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R Score: Changes for the Fall 2017 Semester

In September 2014, the Comité de gestion des bulletins d'études collégiales (CGBEC), whose members represent Québec's universities, colleges and the Ministère de l'Éducation et de l'Enseignement supérieur (MEES), adopted a report on the college R score (*cote de rendement au collégial, CRC*). Compiled in response to a request from the Comité de liaison de l'enseignement supérieur (CLES), this report showed that calculation of the R score needed to be adjusted so that candidates applying for admission to universities would be evaluated more fairly.

The current R score formula consists of two components: the Z score and an indicator of group strength (ISG). The Z score, based on the college grade average and standard deviation, standardizes grading by professors while maintaining ranking, thereby eliminating all the initial differences between the college groups. The ISG addition adjusts the Z score by taking group strength into account: the more strong students there are in the group, the higher the Z score of each student in the group. The reverse is also true. The ISG is based on the average final grades obtained by the students in the group in Secondary 4 and 5 compulsory courses.

The CGBEC report published in September 2014 considered the fairness of the current R score formula from theoretical, experimental and empirical standpoints. A measurement is fair if it reflects the student's actual college performance, with no bias relating to the characteristics of the groups to which the students belong. However, the CGBEC analyses showed that an R score based on the college Z score corrected by a *group strength* indicator and a *group dispersion* indicator, both calculated using the secondary Z scores for the Secondary 4 and 5 ministerial examination subjects, is fairer for all the students, regardless of group characteristics.

Following the CLES meeting in June 2015, the MEES began to work on the recommendations in the CGBEC report. As a result, the initial procedure for introducing the changes was modified.

The following conventions were agreed upon to smooth the transition between the two R score calculation methods:

- The modified R score will take effect for the Fall 2017 semester (benchmark calculations in January 2018) and will apply retroactively to all courses taken during the Fall 2014 to Summer 2017 terms (nine semesters)
- Retroactive application will not reduce any course R score obtained before the modified R score was introduced.

To illustrate this procedure, here is an example of a student who began a college program in Fall 2016. In this case, the revised formula will apply retroactively to both the Fall 2016 and Summer 2017 semesters. However, the student's course R scores, based on the current calculation, will not change if they are higher than the scores obtained with the modified formula. Beginning in Fall 2017 and for all subsequent semesters, the course R scores will be calculated exclusively with the revised formula.

According to this method, the first students whose R scores are calculated with the modified formula will enter university in Fall 2018. With the revised method, some R score thresholds, i.e., the last candidate admitted to a given university program, may be higher.

With the introduction of the modified R score, the automatic R score increase for some study programs is no longer justified. Consequently, the additional 0.5 point will no longer be added to the average R score of students graduating from an International Baccalaureate program or a DCS program in Science, Letters and Arts (SLA)

Documents containing more information about the R score and the CGBEC report of September 2014 can be consulted on the BCI Web site at: <http://www.bci-qc.ca/en/students/r-score/>.