evaluation of quality assurance systems and to ensure an approach comparable to international standards in higher education, the Commission carried out an in-depth examination of current quality assurance practices. It also solicited the contributions of respected international specialists in the field to validate the present document’s proposed evaluation of the effectiveness of the colleges’ quality assurance systems and the evaluation process being proposed.

The implementation of a change of such importance in the evaluation practices of the Commission requires that special attention be given to the needs of the colleges. To that end, the Commission provides individualized support to each institution. Also, in order to accommodate any necessary revisions to the audit process, the Commission conducted validation evaluations in four colleges in the fall of 2014. In accordance with its standard operating procedures, the Commission struck an advisory committee which also contributed to the validation of this new evaluation approach.

The present document contains useful information to assist colleges in evaluating the effectiveness of their quality assurance systems. It is divided into four sections. The first provides an overview of quality assurance in Québec college education. The second introduces the operation of the evaluation of the effectiveness of the quality assurance systems and defines the issues, purpose, conceptual framework and evaluation approach being proposed. The third covers the audit of the quality assurance systems, defines the system being audited, addresses the colleges’ self-evaluation processes, and presents the Commission’s evaluation criteria and rulings. Lastly, in the fourth section the different stages of the audit cycle are outlined. The appendices contain supplementary information, notably a self-evaluation guide for the colleges.

The Commission’s practices are comparable to the best practices of other quality assurance agencies in higher education.

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5. The advisory committee was comprised of 18 members representing the college network, the university community and various socio-economic groups.
Quality Assurance in Québec Colleges

Quality assurance in Québec college education today is assured by the experience institutions have accrued over the years, by the mechanisms put in place to ensure quality, as well as external evaluations performed by an independent body, the Commission d'évaluation de l'enseignement collégial.

1. *The Commission d'évaluation de l'enseignement collégial*

Created in 1993, the *Commission d'évaluation de l'enseignement collégial* is an independent public quality assurance organization whose mission is to contribute to and demonstrate the development of the quality of college education.

The Commission’s mission covers all college-level institutions governed by the *College Education Regulations*. Currently this comprises a network of 101 institutions:

- 48 general and vocational colleges (cegeps);
- 4 institutions under the authority of a ministry or a university;
- 22 subsidized private colleges; and
- 27 non-subsidized private institutions.

As mandated by law, the primary function of the Commission is to evaluate the following elements for each institution:

- institutional policies on the evaluation of student achievement, including procedures for the certification of studies, and their implementation;
- institutional policies on program evaluation and their implementation;

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7. Other regulatory bodies and professional organizations are involved in the accreditation of study programs and contribute their part to quality education standards. The work of these bodies and organizations goes beyond the scope of the present document.


9. Data current as of June 15, 2015. Not included in this figure are the total number of campuses, constituent colleges and specialized college centres.

10. The mission and powers of the Commission are established primarily in sections 13 to 19 of the Act respecting the Commission d’évaluation de l’enseignement collégial.
implementation of programs of study authorized by the Minister of Education, Higher Learning and Research, taking into account the objectives and standards assigned to them; and

objectives, standards, and implementation of programs of study established by the institution, taking into account the needs these programs are designed to meet.

In addition, amendments in the 2002 Act to amend the General and Vocational Colleges Act and the Act respecting the Commission d’évaluation de l’enseignement collégial modified the scope of the Commission’s mandate to include, for cégeps and subsidized private colleges, the evaluation of:

- activities related to their educational mission regarding administrative and academic planning and management as well as instruction and support services; for cégeps this includes an evaluation of their strategic plans.

Furthermore, the Commission has been granted three major powers through legislation: the power to verify, the power to make recommendations, and declaratory powers to make its work publicly available. Operating with a considerable degree of autonomy, the Commission can as a result collect from institutions any relevant information required to do its work, set forth recommendations on actions to improve quality in a specific area, and make its evaluation reports publicly available. For their part, colleges are required to report on any follow-up activities undertaken to address the Commission’s recommendations.

2. Evaluation Activities Since 1993

From the outset, the Commission viewed its work as supportive to the growth and development of Québec college education. For this reason, it chose to work progressively through the various elements of its mandate, with an eye to making colleges more responsible in the area of evaluation.

To reach this goal, the Commission first evaluated institutional policies on the evaluation of student achievement concurrently with the most common and popular programs of study offered throughout the Québec college network. The objective of the Commission was to introduce the evaluation process to the largest possible number of stakeholders and institutions, as well as provide colleges with tools to develop their own program evaluation policies, the latter also subject to evaluation by the Commission.

11. An Act to amend the General and Vocational Colleges Act and the Act respecting the Commission d’évaluation de l’enseignement collégial.
Colleges were then requested to implement their program evaluation policies, and to verify their effectiveness, in the evaluation of a program of study. The Commission also conducted institutional evaluations, the evaluation of success plans and—in the case of cégeps—of strategic plans.

The Commission then proceeded to evaluate the effectiveness of the various components of the quality assurance systems in the colleges. This eventually led to an evaluation of the implementation of institutional policies on the evaluation of student achievement for all colleges in the network, the effectiveness of success plans, and—for cégeps—strategic plans.

Lastly, the Commission launched an operation to provide colleges with an integrated approach for the efficient processing of follow-ups to the recommendations. This exercise also proved useful in establishing an up-to-date picture of these follow-ups.

Appendix A provides a summary of the Commission’s evaluation activities to date, as well as their distribution according to the different categories of institutions.
Evaluating the Effectiveness of Quality Assurance Systems in Québec Colleges

The evaluation of the effectiveness of quality assurance systems in Québec colleges marks an important change in the approach to evaluation for the Commission in the years to come. This approach is founded on the knowledge and experience accrued by colleges in the area of evaluation and the gradual evolution of the Commission’s own activities over the course of the past two decades.

1. Issues

The Commission continues to pursue its mission and fulfill its mandate in a context of systemic and cyclical evaluation that respects the autonomy and acknowledges the responsibilities of colleges. Fully aware of the need to take into account institutional particularities, the Commission understands that the implementation of this new evaluation will need to be adapted to the context of each institution for the latter to reap the benefit of such an exercise. On the one hand, this change in approach requires the Commission to adapt its evaluation practices and processes to take into account the expertise developed in the colleges, and on the other, it confirms the pertinence of the outside perspective provided by the Commission.

For colleges, this new approach will entail a greater reliance on an institutional culture of quality. They are called upon to be part of the proposed paradigm shift in order to cast a critical eye on the effectiveness of their quality assurance mechanisms. In this regard, they must ask themselves if the mechanisms they have been putting in place are reaching the institutional objectives for which they were developed and if the necessary actions are being taken, if applicable, to ensure continuous quality improvement. In looking to answer these questions, colleges can use the institutional information they have at their disposal, and if they deem it necessary, proceed with the collection of additional information.

The cyclical nature of this evaluation will help colleges plan their evaluation activities, as on-site visits, based on a predetermined audit cycle, are scheduled according to a calendar announced at the beginning of the cycle. The evaluation of the effectiveness of quality assurance systems and the implementation of the related procedures, underscore the importance of the institutional responsibility for the management of quality and aim at consolidating the evaluation practices in the colleges. The outside perspective provided by the Commission aims to demonstrate the effectiveness of quality assurance practices implemented by the colleges.
2. Purpose

Having recognized that a culture of evaluation has taken root in the colleges, thus enabling them to take charge of their own evaluation responsibilities, the Commission is henceforth shifting the focus of its activities to evaluating the effectiveness of the mechanisms of which their quality assurance systems are composed. The purpose of doing so is to contribute to and demonstrate the development of the quality of college education.

3. Conceptual Framework

The Commission’s conceptual framework for the audit is based on the evolution of its evaluation practices and its study of quality assurance processes worldwide. The Commission made sure to adapt this conceptual framework to the context of Québec college instruction while consulting its college network partners on the subject.

Internal Quality Assurance

The institutions are primarily responsible for quality within their own walls, doing so through the implementation of their internal quality assurance mechanisms. For the Commission, this quality is defined as the achievement of the objectives set by the institution in order to carry out its mission.

Some of these objectives are common to all institutions, given the colleges’ province-wide educational mission as defined by the legal and regulatory framework in which they operate. By adopting institutional policies, they all pursue the objective of ensuring quality with regards to programs of study and the evaluation of student achievement. On the other hand, institutional objectives are determined by the institutions themselves, in particular by way of their strategic plan and success plan, in relation to their particular context to ensure the accomplishment of their local mission.

To ensure the achievement of these objectives, the institution puts in place a set of mechanisms and practices on an ongoing basis, which can be referred to as its internal quality assurance process. Organized in a structured and dynamic fashion, these various mechanisms constitute the colleges’ quality assurance system aimed at ensuring and demonstrating continuous quality improvement.

12. See the References section for the main works consulted by the Commission.
External Quality Assurance

In its audit, the Commission does not intend to examine the achievement of institutional objectives; instead it focuses on the means adopted by institution to pursue its objectives from the perspective of continuous improvement. Hence the Commission looks at the ability of an institution to reach its stated objectives and accomplish its mission, as reflected in the notion of quality as “fitness for purpose”.

In this context, the Commission’s external quality assurance process is designed to evaluate the effectiveness of an institution’s quality assurance mechanisms and practices based on agreed and predetermined criteria.

As such, the effectiveness of a quality assurance mechanism may be defined as its ability to ensure continuous quality improvement in terms of the institution’s set objectives, while, in the final analysis, the effectiveness of a quality assurance system refers to the ability of the system to ensure continuous quality improvement.

4. The Commission’s Evaluation Approach

The approach adopted by the Commission to evaluate the effectiveness of quality assurance systems in colleges takes the form of an audit based on agreed upon and predetermined criteria. The implementation of this approach is deeply rooted in an institutional culture of values, principles, and evaluation methods that allows each college to demonstrate its ability to meet its set objectives.

The audit process itself is both systemic and cyclical, and implemented according to a pre-determined calendar. Thus each institution receives an on-site visit from the Commission based on a calendar announced at the start of an audit cycle. Following the audit visit, the college is required, in some cases, to provide a follow-up to the Commission’s recommendations, within a specified time frame.

The Commission defines the concept of “quality” as being aligned with objectives.

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14. The different stages of the audit cycle are outlined in greater detail on pages 29-32.
Quality Assurance Systems in Québec Colleges: the Audit Process

The audit process adopted by the Commission to assess the quality assurance system of a college starts with the institution’s self-evaluation and the resulting report. The Commission isolates the components of the quality assurance system to be audited, defines the criteria to be applied, and presents its ruling at the end of the audit.

1. The Quality Assurance System Submitted to an Audit

Depending on their specific characteristics, colleges have over the years adopted a range of mechanisms to ensure quality in meeting the various aspects of their mission. Mindful of the scope and diversity of these mechanisms, the Commission focuses its attention only on those that form the components of the quality assurance system being audited.

This system is comprised of the quality assurance mechanisms for:

- programs of study;
- the evaluation of student achievement;
- strategic planning within a context of results-based management; and
- success planning within a context of results-based management.

The specific components constituting the quality assurance system being audited will vary according to the status of the institution; the table on the following page illustrates these components in greater detail.
Table 1
Quality Assurance Mechanisms Assessed, by Component and Status of Institution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STATUS OF INSTITUTION</th>
<th>Programs of Study</th>
<th>Evaluation of Student Achievement</th>
<th>Strategic Planning</th>
<th>Success Planning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cégep</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subsidized private college</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓ 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-subsidized private institution</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institution under the authority of a ministry or a university</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The quality assurance system is based on institutional information that can be organized in an information system or systems required to monitor the implementation of mechanisms and their effectiveness.

The figure below illustrates the components of the quality assurance system being audited.

Figure 1
Quality Assurance System Components Submitted to an Audit

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1.1 The Quality Assurance Mechanisms

In a college, the quality assurance mechanisms can take many shapes and forms, and cover different aspects of its mission. For the Commission, a quality assurance mechanism is both binding and guiding from an institutional perspective. It most often takes the form of policies, plans, by-laws or practices that have been documented and implemented. The Commission specifies three general categories of quality assurance mechanisms that colleges can include in their demonstration:16

1) institutional mechanisms governed by regulations related to the Commission’s mandate;
2) other institutional mechanisms, such as policies, programs, by-laws, etc.; and
3) institutional practices adopted in relation to the implementation of a given policy or other institutional mechanism.

1.2 The Institutional Information System

An information system is defined by the Commission as an institutional management tool for the collection of data required to support decision making and ensure effective quality management. In the audit process, it can also serve as a database to store the information required for a college to document the effectiveness of its quality assurance mechanisms and provide evidence thereof in its self-evaluation report.

Each college can adapt the organization of its information system to its institutional practices.

The information system is not judged by the Commission.

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16. Examples of these mechanisms are provided in Appendix C.
2. The College Self-Evaluation Process

Each college is required to conduct a comprehensive assessment of the effectiveness of its quality assurance system, according to the criteria articulated in this section, and demonstrate their results in a self-evaluation report.\(^\text{17}\)

The Commission does not judge the self-evaluation process followed for this audit. It is nevertheless appropriate to reiterate the principal characteristics of a quality self-evaluation process. First of all, colleges are invited to draft a self-evaluation plan to direct its process. This plan specifies, in particular, the main challenges of the self-evaluation process, the designation of responsibilities, data-collection, data-processing and-analysis procedures, methods of consultation, as well as a timeline for completing the self-evaluation process.

Colleges are called upon to gather together the data at their disposal required to document the implementation of their quality assurance mechanisms as well as any corrective measures undertaken to improve quality. (Additional data collection may be carried out if deemed necessary by the colleges.) The analysis of this data will allow each individual college to review the effectiveness of its mechanisms according to the criteria established by the Commission. This analysis must be based on valid and sufficient data to provide an effective critical assessment and demonstration of strengths and areas for improvement as regards the effectiveness of its quality assurance mechanisms. Based on the results of this exercise, the college can then draw conclusions for each component of its quality assurance system, and assess the effectiveness of the quality assurance system as a whole based on the conclusions drawn.

The college’s conclusions are presented in a self-evaluation report, which will include the necessary supporting documents as appendices. The college will then draw up an action plan to ensure follow-up on the corrective measures identified to address any shortcomings observed in its quality assurance system.

3. Evaluation Criteria as regards the Effectiveness of a Quality Assurance System

In the audit, three criteria are applied to each of the components of a college’s quality assurance system in order to assess the effectiveness of the mechanisms used by the institution. The Commission defines the effectiveness of a quality assurance mechanism as its ability to ensure continuous improvement in quality in reaching its stated objectives.

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\(^\text{17}\) A self-evaluation guide to direct colleges in their self-evaluation process and in the production of their report is found in Appendix D.
For each component, the three criteria to be applied to judge effectiveness are the following:

1. The implementation of quality assurance mechanisms;

2. The ability of mechanisms to ensure continuous quality improvement by
   a) taking into account the objectives of these mechanisms;\(^{18}\)
   b) identifying areas of strength and areas for improvement based on these objectives; and
   c) implementing corrective measures for improvement in a context of continuous quality improvement.

3. The review and updating of these mechanisms.

The following pages apply the criteria to each component and present the sub-criteria associated with each one. The Commission wishes to emphasize that the sub-criteria are all derived from evaluation criteria used in past operations. As part of the audit, they are reapplied from a perspective of the mechanisms’ effectiveness. Their detailed presentation in Appendix D aims to ensure a common understanding of the Commission's expectations.

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18. For the full set of objectives, refer to the sub-criteria of each component in the quality assurance system.
Component 1
Quality assurance mechanisms for programs of study

The following criteria are used to determine mechanisms’ effectiveness:

CRITERIA:

1. The implementation of mechanisms.

The main quality assurance mechanisms for programs of study are implemented.

2. The ability of mechanisms to ensure continuous quality improvement of programs.

   a) Mechanisms take into account the main objectives associated with the implementation of programs of study:

      Sub-criteria: 19

      Mechanisms ensure

      2.1 the relevance of programs of study;
      2.2 coherence in programs of study;
      2.3 the value of teaching methods and student supervision;
      2.4 the alignment of human, financial and material resources with education needs;
      2.5 the effectiveness of programs of study; and
      2.6 the quality of program management.

   b) These mechanisms make it possible to identify strengths and areas for improvement based on the various objectives pursued through the implementation of programs of study.

   c) The mechanisms allow for the implementation of corrective measures to address areas for improvement and thus ensure continuous improvement of programs of study.

3. The review and updating of mechanisms.

The main mechanisms are reviewed and updated, if necessary, to ensure effectiveness.

19. For the definition of each sub-criterion, please see Appendix D.
Component 2
Quality assurance mechanisms for the evaluation of student achievement

The following criteria are used to judge the mechanisms’ effectiveness:

**CRITERIA:**

1. **The implementation of mechanisms.**
   
The main quality assurance mechanisms for the evaluation of student achievement are implemented.

2. **The ability of mechanisms to ensure continuous quality improvement of the evaluation of student achievement.**
   
a) Mechanisms take into account the main objectives associated with the evaluation of student achievement.

   **Sub-criteria:**
   
   2.1 a fair evaluation of student achievement;
   
   2.2 an equitable evaluation of student achievement.

b) These mechanisms make it possible to identify the strengths and areas for improvement based on the main objectives pursued through the evaluation of student achievement.

c) The mechanisms allow for the implementation of corrective measures to address areas for improvement and thus ensure continuous improvement as regards the evaluation of student achievement.

3. **The review and updating of mechanisms.**
   
The main mechanisms are reviewed and updated, if necessary, to ensure effectiveness.

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20. For the definition of each sub-criterion, please see Appendix D.
Component 3
Quality assurance mechanisms for strategic planning within a context of results-based management

The following criteria are used to determine mechanisms’ effectiveness:

**CRITERIA:**

1. The implementation of mechanisms.

   The main quality assurance mechanisms for strategic planning are implemented.

2. The ability of mechanisms to ensure continuous quality improvement of strategic planning.

   a) The mechanisms take into account the institutional objectives associated with strategic planning.

   **Sub-criteria:**

   2.1 The mechanisms to ensure the implementation of strategic planning help institutions reach their objectives; and

   2.2 The mechanisms to ensure follow-up of strategic planning results help institutions reach their objectives.

   b) These mechanisms make it possible to identify strengths and areas for improvement to help institutions reach their strategic planning objectives; and

   c) The mechanisms allow for the implementation of corrective measures to address areas for improvement to help institutions reach their strategic planning objectives.

3. The review and updating of mechanisms.

   The main mechanisms are reviewed and updated, if necessary, to ensure effectiveness.

21. For the definition of each sub-criterion, please consult Appendix D.
Component 4
Quality assurance mechanisms for success planning within a context of results-based management

The following criteria are used to determine mechanisms’ effectiveness:

**CRITERIA:**

1. **The implementation of mechanisms.**
   
   The main quality assurance mechanisms for success planning are implemented.

2. **The ability of mechanisms to ensure continuous quality improvement of success planning.**
   
   a) The mechanisms take into account the institutional objectives associated with success planning.

   **Sub criteria:**
   
   2.1 The mechanisms to ensure the implementation of success planning help institutions reach their objectives; and

   2.2 The mechanisms to ensure follow-up of success planning results help institutions reach their objectives.

   b) These mechanisms make it possible to identify strengths and areas for improvement to help institutions reach their success planning objectives; and

   c) The mechanisms allow for the implementation of corrective measures to address areas for improvement to help institutions reach their success planning objectives.

3. **The review and updating of main mechanisms.**

   The main mechanisms are reviewed and updated, if necessary, to ensure effectiveness.

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22. For the definition of each sub-criterion, please consult Appendix D.
4. The Commission’s Rulings on the Effectiveness of the Quality Assurance System

At the end of its audit, the Commission renders a ruling on each of the components assessed, issues messages for improvement, where applicable, and provides a comprehensive ruling on the effectiveness of the quality assurance system.

4.1 The Commission’s Rulings

For each component, the Commission renders a ruling on the effectiveness of the quality assurance mechanisms implemented by the college. Based on the assessment of each criterion and sub-criterion, it judges whether the quality assurance mechanisms and their management ensure, generally ensure, partly ensure, or do not ensure the continuous improvement of quality for the component in question (programs of study / evaluation of student achievement / strategic planning / success planning).

4.2 The Commission’s Messages for Improvement

In its audit reports, the Commission highlights the strengths in institutional practices observed during the audit. Where applicable, it also makes comments and delivers messages for improvement in regard to any element requiring corrective measures. These can take the form of invitations, suggestions, or recommendations. The latter require a follow-up by the college, whereby it must demonstrate, by a deadline agreed upon with the Commission, the improvements made to address the shortcomings identified by the audit.

4.3 The Commission’s General Assessment of the Effectiveness of the Quality Assurance System

At the end of the evaluation exercise, the Commission delivers an overall assessment of the effectiveness of the college’s quality assurance system, basing its ruling on the effectiveness of each of the system’s components. Thus the Commission concludes whether the quality assurance system and its management ensure, generally ensure, partly ensure, or do not ensure continuous quality improvement.
4.4 Other observations by the Commission

The Commission invites institutions to reflect on certain aspects of quality management in order to enrich their institutional portrait of quality assurance. The Commission does not judge the observations noted on these issues. Rather, it seeks to document the situation of colleges and demonstrate their progress in these areas in its reports. The Commission’s report therefore notes the observations by the institution concerning the following points for consideration:

- To what extent does the implementation of quality assurance mechanisms demonstrate integrated and dynamic quality management?
- Does the institutional information system enable the collection of sufficient and valid data to support decision making with an eye to continuous quality improvement?
- How is the quality assurance system incorporated in the governance and management practices of the institution?
- To what extent is a culture of quality incorporated into institutional management in order to collectively meet the quality objective and demonstrate this achievement?
Stages of the Audit Cycle

The process of auditing an institution is comprised of several stages: a self-evaluation, an on-site visit, an audit report by the Commission, and an evaluation follow-up by the college. These key moments are illustrated in the diagram below. The Commission also provides an overall plan of the audit cycle, produces an annual progress report of all on-site visits and a summary report at the end of the audit cycle.

Figure 2
The institutional audit process

1. Scheduling the audit

The Commission establishes a general calendar for all on-site visits at the beginning of an audit cycle and informs each college of the semester selected for its visit. The Commission then communicates with each college to provide a timeline for the college's audit process and agree upon the exact date for the visit.
2. College self-evaluation

The college, as part of its internal evaluation process, is required to carry out a critical assessment of the effectiveness of its quality assurance system, and demonstrate this in a self-evaluation report. The report must be concise, be supported by relevant evidence in appendices, and include an action plan, if required. Full details on the content of a self-evaluation report are found in Appendix D.

3. Submission of the self-evaluation report

The college will file its self-evaluation report and appendices electronically on the Commission’s digital portal according to the pre-arranged procedure.

4. Analysis of the self-evaluation report and preparation for the visit

The college’s self-evaluation report is analyzed by the members of the visiting committee. The results of the analysis are then forwarded to the Commission’s research professional in preparation for the on-site visit.

5. On-site visit

The purpose of the on-site visit is to contextualize and supplement the information contained in the self-evaluation report and provide a better understanding of the college’s conclusions. In addition to supplementing the self-evaluation report, the visit enables consideration (where applicable) of any subsequent corrective measures implemented by the college in the interval between the adoption of the report and the time of the visit. In order to help prepare the groups being met, the Commission provides the college with a preparation guide for the visit.

Typically, the visiting committee meets with the college administration, the board of governors, the Commission of Studies, college management, the pedagogical management team working with the director of studies, and the self-evaluation committee, as well as teachers, students, professionals, and support staff. These meetings are adapted to the organizational structure of each college.

23. The role of this committee and the contribution of its experts are detailed in Appendix E.
At the conclusion of the on-site visit, committee members meet to summarize and record their observations. They measure the results of the audit for each criterion against its objectives, identify key areas of strength and deficiency, render their rulings and, in certain cases, formulate messages for improvement that the Commission could present to the college. The committee’s observations are evidence-based and supported by the observations found in the college’s self-evaluation report, views expressed by college stakeholders during the visit, and any other documents examined while on site.

The on-site visit concludes with a meeting with the college administration, at which time the commissioner who chaired the committee, accompanied by the research professional, presents the committee’s key conclusions.

6. Drafting, validating and adopting the preliminary version of the audit report

The research professional drafts a preliminary version of the audit report, based on the conclusions and messages for improvement delivered by the visiting committee, and validates the content of the report with the commissioner in charge and the experts of the visiting committee. The preliminary report is then submitted to a revision panel to ensure clarity and consistency of the text, and then examined and approved by the Commission.

7. Feedback on the preliminary audit report

The Commission forwards the preliminary version of the audit report to the college and invites the latter to comment on its rulings and messages for improvement, and generally provide feedback on whether the report accurately reflects the situation of the college. The college is also invited to inform the Commission of any corrective measures implemented since the visit.

8. Adopting the final audit report

The Commission then adopts the final version of the report. In some cases, the report may include the college’s follow-up demonstrating any corrective measures adopted and carried out since the visit.

The final audit report is then sent to the college, forwarded to the Minister, and made public on the Commission’s website.
9. **Follow-up to the audit**

If required, the college must submit a follow-up report to the Commission by a deadline agreed upon by the Commission and the college, demonstrating corrective measures implemented to address the recommendations delivered. The Commission evaluates the measures implemented and produces a follow-up report, which is made public in the same manner as the final report.

10. **Annual progress report**

The Commission produces an annual report assessing the audit visits. This exercise is designed to provide a critical analysis of processes and tools used by the Commission, as well as an overview of the outcomes of colleges audited. The report may incorporate views expressed by college stakeholders during visits, and is made public.

11. **Summary report on the audit cycle**

At the end of the complete audit cycle, the Commission produces a comprehensive summary report to present the outcomes for all Québec colleges. The report is to be used as a tool to adjust processes, revise expectations for the upcoming cycle, and adapt the reference document in this light. The report is also made public.
Conclusion

With the implementation of an operation for the evaluation of the effectiveness of the quality assurance systems in Québec colleges, the Commission d'évaluation de l'enseignement collégial is adopting an approach that marks a major change in its evaluation practices as well as those of Québec’s colleges. It is confident, however, that this paradigm shift will be successful, as colleges have acquired considerable expertise over the years through evaluations led by the Commission. It therefore intends to make every effort to support colleges in developing and evaluating the effectiveness of their quality assurance systems.

Systemic and cyclical, this new approach takes the form of an audit. Within the framework of the audit process, colleges are required to demonstrate the effectiveness of mechanisms that ensure quality in programs of study and in the evaluation of student achievement. Mechanisms related to strategic planning and success planning for colleges concerned with these practices will also be part of the process.

The key to the quality and success of the Commission's approach lies primarily in the dynamic nature of the institutions themselves and their ability to critically assess their practices and follow up with the implementation of appropriate measures to ensure continuous quality improvement. For colleges, this approach also means assuming a greater responsibility in evaluation. Indeed, this change in how the Commission fulfills its mission is made possible by the fact that colleges have the required expertise and leeway to establish their own quality assurance systems in line with the Commission’s vision of institutional quality management.

In college education, internal and external quality assurance are essential to ensuring the best possible educational experience for students.

In the Québec college system, internal and external quality assurance processes are essential to ensuring quality in every aspect of a college’s mandate and the best possible educational experience for students.
References

Legislation and Administrative Works


http://www2.publicationsduquebec.gouv.qc.ca/dynamicSearch/telecharge.php?type=2&file=/E_9_1/E9_1_A.html

http://www2.publicationsduquebec.gouv.qc.ca/dynamicSearch/telecharge.php?type=2&file=/A_6_01/A6_01_A.html

Québec. *College Education Regulations: RRQ, c C-29, r.4*. Québec: Éditeur officiel du Québec.  


Publications by the Commission

Main Quality Assurance Reference Works Consulted by the Commission


http://www.qualityresearchinternational.com/glossary


Websites of Quality Assurance Organizations and Associations Whose Practices Were Studied by the Commission

Haut Conseil de l’évaluation de la recherche et de l’enseignement supérieur
http://www.hceres.fr

Agence pour l’Evaluation de la Qualité de l’Enseignement Supérieur (AEQES)
http://www.aeqes.be

Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA)
http://www.chea.org

European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA)
http://www.enqa.eu

International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE)
http://www.inqaahe.org

Agence suisse d’accréditation et d’assurance qualité
http://aaq.ch/fr/

Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA)
http://www.qaa.ac.uk

Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC)
http://www.accjc.org

Ontario College Quality Assurance Service
http://www.ocqas.org

Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission (MPHEC)
http://www.cespm.ca

Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA)
http://www.teqsa.gov.au
Appendix A
Evaluation Activities Carried Out by the Commission Since 1993

On Compliance and Potential Effectiveness:
- Institutional Policy on the Evaluation of Student Achievement (IPESA) (1993–ongoing);
- Institutional Policy on Program Evaluation (IPPE) (1993–ongoing);
- Initial success plans (2000–2004);
- Strategic plans (2004–ongoing);
- Success plans (2004–ongoing);
- Integrated approach to processing college follow-ups (Approche intégrée du traitement des suivis des collèges) (2012–current)

On Programs of Study, Institutional Evaluations and Effectiveness of Policies and Plans:
- General Education component of programs of study (1996–2000);
- Institutional Evaluation (2000–2004);
- Effectiveness of strategic plans (2007–2014);
- Effectiveness of success plans (2007–2014);
### Evaluation Activities by Institution Status

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<tr>
<th>Cegeps</th>
<th>Subsidized Private Colleges</th>
<th>Licensed Private Institutions</th>
<th>Institutions Under the Authority of Another Ministry or a University</th>
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<td>No On-site Visit</td>
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<td>• Implementation of the IPPE (1997–2002)</td>
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<td>• Implementation of the IPPE and evaluation of a selected program (2010–current)</td>
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<td>• Implementation of the IPESA (2005–2012)</td>
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<td>• Evaluations of Programs:</td>
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<td>* These institutions were excluded from institutional evaluation as the focus of the Commission’s evaluation activities was limited to public and private colleges offering programs leading to a DEC.</td>
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<td>• Implementation of the IPESA (2005–2012)</td>
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* No evaluations of programs, except for the General Education component, as the Commission’s evaluation activities were focused on specific programs not offered by these colleges.
Appendix B
Legislative and Administrative Documents
(Excerpts)

An Act respecting the Commission d’évaluation de l’enseignement collégial,
RSQ, c C-32.2

CHAPTER II
MISSION AND POWERS

13. The mission of the Commission shall pertain to the college instruction provided
by general and vocational colleges and by any other public or private educational insti-
tution to which the College Education Regulations apply.

Its mission shall consist in evaluating, for each educational institution:

(1) the institution’s policy on the evaluation of learning achievement and the proced-
ures for the certification of studies, and their implementation;

(2) the institution’s policy on the evaluation of programs of studies, and their
implementation;

(3) the implementation of the programs of studies established by the Minister of
Education, Recreation and Sports, taking into account the objectives and standards
assigned to them;

(4) the objectives, standards and implementation of the programs of studies established
by the institution, taking into account the needs these programs are designed to meet.

Educational mission and strategic plan

In addition, for general and vocational colleges and private educational institutions
accredited for purposes of subsidies under the Act respecting private education (chapter
E-9.1), the Commission shall evaluate the activities related to their educational mission
as regards administrative and academic planning and management as well as instruction
and support services. Such evaluation includes an evaluation of the strategic plan estab-
lished pursuant to section 16.1 of the General and Vocational Colleges Act (chapter C-29).
1993, c. 26, s. 13; 1993, c. 51, s. 72; 1994, c. 16, s. 50; 2002, c. 50, s. 8; 2005, c. 28, s. 195.

Evaluation of programs of study

14. The Commission may also evaluate the implementation, by all or some of the educa-
tional institutions, of any program of college studies it designates.
1993, c. 26, s. 14.
15. The Commission may, in exercising its powers and duties,
(1) develop evaluation criteria and instruments and ensure their dissemination;
(2) form advisory committees and determine their powers and duties as well as their operating rules;
(3) retain the services of experts.
1993, c. 26, s. 15.

Evaluation of educational institutions

16. The Commission may carry out an evaluation each time it considers it expedient. It shall give prior notice thereof to the educational institution concerned and give it an opportunity to present its views.

Special attention

The Minister may ask the Commission to pay special attention, in carrying out its evaluation, to one or more aspects of the activities related to the educational mission of one or more educational institutions.

Methods

The Commission shall conduct its evaluation according to the method it determines.
1993, c. 26, s. 16; 2002, c. 50, s. 9.

Evaluation Report

17. The Commission shall prepare an evaluation report containing its findings and conclusions.

Recommendations to educational institutions

In its report, the Commission may recommend to the educational institution measures for improving the quality of its evaluation policies, its programs or the means by which its programs are implemented. Such measures may also concern the planning, organization and operation of the institution and the management of the activities related to the educational mission of the institution.

Recommendations to the Minister

The Commission may also make recommendations to the Minister on any matter relating to programs of studies and evaluation policies, including any governmental or ministerial policy having an impact on the management by the institution of programs of studies and evaluation. It may, in particular, recommend to the Minister that an educational institution be authorized to award the Diploma of College Studies.
1993, c. 26, s. 17; 2002, c. 50, s. 10.
Submitting the evaluation report

18. The Commission shall send a copy of its evaluation report to every educational institution concerned and to the Minister.

Releasing the evaluation report

The report shall be made public by the Commission in the manner it considers appropriate. 1993, c. 26, s. 18.

19. The Commission may generally or specially authorize any person to collect from any educational institution concerned by an evaluation the information necessary for the carrying out of its mission.

Powers

To that end, the person authorized may

(1) have access, at any reasonable time, to the facilities of the institution;
(2) examine and make copies of any relevant register or document;
(3) require any relevant information or document.

1993, c. 26, s. 19.

Public Administration Act, RSQ, c A-6.01

CHAPTER I
OBJECT AND APPLICATION

1. This Act affirms the priority given by the Administration, in developing and implementing the rules of public administration, to the quality of the services provided to the public; thus, it establishes a results-based management framework centred on transparency.

This Act reaffirms the role played by parliamentarians with respect to government action and their contribution to the improvement of the services provided to the public by enhancing the accountability of the Administration to the National Assembly. 2000, c. 8, s. 1.

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[...]
CHAPTER VIII
AMENDING PROVISIONS
GENERAL AND VOCATIONAL COLLEGES ACT
111. (Amendment integrated into c. C-29, s. 18.1).
2000, c. 8, s. 111.

General and Vocational Colleges Act, RSQ, c C-29

CHAPTER I
COLLEGES

16.1. The board of each college shall establish a strategic plan covering a period of several years, having regard to the situation prevailing at the college and the directions of the strategic plan established by the Ministère de l’Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport. The plan shall state the objectives and the measures that are to be implemented to fulfill the mission of the college. The strategic plan shall include a success plan, which is a special plan to improve student success.

Reviews and updates
The strategic plan shall be reviewed annually and updated if necessary.

Copies
The board of each college shall send a copy of its strategic plan and of any updated plan to the Minister and to the Commission d’évaluation de l’enseignement collégial, and shall make the plans public.
2002, c. 50, s. 1; 2005, c. 28, s. 195.

16.2. A document explaining the success plan shall be distributed to the students and the staff of the college. The board of the college shall see to it that the wording of the document is clear and accessible.
2002, c. 50, s. 2.

[...]

17.0.2. The academic council must give its opinion to the board on any question submitted to it by the board in matters within its jurisdiction.

Advance Submissions to Academic Council
The following must be submitted to the council before being discussed by the board:
(a) proposals for institutional policy on the evaluation of learning achievement and procedures for the certification of studies;
(b) proposals for institutional policy on the evaluation of programs of studies;
(c) proposals for programs of studies envisaged by the college;
(d) the selection of learning activities that are within the jurisdiction of the college;
(e) any draft by-law or policy relating to the rules, procedures and criteria governing
the admission and registration of students;
(f) the draft strategic plan of the college as regards matters within the jurisdiction of
the council.
1993, c. 25, s. 8; 2002, c. 50, s. 3.

[...] 

18. The Government shall establish, by regulation, the College Education Regulations.

[Organizational Framework]

The College Education Regulations shall pertain to the general organizational frame-
work of college education, in particular as regards the admission and registration of
students, programs of studies, the evaluation of learning achievement and the certifi-
cation of studies, and may determine the respective powers and duties of the Minister
and of colleges in such matters.

[Powers]

The College Education Regulations may, in particular:

(a) confer on the Minister the responsibility of establishing, within the scope of the
College Education Regulations, the programs of studies leading to the Diploma of
College Studies and the number of credits allotted to each program; the College
Education Regulations may, however, confer on colleges the responsibility of deter-
mining certain elements of these programs;

(b) authorize the Minister, with or without conditions, to recognize programs of
studies other than those he establishes within the scope of the College Education
Regulations as programs leading to the Diploma of College Studies;

(c) provide that programs of technical studies leading to an Attestation of College
Studies awarded by a college may be established by the college and, for that purpose,
determine the cases in which the Minister’s authorization is not required for the imple-
mentation of such institutional programs and the cases in which authorization may be
subject to conditions;

(d) confer on colleges the responsibility of evaluating learning achievement, subject to
what is otherwise provided in the College Education Regulations, particularly in relation
to the power of the Minister to impose uniform examinations;

(e) provide that the Minister may delegate to a college, on the conditions he deter-
mines and on the recommendation of the Commission d’évaluation de l’enseignement
collégial, all or part of his responsibility under the College Education Regulations in the
matter of certification of studies;
(f) provide that the final date after which a student may not abandon a course without a failing mark being entered in his record shall be determined by the Minister;

(g) authorize colleges, with or without conditions, to recognize equivalences or grant a student course exemptions or substitutions;

(h) provide that the Minister may determine remedial activities which may be rendered compulsory by a college.

Every draft regulation under this section shall be submitted to the Conseil supérieur de l’éducation for examination.

The Minister may establish conditions for the application of the College Education Regulations. Such conditions may include measures permitting the gradual application of the College Education Regulations.

1966-67, c. 71, s. 18; 1979, c. 24, s. 11; 1984, c. 47, s. 29; 1985, c. 30, s. 26; 1993, c. 25, s. 11.

[…]

18.0.2. The Minister may make regulations concerning:

(a) the by-laws or policies that a college must adopt, particularly with regard to the management of staff who are members of an accredited association within the meaning of the Labour Code (chapter C-27) and the procedure for awarding an external audit mandate, in addition to those that the college may be required to adopt under the College Education Regulations;

(b) the registers that a college must keep;

(c) the reports and statistics that a college must furnish to the Minister;

(d) (paragraph repealed).

1993, c. 25, s. 11; 1997, c. 87, s. 13.

18.1. The Minister may, with the authorization of the Conseil du trésor, determine, by regulation, conditions of employment for, the classification and maximum number per class of the positions held by, and the remuneration, recourses and rights of appeal of the members of the staff who are not members of a certified association within the meaning of the Labour Code (chapter C-27).

The regulations may require a college to adopt, within such time as the Minister may prescribe, a management policy for the staff described in the first paragraph in order to regulate conditions of employment which are not determined by the Minister. The regulations shall specify what matters the policy must cover and they may prescribe the modalities of consultation on the policy and of its adoption and implementation.

Regulations made under this section come into force on the date of their publication in the Gazette officielle du Québec or on any later date fixed therein.
The Conseil du trésor may limit the authorization requirement under the first paragraph to the matters it considers to be of governmental import. It may also attach conditions to its authorization.
1985, c. 30, s. 27; 1986, c. 77, s. 1; 1993, c. 25, s. 12; 2000, c. 8, s. 111.

19. Subject to this Act, the College Education Regulations and the regulations enacted pursuant to section 18.0.1, 18.0.2 or 18.1, a college may make by-laws respecting:
(a) its internal management;
(b) the appointment, functions and powers of its staff;
(c) the management of its property;
(d) the composition of the executive committee and of the academic council, the term of office of the members thereof and the extent of their powers;
(e) the special conditions for the admission, or continued enrollment in a program, of students or certain categories of students, taking into account the restrictions or conditions affecting the exercise of this power set out in the College Education Regulations, and any special conditions established by the Minister under the College Education Regulations for admission to a program;
(f) the composition, mode of appointment and term of office of the members of the committee created under section 17.1 or 17.2, and the powers and duties of this committee;
(g) the pursuit of its objects.
1966-67, c. 71, s. 19; 1979, c. 24, s. 12; 1985, c. 30, s. 28; 1993, c. 25, s. 13; 1997, c. 87, s. 14.

[...]

27.1. Not later than 1 December each year, a college must submit a report of its activities for the preceding fiscal period to the Minister. The report must set forth the results obtained in relation to the objectives fixed in the strategic plan.
1979, c. 24, s. 17; 1993, c. 25, s. 21; 1993, c. 26, s. 26; 2002, c. 50, s. 4.

An Act respecting Private education, RSQ, c E-9.1

CHAPTER III
RULES GOVERNING THE ACTIVITIES OF INSTITUTIONS
DIVISION III
COLLEGE LEVEL INSTRUCTION

44. The College Education Regulations shall apply to general or vocational instructional services at the college level dispensed by private educational institutions.

The conditions of application of the College Education Regulations are the same as those established by the Minister under section 18 of the General and Vocational Colleges Act (chapter C-29).
1992, c. 68, s. 44; 1993, c. 25, s. 27.
45. An educational institution shall dispense, for each program of pre-university or technical studies mentioned in its permit, at least those courses which, when combined, render the student eligible for admission to university-level studies or to a diploma or attestation of college studies awarded in accordance with the College Education Regulations. 1992, c. 68, s. 45; 1993, c. 25, s. 28

CHAPTER IV
EDUCATIONAL SERVICE CONTRACT

66. The educational service contract to which this chapter applies is a contract by which a private educational institution undertakes in respect of a natural person, the client, to provide educational services belonging to a category mentioned in any of paragraphs 1 to 8 of section 1, or to provide accessory services, in return for a price which the client undertakes to pay to the operator.

The price shall include the admission or enrollment fees but not the charge referred to in section 67. 1992, c. 68, s. 66.

Régime budgétaire et financier des établissements privés d’ordre collégial
(Excerpts from Schedule 039)

1. On December 17, 2002, the National Assembly assented to the Act to amend the General and Vocational Colleges Act and the Act respecting the Commission d’évaluation de l’enseignement collégial. As of July 1, 2004, pursuant to section 12 of this Act and section 16.1 of the General and Vocational Colleges Act, the board of every CEGEP shall establish a strategic plan that also includes a success plan. [translation]

2. As the General and Vocational Colleges Act is not applicable to subsidized private institutions, the latter are therefore not required to produce a strategic plan or a success plan. However, as in the past, subsidized private institutions that do submit their success plan to the Ministère and to the Commission d’évaluation de l’enseignement collégial shall continue to receive funding specifically allocated for implementation the success plan. [translation]

College Education Regulations, RRQ, C-29, r4

DIVISION V
ADMINISTRATION OF PROGRAMS

17. A college shall adopt and make public, in whatever form it considers appropriate, a description of the objectives, standards and learning activities for each program it offers.
The program description shall be distributed to students upon their admission to the program.
OC. 1006-93, s. 17.

[...]

20. A college is responsible for having each teacher draw up, in compliance with the program, an outline for each course.

The course outline shall contain the course objectives and content, the methodology, a bibliography, class participation requirements and evaluation procedures.

The outline shall be distributed to students registered in the course at the beginning of each term.
OC. 1006-93, s. 20

[...]

24. A college shall, after consulting the academic council, adopt an institutional policy on program evaluation and shall ensure its implementation.
OC. 1006-93, s. 24.

DIVISION VI

Evaluation of student achievement

25. A college shall, after consulting the academic council, adopt an institutional policy on the evaluation of student achievement and shall ensure its implementation.

The institutional policy on the evaluation of achievement shall set forth, in particular, the terms and conditions for applying sections 21 to 23, and shall provide for a process of certification and the imposition of a comprehensive examination for each program leading to a Diploma of College Studies that is offered by the college to assess the students' achievement of the set of objectives and standards determined for that program.
OC. 1006-93, s. 25.

DIVISION VII

Certification of studies

32. The Minister shall award a Diploma of College Studies to a student who, according to the recommendation of the college attended by the student:

(1) has attained the set of objectives and standards of the program of studies to which the student is admitted, has passed the comprehensive examination for that program, and has passed the uniform examinations, if any, imposed by the Minister; or
(2) has attained the set of objectives and standards of the subject areas in the components of general education set out in sections 7 to 9, has obtained at least 28 credits in the specific program components referred to in sections 10 and 11, and has passed the uniform examinations, if any, imposed by the Minister.

Despite the foregoing, in the case referred to in subparagraph 2 of the first paragraph, a Diploma of College Studies may not be awarded to a student who already holds a Diploma of College Studies or is registered in a program of studies leading to the Diploma of College Studies.

The diploma must state the name of the student, the name of the college and, if the diploma is awarded pursuant to subparagraph 1 of the first paragraph, the title of the program.

OC. 1006-93, s. 32; OC. 724-2008, s. 18.

32.1. The Minister shall award a Specialization Diploma in Technical Studies to a student who, according to the recommendation of the college attended by the student, has attained the set of objectives and standards of the program of studies to which the student is admitted.

The diploma must state the name of the student, the name of the college and the title of the program of studies.

OC. 724-2008, s. 19.

32.2. The Minister may delegate to a college, on the conditions determined by the Minister and on the recommendation of the Commission d'évaluation de l'enseignement collégial, all or part of the Minister’s responsibilities under sections 32 and 32.1 regarding the certification of studies.

OC. 724-2008, s. 19.

33. A college shall award, on the conditions it determines, an Attestation of College Studies to a student who has attained the objectives of an institutional program to which the student is admitted.

The attestation shall state the name of the student, the name of the college, the number of credits received and the title of the program.

OC. 1006-93, s. 33
Appendix C
Examples of Quality Assurance Mechanisms

The purpose of this appendix is to provide examples of quality assurance mechanisms that colleges can use to support the demonstration in their self-evaluation reports. The examples that follow are drawn from various practices observed throughout the college network. This is by no means a comprehensive list, nor does the Commission expect every college to adopt all of them.

The examples are grouped under the four components of the quality assurance system and are specifically related to the sub-criteria of the component that address the effectiveness of the mechanism. A given mechanism can be applied to more than one component.

Component 1: Quality Assurance Mechanisms for Programs of Study

Mechanisms to ensure relevance: college liaison mechanisms with the labour market and universities; follow-up surveys of graduates; student questionnaires; follow-up indicators (e.g. labour market, university admission and graduation rates, placement rates of graduates in employment related to their training, etc.); structures for the development, adoption and revision of local plans for programs of study; etc.

Mechanisms to ensure coherence: structures for the development, adaptation and revision of competency flowcharts and course matrices; policies for course frameworks; structures for the development, adoption and revision of local plans for programs of study; procedures for course outline approval; information systems on programs of study; program monitoring tools (e.g. dashboards, annual reports on the implementation of programs); etc.

Mechanisms to ensure value in teaching methods and student supervision: procedures for course outline approval; inventory of teaching methods; procedures for the evaluation of teaching; faculty performance evaluation; screening, support and follow-up measures for at-risk students; evaluation of student supervision measures; etc.
Mechanisms to ensure the alignment of human, financial and material resources with education needs: measures for evaluating and upgrading skills for faculty and other categories of staff; professional development plans for faculty and other categories of staff; policies recognizing the value of quality instruction; procurement plans for new or upgraded specialized equipment; blueprints for development (e.g. IT, physical infrastructure); etc.

Mechanisms to ensure the effectiveness of programs of study: admission policies; procedures for course outline, final course examination and comprehensive assessment approvals; follow-up indicators monitoring success rates; procedures for monitoring causes of dropping out; etc.

Mechanisms to ensure the quality of program management: structures for the development, adoption and revision of programs of study; procedures for establishing, approving and revising operating regulations for program committees and communication protocols both between faculty members and between faculty and management; structures for developing and adopting program and departmental work plans; procedures for approving and revising departmental policies and/or guidelines in evaluating student achievement; information system on programs; mechanisms for the monitoring and revision of programs; etc.

Component 2: Quality Assurance Mechanisms for the Evaluation of Student Achievement

Mechanisms to ensure a fair evaluation of student achievement: procedures for establishing, implementing and reviewing departmental rules and policies on evaluating student achievement; mechanisms for the dissemination of guidelines (e.g. course outlines, academic calendars, Intranet, etc.); policies on academic appeals and complaints; policies on recognition of prior learning; etc.

Mechanisms to ensure an equitable evaluation of student achievement: procedures for course outline, final course examination and comprehensive assessment approvals; procedures for establishing, implementing and reviewing departmental rules and policies on evaluating student achievement; policies and tools for on the recognition of prior learning, course equivalency or substitutions; procedures for reviewing student files (e.g. substitution, equivalencies); collaborative tools for faculty; etc.
Component 3: Quality Assurance Mechanisms for Strategic Planning within a Context of Results-based Management

Mechanisms to ensure the implementation of strategic planning: procedures for developing, implementing and reviewing: annual institutional priorities; plans for implementing the strategic plan; institutional, management, departmental and program work plans (e.g. work plan templates); management dashboards, etc.

Mechanisms to ensure the follow-up of strategic planning results: follow-up mechanisms that track indicators and progress measured against expected results (e.g. dashboards); annual review and, where applicable, updates; etc.

Component 4: Quality Assurance Mechanisms for Success Planning within a Context of Results-based Management

Mechanisms to ensure the implementation of success planning: procedures for developing, implementing and reviewing: annual institutional priorities; plans for implementing the success plan; institutional, management, departmental and program work plans (e.g. work plan templates); management dashboards, etc.

Mechanisms to ensure the follow-up of success planning results: follow-up mechanisms that track indicators and progress measured against expected results (e.g. dashboards, etc.); annual review and, where applicable, updates; etc.
Appendix D
Effectiveness of the Quality Assurance System: Self-Evaluation Guide

The Commission proposes a guide to help direct the colleges in their self-evaluation process and production of their report. The guide suggests a structure for the self-evaluation report by presenting the items to be addressed. The elements of description and demonstration to be included are outlined for each item and assessment questions are proposed so as to focus the critical perspective of the college according to the criteria and sub-criteria defined by the Commission.

Examples of supporting documents for demonstration purposes (appendices) are provided for each item. The Commission asks colleges to facilitate consultation of the appendices, for example by inserting hyperlinks, footnotes, and references throughout the report, thus enabling the reader to consult supporting demonstration documents during the reading process. The colleges could also produce a list of appendices for easy referencing. In such cases, the Commission invites them to pay special attention to what name they give the appendices in the electronic file. If hyperlinks are used, they must lead to documents in the electronic file provided by the college and not to documents on internet or intranet websites.

Main headings of the self-evaluation report

- Introduction
- Description of the main institutional quality assurance mechanisms
- Review and updating of the main quality assurance mechanisms
- Evaluation of the effectiveness of quality assurance mechanisms
- General conclusions on the effectiveness of the quality assurance system
- Action plan
- Appendices
Introduction

The college should first present a concise and factual overview of its operations and state of affairs during the period under observation, which should start no later than the beginning of the 2012-2013 academic year and end with the production of the report. The introduction should include:

- a general description of the college (mission, campuses, affiliated college centre(s) for technology transfer, affiliated research centre(s), other affiliated institution(s), etc.);
- the type of instruction offered (regular, continuing education, distance or e-learning, etc.);
- the evolution of its main programs and areas of study, in regular and/or continuing education);
- the evolution of the student population, in regular and/or continuing education programs;
- the evolution of college personnel, by staff category (management, faculty, professionals, support staff); and
- any other information deemed relevant by the college due to its specific characteristics.

Second, the introduction should also include the self-evaluation approach used for the audit, outlining the following:

- the main issues of the self-evaluation;
- the composition of the self-evaluation committee;
- the delegation of responsibilities;
- data collection procedures and the role of the information system;
- data analysis procedures used to critically assess the effectiveness of mechanisms;
- the process leading to conclusions and the action plan; and
- any consultations carried out.

Example of supporting document

- Self-evaluation plan
- Institutional organization chart

24. For colleges to be visited as of fall 2017 (wave G), this observation period begins after 2012-2013 so that the period does not exceed five years.
Description of the Main Quality Assurance Mechanisms

The institution could immediately choose to present the main institutional mechanisms used for the different components of its quality assurance system. This overall portrait may be helpful in presenting those mechanisms contributing to quality for a number of components of the quality assurance system. The college may also find an institutional utility in providing a systemic portrait of its mechanisms, although this is not among the Commission’s expectations for the first audit cycle.

The main mechanisms to be described are firstly those linked to a regulatory requirement in line with the mandate of the Commission d’évaluation de l’enseignement collégial, as well as other institutional mechanisms, including policies, by-laws, guidance documents adopted by the board of governors, etc. The institution demonstrates that these mechanisms were in fact implemented during the observation period, specifies the date when they were last reviewed, and lists those individuals primarily in charge of their implementation.

This presentation of the main quality assurance mechanisms and demonstration of their implementation meets the first criterion as regards mechanism effectiveness. The institution could choose instead to address this criterion on a component-by-component basis as proposed beginning on the following page.

Reviewing and Updating of the Main Quality Assurance Mechanisms

The institution could also choose to devote a section of its report to reviewing and updating the main mechanisms for the various components of its quality assurance system. The institution takes a critical look at its mechanism review and updating procedures for the purposes of quality assurance. It briefly describes how mechanisms were reviewed and updated during the observation period and assesses the impacts with respect to continuous quality improvement.

This assessment of the review and updating procedures for the main mechanisms meets criterion 3 as regards mechanism effectiveness. The institution could instead choose to address this criterion on a component-by-component basis as proposed beginning on the following page.
Evaluation of the Effectiveness of Quality Assurance Mechanisms

The evaluation of mechanism effectiveness applies to the quality assurance system under audit based on the status of the institution in question. In every case, the demonstration takes into account the quality assurance mechanisms implemented for credited education, both regular schooling and continuing education.

Component 1
Quality assurance mechanisms for programs of study

In order to demonstrate the effectiveness of the quality assurance mechanisms for programs of study, the institution addresses the three criteria and six associated sub-criteria. The institution that has already provided an overall demonstration of the implementation of the main mechanisms (criterion 1) and their updating and review (criterion 3) must, in this section, focus only on criterion 2, i.e. the ability of mechanisms to ensure continuous quality improvement of programs of study.

In every case, the demonstration takes the shape of a critical look at mechanism effectiveness, with supporting documents appended.

CRITERION 1
THE IMPLEMENTATION OF MECHANISMS

Demonstration elements

The institution briefly describes the main institutional mechanisms used for the purposes of quality assurance with regards to programs of study, for both continuing education and regular schooling. First of all, it addresses the Institutional Policy on Program Evaluation (IPPE) and demonstrates that it was in fact implemented during the observation period. The institution may choose to present other institutional mechanisms contributing to the quality of programs of study, including policies, by-laws, guidance documents adopted by the board of governors, etc. For these mechanisms, it specifies the date when they were last reviewed as well the individuals primarily in charge of their implementation.

Assessment questions

- What are the main mechanisms implemented by the college in order to ensure the quality of programs of study?
- How are these mechanisms implemented?
- Who is primarily responsible for their implementation?
Examples of supporting documents

- Institutional Policy on Program Evaluation (IPPE);
- Calendar of program evaluations carried out during the observation period; and
- Other documents depending on the institution’s choices of mechanisms, such as the management policy for programs of study, the human resources management policy (HRMP), staff evaluation programs, investment plan, etc.

**CRITERION 2**

**THE ABILITY OF MECHANISMS TO ENSURE CONTINUOUS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT OF PROGRAMS**

**Demonstration elements**

The sub-criteria allow the institution to address practices supporting the main mechanisms in order to take into account objectives relating to the quality of programs of study (their relevance; their coherence; the value of teaching methods and student supervision; the alignment of human, financial and material resources with education needs; their effectiveness; and the quality of program management). It then assesses the mechanisms’ ability to identify the strong points and those that need improvement in order to ensure program quality, as well as the implementation of these improvements with a view to the continuous improvement of programs of study. The institution bases its demonstration on documents regarding actions carried out during the observation period.

Examples of supporting documents

- Self-evaluation reports and action plans resulting from program evaluations carried out during the observation period. A sample may be constituted if there are a large number of reports. Supporting documents may also include reports of partial evaluations regarding specific criteria or continuous evaluation reports.
- Documents demonstrating the follow-up to program evaluation action plans; and
- Other documents deemed relevant to the demonstration, in particular in connection with specific sub-criteria.
Assessment questions:

**Sub-criterion 2.1**
**Do the mechanisms ensure the relevance of programs of study?**

- What mechanisms has the college implemented to ensure the relevance of programs?

  a) Do these mechanisms take into account the following aspects associated with relevance?

  - the objectives, standards and content are aligned with the needs and expectations of universities and/or the labour market;
  - the objectives, standards and content take into account student expectations; and
  - the objectives, standards and content take into account the general expectations of society.

**Sub-criterion 2.2**
**Do the mechanisms ensure coherence in programs of study?**

- What mechanisms has the college implemented to ensure the coherence of programs?

  a) Do these mechanisms take into account the following aspects associated with coherence?

  - the objectives and content clearly define competencies to be acquired and program standards establish college-level competencies;
  - the programs of study include comprehensive and varied learning activities that enable the objectives and program standards to be achieved;
  - learning activities are organized in a logical and sequential fashion to facilitate acquiring an in-depth and comprehensive understanding of program content; and
  - requirements related to each learning activity (course load, laboratory work, student work) are set clearly and realistically and these requirements are accurately represented in course outlines, as well as in the course weighting and the calculation of credits.
Sub-criterion 2.3
Do the mechanisms ensure the value of teaching methods and student supervision?

- What mechanisms has the college implemented to ensure the value of teaching methods and student supervision?

  a) Do these mechanisms take into account the following aspects associated with the value of teaching methods and student supervision?

    - teaching methods are aligned with both the program objectives and each of the learning activities, and take into account student characteristics, facilitating the achievement of these objectives in compliance with set standards;
    - guidance, support and follow-up services, as well as screening measures designed to identify at-risk students, facilitate student success; and
    - the availability of faculty is sufficient to meet the needs of students with respect to supervision.

Sub-criterion 2.4
Do the mechanisms ensure the alignment of human, financial and material resources with education needs?

- What mechanisms has the college implemented to ensure the alignment of human, financial and material resources with education needs?

  a) Do these mechanisms take into account the following aspects associated with the alignment of human, financial and material resources with education needs?

    - the number of qualified faculty is sufficient, and the respective areas of specialization diversified enough, to meet the objectives of both the programs and the learning activities;
    - the number of professional and support staff needed for the program is adequate and their qualifications are sufficient to satisfy the needs of the programs;
    - the motivation and skills of faculty and support staff are maintained and developed through clearly-defined evaluation procedures and professional development activities;
    - teaching facilities, equipment and other material resources are adequate in terms of quantity, quality and accessibility; and
    - financial resources are sufficient to ensure the proper functioning of the programs.
Sub-criterion 2.5
Do the mechanisms ensure the effectiveness of programs of study?

What mechanisms has the college implemented to ensure the effectiveness of programs of study?

a) Do these mechanisms take into account the following aspects associated with the effectiveness of programs of study?

– student recruitment, selection and integration measures are effective in admitting college candidates capable of succeeding in the programs;

– student evaluation tools and methods used in the programs of study are effective in the evaluation of students’ achievement of objectives according to the established standards;

– course success rates are satisfactory and comparable to other programs of study and other institutions;

– a satisfactory proportion of students complete the programs within a reasonable time frame, depending on their status and characteristics; and

– graduates meet the established standards for the acquisition of competencies required by the programs of study.

Sub-criterion 2.6
Do the mechanisms ensure the quality of program management?

What mechanisms has the college implemented to ensure the quality of program management?

a) Do these mechanisms take into account the following aspects associated with the quality of program management?

– the organizational structure, methods of management, and means of communication are well articulated and promote the proper functioning of the programs of study and a program-based approach;

– clearly-defined procedures, using valid qualitative and quantitative data, facilitate regular assessment of the strengths and shortcomings of the programs and of each of the learning activities;

– program descriptions are duly distributed and explained to both faculty and students; and

– the implementation of the Institutional Policy on the Evaluation of Student Achievement (IPESA) in the programs is effective.
Addressing the continuous improvement of programs of study

Taking all preceding sub-criteria into account

b) Do the mechanisms make it possible to identify strengths and areas for improvement as regards programs of study?

c) Do the mechanisms allow for the implementation of corrective measures to address areas for improvement to ensure continuous improvement as regards programs of study?

CRITERION 3
REVIEWING AND UPDATING OF MECHANISMS

Demonstration elements

The institution takes a critical look at the review and updating of the main mechanisms presented under Criterion 1. It briefly describes the review and updating processes carried out during the observation period and the adjustments made to the resulting mechanisms, where relevant, and assesses the impacts on continuous quality improvement.

Assessment questions

- Were the main mechanisms reviewed during the observation period?
- Were the main mechanisms updated during the observation period?
- Does the management of mechanisms enable the college to review and update them as required in order to ensure their effectiveness?

Examples of supporting documents

- IPPE, reviewed and updated, where relevant;
- IPPE review report, where relevant;
- Other main mechanisms, reviewed and updated, where relevant; and
- Board of governors' resolutions demonstrating the adoption of reviewed or updated mechanisms.

Conclusion of Component 1

To what extent do the mechanisms and how they are managed ensure the continuous improvement of programs of study? What actions can be taken in this regard?
Component 2
Quality assurance mechanisms for the evaluation of student achievement

In order to demonstrate the effectiveness of the quality assurance mechanisms for the evaluation of student achievement, the institution addresses the three criteria and the two associated sub-criteria. The institution that has already provided an overall demonstration of the implementation of the main mechanisms (criterion 1) and their updating and review (criterion 3) must, in this section, focus only on criterion 2, i.e. the ability of mechanisms to ensure continuous quality improvement of the evaluation of student achievement.

In every case, the demonstration takes the shape of a critical look at mechanism effectiveness, with supporting documents appended.

CRITERION 1
THE IMPLEMENTATION OF MECHANISMS

Demonstration elements

The institution briefly describes the main institutional mechanisms used for the purposes of quality assurance with regards to the evaluation of student achievement, for both continuing education and regular schooling. First of all, it addresses the IPESA and demonstrates that it was in fact implemented during the observation period. The institution may choose to present other institutional mechanisms contributing to the quality of the evaluation of student achievement, including policies, by-laws, and guidance documents adopted by the board of governors. For these mechanisms, it specifies the date when they were last reviewed as well the individuals primarily in charge of their implementation.

Assessment questions

- What are the main mechanisms implemented by the college in order to ensure the quality of the evaluation of student achievement?
- How are these mechanisms implemented?
- Who is primarily responsible for their implementation?

Examples of supporting documents

- Institutional Policy on the Evaluation of Student Achievement (IPESA); and
- Other documents depending on the mechanisms chosen by the institution, for instance the quality of language policy, the recognition of prior learning policy, etc.
CRITERION 2
THE ABILITY OF MECHANISMS TO ENSURE CONTINUOUS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT WITH REGARDS TO THE EVALUATION OF STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Demonstration elements
The sub-criteria allow the institution to address practices supporting the main mechanisms in order to take into account the objectives associated with the evaluation of student achievement (fairness and equity with respect to the evaluation of student achievement). It then assesses the mechanisms’ ability to identify the strengths and areas for improvement in order to ensure quality with regards to the evaluation of student achievement and allow for the implementation of corrective measures to the address these improvements with a view to the continuous improvement of the evaluation of student achievement. The institution bases its demonstration on documents regarding actions carried out during the observation period.

Examples of supporting documents
- Self-evaluation report produced during the observation period on implementation of the IPESA, where necessary, along with the action plan; and
- Other documents deemed relevant depending on the demonstration linked to specific sub-criteria, such as course outline analysis grids; final examinations; program comprehensive assessments (PCA); final examination frameworks and frameworks for PCA development; conflict resolution policy; framework for the development and adoption of departmental rules on the evaluation of student achievement (DPESA/DRESA), etc.

Assessment questions
Sub-criterion 2.1
Do the mechanisms ensure a fair evaluation of student achievement?
- What mechanisms has the college implemented to ensure a fair evaluation of student achievement?

a) Do these mechanisms take into account the following aspects associated with fairness?
   - students are duly informed of rules regarding the evaluation of learning;
   - the evaluation is impartial; and
   - students have the right to appeal.
Sub-criterion 2.2

Do the mechanisms ensure an equitable evaluation of student achievement?

What mechanisms has the college implemented to ensure an equitable evaluation of student achievement?

a) Do these mechanisms take into account the following aspects associated with an equitable evaluation of student achievement?
   - the evaluation allows students to individually demonstrate that they have met the program objectives as per set standards, and the comprehensive assessment allows them to demonstrate that they have mastered the program’s competencies;
   - the evaluation is based on the course content taught; and
   - the evaluation is equivalent in the case of courses taught by a team of teachers.

Addressing the continuous improvement of the evaluation of student achievement

Taking all preceding sub-criteria into account

b) Do the mechanisms make it possible to identify strengths and areas for improvement with regards to the evaluation of student achievement?

c) Do the mechanisms allow for the implementation of corrective measures to address areas for improvement to ensure continuous improvement with regards to the evaluation of student achievement?

CRITERION 3
REVIEWING AND UPDATING OF MECHANISMS

Demonstration elements

The institution takes a critical look at the review and updating of the main mechanisms presented under Criterion 1. It briefly describes the review and updating processes carried out during the observation period and the adjustments made to the resulting mechanisms, where relevant, and assesses the impacts on continuous quality improvement.

Assessment questions

- Were the main mechanisms reviewed during the observation period?
- Were the main mechanisms updated during the observation period?
- Does the management of mechanisms enable the college to review and update them as required in order to ensure their effectiveness?
Examples of supporting documents

- IPESA, reviewed and updated, where relevant;
- IPESA review report, where relevant;
- Other main mechanisms, reviewed and updated, where relevant; and
- Board of governors’ resolutions demonstrating the adoption of reviewed or updated mechanisms.

Conclusion of Component 2

To what extent do the mechanisms and how they are managed ensure the continuous improvement of the evaluation of student achievement? What actions can be taken in this regard?

Component 3

Quality assurance mechanisms for strategic planning within a context of results-based management

In order to demonstrate the effectiveness of the quality assurance mechanisms for strategic planning, the institution addresses the three criteria and the two associated sub-criteria. The institution that has already provided an overall demonstration of the implementation of the main mechanisms (criterion 1) and their updating and review (criterion 3) must, in this section, focus only on criterion 2, i.e. the ability of mechanisms to ensure continuous quality improvement of strategic planning.

In every case, the demonstration takes the shape of a critical look at mechanism effectiveness, with supporting documents appended. In the case of cégeps, this demonstration can incorporate the demonstration relating to the fourth component concerning success planning, slightly adjusted as regards the mechanisms used.

CRITERION 1

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF MECHANISM

Demonstration elements

The institution briefly describes the main institutional mechanisms used for the purposes of strategic planning for both continuing education and regular schooling. First of all, it addresses the strategic plan itself and demonstrates that it was in fact implemented during the observation period. The institution may choose to present other institutional mechanisms contributing to the quality of strategic planning, including institutional priorities, etc. For these mechanisms, it specifies the date when they were last reviewed as well the individuals primarily in charge of their implementation.
Assessment questions

- What are the main mechanisms implemented by the college in order to ensure the quality of strategic planning?
- How are these mechanisms implemented?
- Who is primarily responsible for their implementation?

Examples of supporting documents

- The strategic plan (or plans) that were in effect during the observation period; and
- Other documents depending on the mechanisms chosen by the institution, such as institutional priorities, etc.

CRITERION 2
THE ABILITY OF MECHANISMS TO ENSURE CONTINUOUS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT WITH REGARDS TO STRATEGIC PLANNING

Demonstration elements

With respect to the strategic plan, the sub-criteria allow the institution to address the implementation and results follow-up practices enabling the institutional strategic planning objectives to be taken into account. It then assesses the mechanisms’ ability to identify the strengths and areas for improvement with regards to the implementation of these mechanisms and allow for the implementation of corrective measures to the address these improvements with a view to reaching the institutional strategic planning objectives. The institution bases its demonstration on documents regarding actions carried out during the observation period.

Examples of supporting documents

- Strategic plan assessment reports (annual, mid-term, final), produced during the period of observation, where relevant;
- Annual reports of the college; and
- Other documents deemed relevant depending on demonstrations linked to specific sub-criteria, such as a procedure for the drafting of work plans; a work plan template; work plans of administrations, units, departments and/or programs; work plan assessment reports; strategic plan results follow-up assessments; supporting documents for the plan’s review or updating, etc.
Assessment questions

Sub-criterion 2.1
Do the mechanisms to ensure the implementation of strategic planning help the college reach its institutional objectives?

What mechanisms has the college implemented to help reach its institutional objectives?

a) Do these mechanisms take into account the various aspects associated with implementation?
   - the objectives of the strategic plan are addressed;
   - the means used are aligned with the strategic plan’s objectives;
   - assigned responsibilities are carried out; and
   - the calendar for the execution of the strategic plan is respected.

Sub-criterion 2.2
Do the mechanisms to ensure the follow-up of strategic planning results help the college reach its institutional objectives?

What mechanisms for results follow-up has the college used to help reach its institutional objectives?

a) Do these mechanisms take into account the following aspects associated with results?
   - the indicators demonstrate progress toward achieving the expected results; and
   - the expected results are achieved.

Addressing the continuous improvement of strategic planning

Taking all preceding sub-criteria into account

b) Do the mechanisms make it possible to identify strengths and areas for improvement as regards implementation and follow-up of the strategic plan?

c) Do the mechanisms allow for the implementation of corrective measures to address areas for improvement with a view to reaching the institutional objectives associated with strategic planning?
**CRITERION 3**

**REVIEWING AND UPDATING OF MECHANISMS**

**Demonstration elements**

The institution takes a critical look at the review and updating of the main mechanisms presented under Criterion 1. It briefly describes the review and updating processes carried out during the observation period and the adjustments made to the resulting mechanisms, where relevant, and assesses the impacts on continuous quality improvement.

**Assessment questions**

- Was the strategic plan reviewed annually and, where relevant, updated during the observation period?
- Were the other main mechanisms reviewed and updated during the observation period?
- Does the management of mechanisms enable the college to review and update them as required in order to ensure their effectiveness?

**Examples of supporting documents**

- Strategic plan, reviewed and updated, where relevant;
- Strategic plan review report, where relevant; and
- Board of governors’ resolutions demonstrating the adoption of reviewed or updated mechanisms

**Conclusion of Component 3**

To what extent do the mechanisms and how they are managed ensure the continuous improvement of strategic planning? What actions can be taken in this regard?

**Component 4**

**Quality assurance mechanisms for success planning within a context of results-based management**

In order to demonstrate the effectiveness of success-related quality assurance mechanisms, the institution addresses the three criteria and two associated sub-criteria. The institution that has already provided an overall demonstration of the implementation of the main mechanisms (criterion 1) and their updating and review (criterion 3) must, in this section, focus only on criterion 2, i.e. the ability of mechanisms to ensure continuous quality improvement of success-related planning.
In every case, the demonstration takes the shape of a critical look at mechanism effectiveness, with supporting documents appended.

**CRITERION 1**

**THE IMPLEMENTATION OF MECHANISMS**

**Demonstration elements**

The institution briefly describes the main institutional mechanisms used for the purposes of quality assurance with regards to success planning, for both continuing education and regular schooling. First of all, it addresses the success plan itself and demonstrates that it was in fact implemented during the observation period. The institution may choose to present other institutional mechanisms contributing to the quality of the success plan, including a specific action plan, etc. For these mechanisms, it specifies the date when they were last reviewed as well the individuals primarily in charge of their implementation.

**Assessment questions**

- What are the main mechanisms implemented by the college in order to ensure the quality of success-related planning?
- How are these mechanisms implemented?
- Who is primarily responsible for their implementation?

**Examples of supporting documents**

- The success plan (or plans) in effect during the observation period; and
- Other documents depending on the mechanisms chosen by the institution, such as the success-plan action plan, etc.

**CRITERION 2**

**THE ABILITY OF MECHANISMS TO ENSURE CONTINUOUS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT OF SUCCESS-RELATED PLANNING**

**Demonstration elements**

With respect to the success plan, the sub-criteria allow the institution to address the implementation and results follow-up practices enabling the institutional objectives related to success to be taken into account. It then assesses the mechanisms’ ability to identify the strengths and areas for improvement with regards to the implementation of these mechanisms and allow for the implementation of corrective measures to address improvements with a view to reaching these institutional objectives. The institution bases its demonstration on documents regarding actions carried out during the observation period.
Examples of supporting documents

- Success plan assessment reports (annual, mid-term, final), produced during the period of observation, where relevant; and

- Other documents deemed relevant depending on demonstrations linked to specific sub-criteria, such as a procedure for the drafting of work plans; a work plan template; work plans of administrations, units, departments and/or programs; work plan assessment reports; success plan results follow-up assessments; supporting documents for the plan’s review or updating, etc.

Assessment questions

Sub-criterion 2.1
Do the mechanisms to ensure the implementation of success-related planning help the college reach its institutional objectives?

- What mechanisms has the college implemented to help reach its institutional objectives related to success?

  a) Do these mechanisms take into account the following aspects associated with implementation?

     - the objectives of the success plan are addressed;
     - the means used are aligned with the success plan’s objectives;
     - assigned responsibilities are carried out; and
     - the calendar for the execution of the success plan is respected.

Sub-criterion 2.2

Do the mechanisms to ensure follow-up of success planning results help the college reach its institutional objectives?

- What follow-up mechanisms has the college implemented to help reach its institutional objectives related to success?

  a) Do these mechanisms take into account the following aspects associated with results follow-up?

     - the indicators demonstrate progress toward achieving the expected results; and
     - the expected results are achieved.
Addressing the continuous improvement of success planning
Taking all preceding sub-criteria into account

b) Do the mechanisms make it possible to identify strengths and areas for improvement as regards implementation and follow-up of the strategic plan?

c) Do the mechanisms allow for the implementation of corrective measures to address areas for improvement in view of reaching the institutional objectives associated with success planning?

**CRITERION 3**

**REVIEWING AND UPDATING OF MECHANISMS**

**Demonstration elements**
The institution takes a critical look at the review and updating of the main mechanisms presented under Criterion 1. It briefly describes the reviewing and updating processes carried out during the observation period and the adjustments made to the resulting mechanisms, where relevant, and assesses the impacts on continuous quality improvement.

**Assessment questions**
- Was the success plan reviewed annually and, where relevant, updated during the observation period?
- Were the other main mechanisms reviewed and updated during the observation period?
- Does the management of mechanisms enable the college to review and update them as required in order to ensure their effectiveness?

**Examples of supporting documents**
- The success plan, reviewed and updated, where relevant;
- Success plan review report, where relevant; and
- Board of governors’ resolutions demonstrating the adoption of reviewed or updated mechanisms.

**Conclusion of Component 4**
To what extent do the mechanisms and how they are managed ensure the continuous improvement of success-related planning? What actions can be taken in this regard?
Overall assessment of the effectiveness of the quality assurance system

Based on the demonstration associated with each component and according to the criteria, the institution reaches an overall assessment of the effectiveness of its quality assurance system.

Assessment questions

- To what degree do the quality assurance system and its implementation guarantee continuous quality improvement?
- Overall, what are the main strengths and areas for improvement in regards to mechanism effectiveness?

In addition, the Commission invites institutions to reflect on certain aspects of quality management in order to enhance their institutional quality-assurance profile. The Commission will not make any judgement on the basis of the observations provided on these questions. Its intent is to document the colleges’ situations and to note the progress made in this respect in its annual assessment reports.

Some questions to consider

- To what extent do interactions between quality assurance mechanisms promote integrated and dynamic quality management?
- Does the information system enable the collection of sufficient and relevant data to support decision making in order to ensure continuous quality improvement?
- In what way is the quality assurance system addressed in the institution’s governance and management?
- To what extent is the culture of quality integrated into the institution’s management with a view to collectively reaching and demonstrating an optimum level of quality?

Action plan

The institution records in an action plan the means that it intends to use in order to improve the effectiveness of its quality assurance system based on the observed shortcomings. The plan organizes the actions to be implemented in order of priority according to a timetable, while also specifying the shared responsibilities for their implementation for the individuals and bodies concerned.
Appendices

The institution attaches the board of governors’ resolution demonstrating the adoption of the self-evaluation report, as well as the college’s organization chart. It also includes all the documents it deems necessary in support of its demonstrations in the various sections.
Appendix E
The Visiting Committee and the Role of Experts

For each evaluation requiring an on-site visit, the Commission strikes a visiting committee to analyse the self-evaluation report submitted by the college, visit the college, and propose rulings and messages for improvement. Each committee is comprised of three external experts and two members from the Commission—a commissioner, acting as chair, and a research professional.

The experts are tasked with

- Analyzing, prior to the visit, the self-evaluation report, with tools specifically developed to this end;
- Identifying items requiring further verification and/or clarification during the visit;
- Participating in the visit;
- Assisting, following the visit, in formulating an assessment of the college’s self-evaluation results and, where applicable, the action plan for corrective measures adopted by the college; and
- Validating the preliminary report prepared by the Commission staff.

Experts are selected both for their knowledge of the college network and their experience in evaluation and quality assurance, and receive training to prepare them for carrying out their duties and responsibilities. They are duly informed of the code of conduct regarding confidentiality, impartiality and respect, to which they must conform at all times.

Due to the cyclical nature of evaluation, the Commission recruits and trains potential members for visiting committees on an ongoing basis. To promote a complementarity of opinions on the committees, the Commission recruits experts with diverse backgrounds within the college network and elsewhere. Experts from the college network include directors general, assistant directors general, academic deans, assistant academic deans, directors of continuing education, human resources directors, faculty members, college professionals and external members of college boards of governors. Experts may also be recruited from different socioeconomic groups or universities, ranging from administrators to graduate students in fields related to education.

Lastly, to ensure impartiality, the list of experts proposed for a visiting committee is submitted for approval to the administration of the college being evaluated.
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