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**POLICY ON THE DESIGN OF PROGRAMS AND COURSES**

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**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

1. PREAMBLE ..... 1

2. PRINCIPLES..... 1

3. DEFINITIONS ..... 1

4. SCOPE ..... 2

    4.1 Programs leading to a Diploma of College Studies (DCS) ..... 2

    4.2 Programs leading to an Attestation of College Studies (ACS)..... 2

5. POLICY STATEMENT..... 2

    5.1 Roles and responsibilities..... 2

    5.2 Selection of courses ..... 3

    5.3 Course design ..... 4

    5.4 Program design approval process..... 4

    5.5 Program and course documents ..... 4

6. POLICY REVIEW AND REVISION ..... 5

7. APPLICATION OF THE POLICY ..... 5

8. EFFECTIVE DATE..... 5

# Policy on the Design of Programs and Courses

## 1. PREAMBLE

The principal goal of program design is to create quality programs aligned with the aims of college education and the College's educational mission, vision and values.

Since the adoption of competency-based education at the college level, the College has developed extensive experience in designing programs that are elaborated as objectives and standards and lead either to a Diploma of College Studies (DCS; *Diplôme des études collégiales, DEC*) or an Attestation of College Studies (ACS; *Attestation des études collégiales, AEC*). This policy formalizes the College's requirements for program and course design.

## 2. PRINCIPLES

- Program and course design are fundamental components for assuring the quality of instruction delivered by the College.
- Programs of quality:
  - focus on learners as active, responsible participants in their own learning;
  - emphasize the development of both program competencies and the broader learning outcomes of the Graduate Profile;
  - enable the implementation of a program approach through which learning activities are integrated and harmonized to promote horizontal and vertical coherence in the development of students' skills, knowledge and attitudes;
  - are relevant to higher educational, societal or occupational needs.
- Program design draws upon the knowledge, expertise and joint responsibility of program faculty, pedagogical counsellors and the academic leadership, and is supported by consultations with relevant internal and external stakeholders.
- The selection and design of program courses is guided by what best helps learners achieve the desired learning outcomes.

## 3. DEFINITIONS

**Course-competency relationships, or matrix**, is a table showing where the ministerial competencies are developed in courses.

**Ministerial program document** (*devis*) defines the aims, goals, objectives (competencies) and standards (level of performance at which a competency is considered to be achieved) of a program and serves as a framework for the design of local programs. A new ministerial program document is created when new competencies and a new program number are assigned to a program.

**Program** is "an integrated set of learning activities leading to the achievement of education objectives based on set standards" (*College Education Regulations, CQLR, chapter C-29 r. 4, article 1*).

**Program design** encompasses both the development of new programs and the revision of existing ones.

#### 4. SCOPE

This policy applies to the design of credit programs that are offered by the College and lead either to a Diploma of College Studies (DCS) or an Attestation of College Studies (ACS).

Program design addresses some or all of the following components:

- Ministerial and/or program admission requirements
- Exit profile
- Comprehensive examination
- Work-study option (*Alternance travail-études, ATE*)
- Course-competency matrix
- Prerequisites and co-requisites
- Academic standing and advancement policy
- Professional conduct policy, if applicable

Except in cases where the Ministry defines the scope, the Academic Dean determines the scope of program design.

##### 4.1 Programs leading to a Diploma of College Studies (DCS)

This policy applies to the development of DCS programs that are either new to the College, or are ones already delivered by the College for which the Ministry has created a new program document.

This policy also applies to the redesign of existing programs that is initiated by either the Ministry or the Academic Dean.

In the event of a redesign of a DCS program having an affiliated ACS program, a coordinated revision process for the ACS program may be needed to ensure harmonization between the two programs.

##### 4.2 Programs leading to an Attestation of College Studies (ACS)

This policy applies to the development of ACS programs in any area of training specific to a DCS technical program that is offered in the CEGEP network, or, with the authorization of and according to the conditions determined by the Ministry, in any other area of technical studies. The development of ACS programs conforms to the *Protocole d'entente entre les cégeps sur l'élaboration et la gestion des attestations d'études collégiales (AEC)*.

This policy also applies to the redesign of existing programs that is initiated by the Academic Dean.

#### 5. POLICY STATEMENT

##### 5.1 Roles and responsibilities

###### 1. Dean of Academic Development (OAD)

The College, through the Dean of Academic Development (OAD), ensures that program design meets ministerial and College requirements. The Dean of Academic Development leads and supports program and course design.

To assist faculty from any discipline who are participating in the work of program design, the Dean of Academic Development provides information and support on key topics related to program design to members of the writing committee, program committee and other program faculty, as appropriate.

2. Program committee

The program committee analyzes the competencies to build a common understanding and vision of the program and the graduate. It delegates design of the local program to the writing committee and validates design-related decisions proposed by the writing committee. It recommends the program design document to the College's approval bodies. It also validates the course design documents submitted by disciplines to ensure pedagogical harmonisation and interdisciplinary coherence, and recommends them to the College.

3. Writing committee

For DCS programs, the writing committee consists of the faculty members who have been designated to work on program design, as well as one or more pedagogical counsellors from the Office of Academic Development. The program coordinator is an *ex officio* member of the writing committee.

For ACS programs, the writing committee consists of the faculty members who have been designated to work on program design and/or a pedagogical counsellor from Continuing Education and Community Services.

The writing committee establishes a work plan to ensure that the College's program design requirements are met, convenes such meetings as are necessary to accomplish the work plan, produces a program design document according to the format established by the Dean of Academic Development and presents the program design document to the College's approval bodies up to and including the Board of Governors, as necessary.

4. Discipline

The discipline prepares course design documents and submits them to the program committee for validation.

5. Program dean

The program dean assists the process of program design.

6. Dean of Academic Systems

The Dean of Academic Systems manages the financial resources available for program and course design, and ensures that program design meets the ministerial requirements for graduation.

## 5.2 Selection of courses

1. The selection of the specific education courses in program design depends on their relevance to the competencies to be developed and their alignment with the goals of the program and the program's exit profile.

2. The selection of disciplines in program design, other than those specified by the Ministry for general education and pre-university programs, follows the same criteria as set out in article 5.2.1.

The process for selecting program disciplines is open and transparent. Proposals from disciplines are submitted to the writing committee in a format established by the Dean of Academic Development and are assessed according to criteria established by the Academic Dean.

3. Profiles of a program may be developed to offer students thematic grids related to specific areas of interest. Profiles may be modified, added to or retired from an existing program according to criteria established by the Academic Dean.

### **5.3 Course design**

1. Course design translates the implicit course relationships presented in the program grid into an explicit strategy to develop competencies among courses in the same semester (horizontal integration) and across courses in successive terms (vertical integration).
2. Course design is undertaken by the assigned discipline and normally takes place during the first two semesters following the Senate's recommendation of the program design document to the Board of Governors. It is supported by pedagogical counsellors from the Office of Academic Development and by other College resources as necessary.
3. A course design document is created for each course in a newly designed program according to the format established by the Dean of Academic Development. A course design document describes the observable and measurable course learning outcomes that are aligned with the competencies, and their corresponding forms of assessment. It also identifies links between course learning outcomes and the program's exit profile.

### **5.4 Program design approval process**

1. Program design that affects course-competency relationships (the matrix) must be approved by the Board of Governors, after consultation with the Senate.
2. Program design that affects program components other than course-competency relationships (the matrix) must be approved by the Academic Dean, after consultation with the Senate.
3. A new program, or a revised one which has undergone changes to its course-competency matrix, does not exist for the purposes of recruitment until it has been recommended by the Senate to the Board of Governors, and does not exist for the purposes of admission until it has been approved by the Board of Governors.

### **5.5 Program and course documents**

1. Three different documents are produced to reflect different phases of program design:
  - a. A program design document is created by the College to describe the local program design after the Ministry creates a new program document. The program design document is the program reference document until such time as any of the program components listed in article 4 are changed.

- b. A revision document is created when one or more components of an existing program are changed.
  - c. The program reference document is created after the first time components of an existing program are changed. It incorporates all the program components listed in article 4 and updates them as necessary following program revision. The program reference document is accessible to all stakeholders.
2. A course design document is accessible to all stakeholders. It may be revised as necessary to meet pedagogical needs.

**6. POLICY REVIEW AND REVISION**

This policy will be reviewed annually for the first two years and every five years thereafter as part of the College's quality assurance process.

The Academic Dean is responsible for acting upon the recommendations that may arise from the review process.

**7. APPLICATION OF THE POLICY**

The Academic Dean is responsible for the application of this policy.

In the case of disagreements arising from program design, the Academic Dean will arbitrate the dispute and make a final decision.

**8. EFFECTIVE DATE**

This policy will come into effect on the date it is approved by the Academic Dean.

This policy supersedes all previous policies relating to the design, development or revision of programs.