

Questions and answers on the college R score

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INTRODUCTION

This document provides answers to the main questions that people might have concerning the collegial CRC score, also called the R Score.

For a detailed description of the two main components of the R score, namely the Z score and the indicator of the strength of the group (ISG), please consult the document: *The R Score: what it is and what it does*. It describes, with the help of an example, how the R score is calculated and how it affects the ranking of candidates.

More general information on the R score can be found in the document: *The R Score: a survey of its purpose and use*. This document is shorter and information is expressed in non-mathematical terms. It is an abridged version of the first document and is written for a general public not familiar with the concepts inherent in the R score. These two informational documents, as well as the present document, are available on the web site of the Conference of Rectors and Principals of Québec Universities (CREPUQ) at the following address: www.crepuq.qc.ca in the section "Admission et dossier étudiant".

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1. IMPORTANCE OF THE R SCORE IN THE ADMISSIONS PROCESS

QUESTION 1

Is the R score used when selecting applicants to all university programs?

Although the R score is the preferred instrument for the analysis of all applications to university programs, it is used mainly in the context of the selection process for admission to limited enrollment programs. A limited enrollment program is one where the applications received outnumber the places available. Students who plan to apply to such programs can therefore expect that their academic performance will play an important role in the selection process.

QUESTION 2

Is the R score the only selection criterion used for admission to a limited enrollment program at a university?

No. In several limited enrollment programs, other criteria may replace or supplement the R score in the selection of students. In certain programs, candidates may, for example, be required to write a specific examination, take an entrance test, attend an interview, submit a portfolio, etc. This type of information is retained on file by CREPUQ and is available in the « Tableau comparatif des critères de sélection des candidatures évaluées sur la base du DEC aux programmes contingentés de baccalauréat ». This information is also available on the web sites of each University, as well as in their Admission Guides and University Calendars.

QUESTION 3

Must a student have a very good R score (30 or higher) in order to be admitted to a limited enrollment program at university?

No. Only extremely competitive programs (such as Medicine, Dentistry, Optometry, Speech Therapy, Audiology, Communications) generally require a very high R score. By accessing the web sites of the various universities, you can consult the minimum admissible R score for students admitted a previous year in each limited enrollment program.

QUESTION 4

Can a student who has failed courses in CÉGEP ever hope to be admitted in a university program?

Yes. As of Winter 2005 admissions, failed courses have less importance in the calculation of the average R score. Indeed, courses failed in the first semester count for only 25% of the units allocated to them while courses failed in subsequent semesters count for 50% of the units allocated to them. This measure was adopted in order to restore the confidence of students who encounter orientation problems in CÉGEP.

2. PROGRAM SPECIFIC AVERAGE R SCORE AND ADMISSIONS¹

THIS SECTION CONCERNS ONLY CANDIDATES FOR ADMISSIONS TO THE FALL 2009 SEMESTER AND TO THE FOLLOWING SEMESTERS.

QUESTION 5

Which average R score is used for university admissions in cases in which the student has enrolled in more than one academic program in CÉGEP?

As of Fall 2009 admissions, universities use the average R score of the last DEC program in which the candidate has registered, under the condition that at least 16 courses contribute to its calculation. The R scores of the courses that are considered to be relevant prerequisites to the admission to certain university programs are integrated into the average R score calculation when necessary. If the calculation of the average R score of the last registered program does not rely on at least 16 courses, then the global average R score -that is, the one that takes into account all CÉGEP grades of the student- is used for admissions purposes.

Furthermore, when the student has already completed a DEC, the university uses the highest amongst the average R score of the program that led to the DEC and the average R score of the last registered program (with the condition that at least 16 courses contribute to its calculation). If many DEC sanctions appear in the student record, then the university uses the highest amongst the average R score of the completed DEC programs and the one of the last registered program (again if it satisfies the 16 courses condition). Relevant

¹ In order to manage a large majority of admissions to their study programs, McGill University does not use the CRC average by program but rather the CRC global average, which includes all of the results obtained at the college level by a candidate. If the candidate is enrolled in more than one program at the college level and would like to know the CRC which will be retained for evaluation purposes in his dossier, he must contact Enrolment Services at McGill University.

prerequisites are added, when necessary, to the average R score used for admission purposes.²

QUESTION 6

When a student switches from one academic program to another, are the non-completed academic program grades taken into account in the analysis of the student's record?

The grades to common general courses (such as English and Philosophy) contribute to the average R score calculation of all programs and are thus taken into account in the analysis of the student's record. However, the grades obtained in the courses that are specific to the non-completed program are not considered.

QUESTION 7

Does a course contribute to the calculation of the program specific average R score in a case where the course, while being specific to a non-completed DEC program, is used by the CÉGEP as a substitute for a general complementary course of the program in which the DEC was obtained?

One must distinguish between the average R score calculation rules and those rules that allow determining whether a student has met all the conditions required to obtain his DEC. If the course serving as a substitute (the one that replaces a course of the program; i.e. the "substituted course") is directly associated with the fulfillment of an objective of the program in which the DEC was obtained (as defined in the *Système des objets d'études collégiales* (SOBEC) of the MELS), then it is included in the average R score. Otherwise, it is not included. For example, for a student making a program switch from Science to Social Sciences, the Science course 203-NYA-05 (Mechanics) could serve as a substitute for a complementary course in the Social Sciences DEC program. However, since this course does not belong to either the common general courses or to the specific courses of the Social Sciences program, then it will not be included in the calculation of the average R score of the Social Science program. In other words, only the courses directly associated to an objective of the program are considered in the R score calculation; all courses indirectly associated through the transmission by the CÉGEP of a substitution mention note in the Socrate system of the MELS are not taken into account.

² In order to facilitate the understanding of these rules, fictitious examples representing a certain number of potential cases are described in appendix B of the document *The R score: what it is, and what it does*.

QUESTION 8

Does the result to a course that a student takes in a different CÉGEP (host institution) than the CÉGEP in which he is undertaking his program (home institution) count in the program specific average R score?

If the course is associated, in the host institution, to the fulfillment of an objective of the program of the student, then it is included in the average R score, whether or not the home institution transmitted a course substitution mention in the Socrate system of the MELS. In other words, any course associated to an objective of the program of study, regardless of the CÉGEP in which it was followed, is included in the calculation of the program specific average R score.

QUESTION 9

Which R score is used for university admission if the student is registered in a combined program (Double DEC)?

The general rule consists in using the highest R score between the two component programs; to which are integrated, when necessary, the relevant prerequisite courses to the university program. For example, for a student registered in the program *200.11 – Science and Music*, the university uses the highest amongst the Science average R score and the Music average R score.

QUESTION 10

Do grades to courses considered to be necessary prerequisites to university admission always need to be added to the average R score calculation?

No. In the large majority of cases, the prerequisites are already integrated into the CÉGEP program of the student. This is the case, for example, for a CÉGEP graduate of the DEC in Science who wishes to be admitted in a Health Sciences program in university.

QUESTION 11

Is it possible that the value of the average R score of the candidate used for admission differs according to the program applied for?

Yes. Since university programs do not all require the same prerequisite courses, it is possible that the value of the average R score used in for the analysis of a candidate's record may vary according to the university program applied for. For the same reason, the value of the average R score used may vary according to the university to which a candidate submits an application.

QUESTION 12

Do failed prerequisite courses count in the program specific average R score?

Yes. However, as stated in question 4, these results are weighted in the calculation of the average R score according to the semester of study.

3. INDICATOR OF THE STRENGTH OF THE GROUP OF THE R SCORE**QUESTION 13**

What is the indicator of the strength of the group and what is its calculation based on?

The ISG is an adjustment applied to the Z score to take into consideration the strength of students who make up a group. This indicator is based on the weighted average of the final grades obtained in the compulsory courses of Secondary IV and V specific to each pedagogical regime (present and past) and followed in the Youth sector by the students making up a group at CÉGEP. The courses on which the ISG is based are given by the following list:

- Chemistry (Secondary IV of the old regime)
- Physics (Secondary IV of the old regime)
- Science (Secondary IV of the old regimes)
- Science and technology or scientific and technological applications (Secondary IV, renewed pedagogy)
- Mathematics (Secondary IV and V of all regimes)
- History of Canada and Quebec (Secondary IV of the old regimes)
- Citizenship history and education (Secondary IV, renewed pedagogy)
- Economics (Secondary V of the old regimes)
- Contemporary world (Secondary V, renewed pedagogy)
- French, instruction language (Secondary IV and V of the old regimes)
- English, second language (Secondary IV and V of all regimes)
- English, instruction language (Secondary IV and V of all regimes)
- French, second language (Secondary IV and V of all regimes)
- Primary language for attached school commissions (Crie, Kativik, Naskapi)³

QUESTION 14

Does a student need to be in a class of strong students in order to obtain a good R score?

³ In order to assure the continuity of the average over time, the following subjects are excluded from the ISG calculation: Physical education, Physical education and health, Personal development, Career choice, Moral teaching, Moral and religious teaching, Ethics and religious culture, Arts, Integrative project.

No. The R score considers the relative strength of the group each student is in. There is therefore no advantage or disadvantage to be in one group rather than another. Studies done on the entire CÉGEP population of CÉGEP students show that the combined effects of these two elements of the R score (the Z score and the ISG) compensate each other. Moreover, should students transfer to a different CÉGEP, change their program of study or the group they are in, the Z score obtained for each course is adjusted each time by the indicator of the strength of the group in which the students have been evaluated.

4. INFLUENCE OF THE CÉGEP IN THE CALCULATION OF THE R SCORE

QUESTION 15

Does a student need to attend a CÉGEP which is considered strong academically in order to get a good R score?

No. Because the R score takes into account group strength, all students start off with the same opportunity in all colleges. In fact, it is pointless to choose a CÉGEP solely for the reason that you believe it will give you a competitive advantage in admission to university. In the past, certain advantages might have existed when only the Z score was used but this is no longer true. Students should consider other factors when selecting a CÉGEP such as, for example, how well they are received, the quality of the teaching, the services to students, the proximity of the CÉGEP, etc.

QUESTION 16

Is there a CÉGEP ranking which is factored into the calculation of the R score?

No. No ranking of CÉGEPs is used when calculating the R score.

5. INFLUENCE OF SECONDARY SCHOOL GRADES IN THE CALCULATION OF THE R SCORE

QUESTION 17

Can a student who had low grades in secondary school still obtain a strong R score?

Yes. The student's average grade in secondary school is combined with that of other members of the group to form a group average that is then used in calculating the indicator of the strength of the group. A student's individual secondary school grades therefore have a relatively minor effect on the calculation of his or her R score.

6. GROUP AT EVALUATION AND CALCULATION OF THE R SCORE

QUESTION 18

What is a group at evaluation?

A group at evaluation should include the students of the same college who have taken the same course, the same year, the same semester and who have been evaluated in the same way. For example, if in a winter semester a professor teaches the same course to three groups of 40 students each and if the method of grading is the same for all, there is effectively only one evaluation group of 120 students. The average, the standard deviation and the indicator of the strength of the group are therefore calculated on this evaluation group. Each CÉGEP is responsible for the way it determines its evaluation groups.

QUESTION 19

How can two students who have taken the same course, the same year and the same semester and who received the same grade obtain different R scores when they have been evaluated according to the same method?

Even if they have been subject to a common method of grading, the students in these registration groups were not included in the same evaluation group by the CÉGEP. The R score of each student was calculated from different statistical elements (please see question 9).

QUESTION 20

If two students, who are not part of the same evaluation group, took the same course, the same year and the same semester, but one of them had a higher grade than the other, will his or her R score be higher than that of the other student?

Not necessarily, since the calculation of the R score is based on different statistical indicators (group average at evaluation, standard deviation, and indicator of the strength of the group).

7. METHOD USED TO CALCULATE THE R SCORE FOR A COURSE

QUESTION 21

How often are the statistical elements used in the determination of the R score calculated?

The statistical elements used in determining the R score are calculated by the Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport (MELS)⁴ four times a year for the last five terms:

- At the beginning of October, to include summer courses for students applying to university for the following winter term;
- In mid-January, to provide CÉGEPS with preliminary information including grades for Fall courses, for applications for admission to university for the following Fall term;
- At the beginning of February, to include the Fall term courses, with respect to admission to university for the following Fall term;
- In mid-June, to include winter term courses for finalizing Fall admission to university.

QUESTION 22

Can a student obtain an R score of 99.999 for a course even if he or she received a good grade for the course?

Yes. A value of 99.999 indicates that the R score could not be calculated. This occurs for the following kinds of courses:

- Physical education courses taken before autumn 2007, which are automatically excluded;
- Qualifying courses, which are also excluded;
- A course where there were fewer than six grades greater than or equal to 50;
- A course in which all students received the same grade.

QUESTION 23

Why was the R score not calculated, when there were more than six students in a class?

Before an R score can be calculated a group must contain a minimum number of students who have grades greater than or equal to 50. If this number is less than six, then there will be no R score calculation for any student in this group.

⁴ The R scores of the Collèges Marie de France and Stanislas, who offer the French rather than the Quebec academic programs, are not calculated by the MELS but by the colleges themselves. You may contact them for information relative to their methodology.

QUESTION 24

Why can a student, whose grade for a course is clearly above the group average indicated on his or her CÉGEP transcript, obtain an R score which is lower than he or she expected?

The group average calculated by a CÉGEP for a course is not the same as the group average used in the calculation of the R score. The group average used for calculating the R score might be higher because all the grades of the group below 50 are excluded from the calculation of the R score. This is not the case for the group average indicated on the student's CÉGEP transcript.

8. METHOD USED TO CALCULATE THE AVERAGE R SCORE OF A STUDENT'S RECORD**QUESTION 25**

How do you account for the fact that an R score of 23 obtained for a course taken last year now shows as 22?

Each time the process of calculating R scores is redone, the five last terms are also recalculated (see question 20 on this topic). For this reason, some of the information for a group might have changed because there might have been a grade change for another student in the group or some students may have been added to or removed from the group. These types of changes can affect the subsequent calculation of the R score.

QUESTION 26

How can you account for the fact that an overall average R score has hardly changed, despite the fact that a student received higher grades in his or her final courses?

The average R score takes into account the units of each course taken. The addition of an R score for a two unit course, for example, in a student's record which includes more than 40 courses, will have little influence on the average.

9. ACCESS TO INFORMATION ABOUT THE R SCORE

QUESTION 27

Where can students obtain their R score?

According to the access to information policy adopted by the *Comité de gestion des bulletins d'études collégiales* (CGBEC) which is made up of representatives from CÉGEPS, Universities and the Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport, students wanting to know their R score must contact their CÉGEP or the university to which an official request for admission has been made. In addition, for all information of a general nature on the use of the R score in the admissions process, students must contact the university to which a request for admission was either made or will be made.