

# **Guide for the Application of CREPUQ Policy Related to the Periodic Evaluation of Current Programmes**

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## INTRODUCTION

In Quebec, the periodic evaluation of current university programmes is the responsibility of each institution. However, all universities have agreed to align their respective evaluation processes within the framework of the Conférence des recteurs et des principaux des universités du Québec (CREPUQ). In 1991, CREPUQ adopted a *Policy of Quebec Universities for the Periodic Evaluation of Current Academic Programmes*, hereinafter referred to as the **Policy**.

This policy states that :

The primary purpose of the periodic evaluation process is to improve the quality and relevance of academic programmes offered by the universities at all levels and in all academic areas, with a view to fostering their future development. (**Policy**, Article 1.1)

CREPUQ, therefore, established the Programme Evaluation Review Commission (Commission de vérification de l'évaluation des programmes, or CVEP) and gave the Commission the following mandate :

- To verify that the evaluation policy of each institution is in conformity with the **Policy** of CREPUQ;
- To verify that the practices of programme evaluation are in conformity with the evaluation policy of the institution.

Accordingly, the Commission does not have a mandate to evaluate programmes but to ensure that the evaluations conducted within each institution respect both the CREPUQ **Policy** and the institutional policy in effect.

The Commission is composed of five members<sup>1</sup> appointed by the Board of Directors of CREPUQ, for a three-year term, renewable once. The members of the Commission are respected persons who have a good understanding of the university environment and who can perform their duties without any appearance of conflict of interest. In discharging its mandate, the Commission enjoys complete autonomy. The recommendations it formulates are addressed to the institutions concerned and are not subject to the approval of any committee of CREPUQ. Its schedule of activities is established in consultation with the institutions. (Policy, Introduction)

Since its inception, the Commission has recommended to CREPUQ certain modifications in the general **Policy**. The most recent revision was approved in September 2000 and on that occasion an accompanying document to the **Policy** was developed by the Commission to clarify its application for the benefit of those responsible for periodic evaluation in the institutions.

The Commission began the second cycle of its activities in 1999 and since that time it has analyzed the policies for periodic evaluation in effect in the universities as well as the related evaluation guides; this resulted in a working document for each institution which was forwarded to the institution concerned.

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix C for the names of the members of the Commission.

In addition, the Commission has verified the application of the process in effect in a number of institutions<sup>2</sup>. This operation included, in each instance, an analysis of two or three evaluation files, sometimes grouping several programmes, a visit to the university and meetings with groups involved in the evaluation process in various capacities. The Commission will continue this procedure until it has completed the verification of the process of the periodic evaluation of the programmes of all the institutions of the Quebec university network.

As a result of this experience, the Commission has acquired a better understanding of the policies of institutions for the periodic evaluation of programmes and of the practices in effect. It has identified certain practices which seem promising for improving the quality and effectiveness of the present system and it has also noted certain problem areas which deserve special attention.

The Commission, therefore, has decided to revise its accompanying document and to prepare a Guide for applying the **Policy** of CREPUQ for the periodic evaluation of programmes.

This Guide is intended primarily for the academic authorities of the universities, the professionals who coordinate evaluation activities, those responsible for preparing documentation and reports for the evaluation process, and all those interested in the periodic evaluation of university programmes.

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<sup>2</sup> See Appendix D for a list of reports prepared by the Commission since 2001.

## 1. ISSUES RELATED TO THE PERIODIC EVALUATION OF PROGRAMMES

For a number of years, questions have been raised in many countries about the effectiveness of institutions supported by public funds, whether public or private in nature, and attempts have been made to exercise more control over their activities. In addition, there have been pressures in many places on universities to demonstrate that their programmes are of high quality and are responding to the needs of society, that they are managing public funds in a responsible manner and that their procedures for quality appraisal are transparent.

### International Trends in Evaluation

These pressures have led certain countries to establish a national agency, independent of government and universities, to verify the quality of programmes in higher education. The mandate of these agencies is generally to supervise the quality of programmes and report to the public. Examples include the Comité National d'Évaluation (France), the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (United States), and the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (England).

There is no similar body in Canada where education is the responsibility of the provinces. In Ontario there are two different evaluation organizations for undergraduate and graduate programmes : the Ontario Undergraduate Program Review Audit Committee and the Ontario Council on Graduate Studies. In the four Atlantic provinces, the evaluation of university programmes is the responsibility of one organization, the Commission on Higher Education of the Atlantic Provinces.

At the international level, the issue of the evaluation of the quality of higher education has given rise to numerous activities. For example, there are the conferences and regular meetings organized under the auspices of the International Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher education. In general, issues raised in such meetings include the accountability of universities, the transparency of their procedures, the recognition of diplomas and the transfer of credits among institutions and jurisdictions.

There seems, moreover, to be an emerging consensus on a general model for the evaluation of university programmes, to include four elements : criteria for evaluating programme quality, self-study, external evaluation and a final report. There is also a trend to stress quality standards and performance indicators (including, for example, samples of student work). In addition, great importance is being placed on the recommendations and their follow-up.

Often the same body is responsible for the evaluation of institutions, their current programmes and their proposals for new programmes. This body may also assume responsibility in some cases for accreditation.

In Quebec, the situation is somewhat different in that the evaluation of current programmes is the responsibility of the individual institutions<sup>3</sup> and certain professional programmes are submitted to an accreditation procedure under the control of an external agency.

## Periodic Evaluation of Programmes in Quebec

The *Policy of Quebec Universities for the Periodic Evaluation of Current Programmes*<sup>4</sup> states that the primary goal of periodic evaluation is to improve the quality and the relevance of university programmes as well as to assure their future development.

The model of periodic evaluation of programmes, which is established in virtue of this **Policy**, involves the participation of all the universities concerned, the Conférence des recteurs et des principaux des universités québécoises (CREPUQ) and the Programme Evaluation Review Commission (CVEP) established by CREPUQ.

This model is based on the following assumptions, which confirm the accountability of Quebec universities with regard to the quality of their programmes :

- The evaluation of the quality of programmes, undergraduate and graduate, is the responsibility of the institution offering the programme, and all programmes leading to a degree are included in this responsibility.
- Quebec universities have agreed on a common policy to guide their operations of programme evaluation as well as on a system of verification to assure consistency in their practices.
- The universities periodically evaluate their programmes with the same rigour that they exercise for the study of new programme proposals.
- Their procedures are open and transparent.
- The results of programme evaluation are public and easily accessible.
- In periodic evaluation, emphasis is clearly placed on the quality and relevance of the programme in all its aspects.
- University authorities are committed to support the periodic evaluation of programmes for which they are responsible.

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<sup>3</sup> For proposals for new programmes, their quality is evaluated by external experts according to a procedure of the Commission d'évaluation des projets de programme (CEP), also established within the framework of CREPUQ. It is the responsibility of the ministère de l'Éducation to make a decision as to appropriateness of implementation, in relation to the needs of society.

<sup>4</sup> See Appendix A.



## 2. VARIABLES IN THE EVALUATION PROCESS

The periodic evaluation of programmes may be done on the basis of individual programmes or on units of teaching and research, depending on the preference of the institution. Whatever the approach, periodic evaluation should be distinguished from the practices of continuing evaluation.

### Approach by Programme

The approach by programme emphasizes the detailed study of each programme, the quality of its content, the integration of the courses within a coherent structure, its socio-economic relevance and the expectations of the objectives of the curriculum. Moreover, this approach requires that sufficient attention be given to the assessment of human resources, notably the contribution of professors and their research activities to the enrichment of the programme.

To simplify this process, an institution may wish to proceed with the concurrent evaluation of all the programmes in the same discipline or related programmes, and group them together in one evaluation file.

### Approach by Teaching and Research Unit

The approach by teaching and research unit can make it easier to link the periodic evaluation of programmes with the organization of activities and the allocation of resources.

It is the responsibility of the institution that adopts this model to be sure that its professors, those responsible for the self-study and the external experts give sufficient attention to all the dimensions of each programme (for example, the content and organization of courses, conditions of admission, teaching methods and student life) and that they do not wander from the primary purpose of programme evaluation by focusing mainly on research activities. The use of an evaluation guide attached to the institutional policy can help avoid this problem.

### Continuing Evaluation and Periodic Evaluation

It is important to distinguish continuing evaluation of a programme from periodic evaluation.

*Continuing evaluation* refers to ongoing activities that enable a university to adjust a programme whenever there is a need, for example, by offering new options, introducing new courses or terminating others, modifying teaching and evaluation methods or generally responding to changing conditions. These changes may be comprehensive or be a response to new student needs, a reaction to budgetary constraints or a reflection of the evolution of the discipline or profession.

Generally, these changes are the result of an *ad hoc* evaluation procedure that is more or less informal. Decisions affecting a program, such as introducing new options or temporarily suspending admissions, may be taken without a great deal of consultation.

*Periodic evaluation* is a larger activity which must respect the requirements of an institutional policy, calls upon external expertise and is repeated at regular intervals according to a pre-determined calendar. In this procedure, committees are formally established and the requirements for consultation are clearly defined from the beginning. In addition, detailed documentation is prepared for those taking part in the operation. At the end of the process a final evaluation report is prepared for the institutional authorities.

Periodic evaluation is an activity of prime importance, one that takes place outside the ordinary academic activities of those responsible for the programme and the unit concerned. It must obviously take into account the results of continuing evaluation in order to understand the development of the programme, but it is much more than a summary of these continuing evaluation activities.

## Partnerships

The **Policy** of CREPUQ includes the periodic evaluation of programmes offered in partnership among institutions.

Programmes offered in collaboration among two or more institutions have become more common in recent years and are likely to increase in the future<sup>5</sup>.

There are three types of partnerships according to the way academic responsibilities are shared :

- Programmes offered **jointly**, where the responsibilities are shared among the participating institutions;
- Programmes offered **in association**, where one of the partners exercises major responsibility;
- Programmes offered **by extension**, where the initiating institution preserves complete academic responsibility.

All these arrangements are established in virtue of a protocol of agreement, which should also provide for the process of the periodic evaluation of the programme, in conformity with the **Policy** of CREPUQ.

The organizational arrangements of programmes offered in partnership among institutions are generally complex and their evaluation undoubtedly presents special challenges to the participating institutions. This is probably why the Commission has not yet had the occasion to verify a file of this type.

The Commission, however, wishes to stress certain general principles concerning the periodic evaluation of such programmes :

- In each case, there is only one programme involved, which means a single integrated self-study, one team of external experts, and the preparation of a single synthesis of the various elements of the evaluation file;

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<sup>5</sup> In a survey by CREPUQ of all universities in 2003, there were 76 degree programmes of this type, including 64 at the graduate level.

- For joint programmes, there needs to be coordination among the academic authorities of the institutions in partnership, so that the differences among their institutional policies can be reconciled, so that they can together define the set of procedures to be adopted, and so that they can choose the persons asked to contribute to each of the stages of the evaluation;
- For programmes offered in association, the policy of the leading institution applies, but the choice of persons to contribute to the implementation of different stages must involve consultation among institutions;
- For programmes offered by extension, the initiating institution assumes the responsibility for the process.

Within an institution there also exist partnerships which involve the participation of different units to offer multidisciplinary programmes. It is the responsibility of the institution to adopt, where necessary, a procedure to take into account these special situations.

### Accreditation and Periodic Evaluation

The **Policy** of CREPUQ also applies to university programmes that are submitted to an accreditation process by some external body (for example, in engineering, architecture or social work).

The Commission recognizes that these procedures are demanding and very often expensive. Since the future of a professional programme can depend on receiving accreditation, it is obvious that the units concerned and those responsible for the programme would devote all the time and energy necessary for the accreditation process. It is also normal that the universities would want to use certain relevant elements of the documentation produced in the accreditation process to build part of the file for the periodic evaluation of the programme.

This procedure can be justified to the extent that the two operations take place around the same time. It simplifies the collection and analysis of data in the basic file; it also benefits from the efficient engagement of the academic staff. One must be careful, however, to ensure that the objectives of the two procedures are not confused and that all the requirements of periodic evaluation are fulfilled.

During the process, all of the academic objectives of the programme need to be respected in all of their aspects. Moreover, even if the accreditation includes an analysis of the social relevance of the programme, its relevance within the institution and in relation to other universities needs to be examined.

While recognizing the value of accreditation procedures, the universities must not let these procedures diminish their own responsibilities to evaluate all their programmes according to their own criteria, and to examine the relationship between these programmes accredited by an external body and the distinctive mission of the institution.



### 3. EVALUATION CRITERIA AND QUALITY INDICATORS

In accordance with Article 1.3 of the CREPUQ **Policy**, the evaluation policy of each institution should specify that the periodic evaluation of programmes address, as a minimum, the following criteria :

- (1) clarity and validity of the programme's learning **objectives**;
- (2) compliance of the programme's objectives with the institution's **mission** and development plans;
- (3) appropriateness of **admission criteria** for the programme with respect to the learning objectives;
- (4) appropriateness of the programme's **structure** with respect to the learning objectives;
- (5) consistency between the content of learning activities and the **development of the discipline** or field of study;
- (6) appropriateness of **teaching, learning and assessment strategies** with respect to the programme's objectives;
- (7) appropriateness of **human resources**, including part-time faculty members and instructors, with respect to the training provided, considering especially the professorial resources required to ensure adequate supervision of students, and, in the case of graduate programmes, to constitute a critical mass of active researchers;
- (8) appropriateness of **physical and financial resources** with respect to the programme's objectives;
- (9) **relevance** of the programme under three aspects : institutional relevance (status of the programme within the institution), inter-university relevance (status of the programme within the Quebec university system), and social relevance (with respect to society's expectations and needs regarding the education provided by the programme).

The institutional policy should also provide for indicators which describe :

- the characteristics of the academic staff (degrees, where they were obtained and other relevant information of the curriculum vitae). It is important that the information about professors and part-time instructors on staff be sufficiently detailed to allow for a judgment about the competence of the academic staff and the relevance of their areas of specialization with regard to the objectives of the programme;
- the characteristics of the student body (applications and registrations, completion rates, length of study, success of graduates in further studies or professional life).

The following table presents the main elements to consider in dealing with each of the criteria described in the CREPUQ **Policy**. These elements can be applied in varying degrees to different levels of programmes (undergraduate and graduate). The Commission has noted on several occasions that the self-study process does not give sufficient attention to certain of these criteria.

<b>CRITERIA</b>	<b>ELEMENTS TO CONSIDER</b>
(1) <b>objectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledge and competencies expected in the programme of study and research</li> <li>• Appropriate performance indicators</li> </ul>
(2) <b>mission</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contribution of the programme to the mission of the institution in teaching and research</li> </ul>
(3) <b>entrance requirements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relation between admission standards and the requirements of the programme, including selection procedures for programmes of limited enrolment</li> <li>• Accessibility of the programme for disadvantaged groups</li> </ul>
(4) <b>structure</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organization of required and optional courses</li> <li>• Course sequence</li> <li>• Internships and other practical experiences part of the programme</li> <li>• Required student projects and theses</li> </ul>
(5) <b>field of study</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integration in the programme of new knowledge resulting from advances in the discipline or profession</li> <li>• Current research activities</li> <li>• Comparison with similar programmes</li> </ul>
(6) <b>teaching and evaluation strategies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appropriateness of teaching methods in relation to the objectives of the programme</li> <li>• Pedagogical approaches and innovations</li> <li>• Learning activities specific to the programme (special projects, seminars)</li> <li>• Links among the research of professors, the programme of studies and the work of the students</li> <li>• Links between the courses and the practical activities of the students</li> <li>• Methods of evaluating learning</li> <li>• Integration of information technologies in the curriculum</li> <li>• Measures to improve student life</li> </ul>

<b>CRITERIA</b>	<b>ELEMENTS TO CONSIDER</b>
<b>(7) human resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Qualifications, interests, and research activities of academic staff</li> <li>• Contributions to the enrichment of the programme</li> <li>• Teaching responsibilities of professors and part-time instructors</li> <li>• Per cent of professors who are full-time</li> <li>• Initiatives to support new professors in their responsibilities</li> <li>• Contribution of professional and support staff</li> </ul>
<b>(8) material and financial resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Library resources and facilities available</li> <li>• Equipment available to students</li> <li>• Technology available to the programme</li> <li>• Resources allotted to the programme</li> <li>• Impact of current resources on learning</li> </ul>
<b>(9) relevance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relevance of the programme in relation to other programmes of the institution</li> <li>• Relevance and distinctive characteristics of the programme in relation to other programmes offered by Quebec universities</li> <li>• Social relevance of the programme for the immediate community and for society in general, for career needs and for the intellectual community</li> </ul>



## 4. THE INSTITUTIONAL PROCESS OF PERIODIC EVALUATION

It is the responsibility of the authorities of each university to establish a procedure for the periodic evaluation of programmes reflecting the distinctive character of the institution, and to articulate this in a formal policy. The authorities should also make sure that this procedure is strictly applied in all teaching and research units.

### Institutional Policy

In accordance with Article 1.3 of the **Policy**, every institutional policy of periodic evaluation of programmes should :

- a) designate an **authority** to be in charge of its implementation;
- b) provide for the preparation of an institutional **manual** for periodic evaluation;
- c) determine the **frequency** of evaluations, which must not exceed a ten-year cycle for an institution's entire range of programmes;
- d) provide, in the case of programmes offered through the **co-operation** of several units or several institutions, that the procedures for periodic evaluation will be determined in the agreement protocols and other relevant documents;
- e) determine who will be in charge and what procedure will be followed in order to **implement** the recommendations set out in the evaluation reports, and to establish an action plan;
- f) provide for the **dissemination**, both internally and externally, of the evaluation results (strengths and weaknesses, major recommendations, etc.).

It is also important to prepare a schedule for periodic evaluation and to establish a maximum duration for completing the different stages of the process. In fact, the Commission has observed that the delays are sometimes too long and this has the effect of weakening interest and reducing the efficiency of the procedure.

In addition, the Commission believes that the university should ensure that all the members of the self-study committee, the external experts and the members of the institutional committee are well informed of their mandate and that they understand the principles and procedures set out in the institutional policy. This would contribute to the development within the institution of a culture favourable to the periodic evaluation of programmes.

## Three Evaluation Perspectives

Quebec universities vary considerably in terms of size, location, resources and institutional culture; all these factors have an impact on their procedures to implement the periodic evaluation of their programmes. Nevertheless, whatever the institution, the process of periodic evaluation should integrate three perspectives : (1) an internal perspective, which includes a self-study providing the views of professors and students involved in the programme; (2) an external perspective, which provides the views of qualified external experts who are at a distance from the programme and the institution; (3) an institutional perspective, which includes the final report prepared by a group of professors not involved in the programme being evaluated, together with academic authorities, if appropriate.

To facilitate the work of these different groups of participants, the Commission recommends that they be provided with detailed guidelines; furthermore, it believes that interaction among these groups can lead to an enrichment of the value of the process.

### Self-Study

The self-study forms the cornerstone of the process of periodic evaluation and on it the value of subsequent activities depends.

The policy of the institution should specify the purposes of self-study and provide precise guidelines about the make-up of the committee responsible for it. It should also indicate the different procedures and consultations necessary for the discharge of its mandate.

- **Participants**

Professors directly involved in the programme are essential participants. They should not only be represented on the self-study committee but must also be included in the consultations. It is their duty to provide a critical perspective on the quality and relevance of the programme offered to the students, in the light of the contribution they make to the success of the programme.

Some programmes require the contribution of a number of part-time instructors and the Commission believes it is vital to assure that the self-study report takes into account their points of view.

The Commission also considers it necessary to include recent graduates and current students in the consultations, so that they can express their views on the quality and relevance of their training, and to include current students as members of the self-study committee.

- **Preparation of the Self-Study Report**

The self-study report should describe the programme, analyze its strengths and weaknesses according to the criteria provided in the institutional policy, develop recommendations to improve the programme and present a development plan.

The self-study report should present four kinds of information:

(1) clear and relevant descriptive information on the structure and operation of the programme; (2) data on the patterns and trends in admissions, completion rates, the evolution of the teaching and support personnel, and the physical and financial resources allocated to the programme; (3) information obtained from all groups involved in the programme to determine their views on different aspects of the programme; (4) comparative data which will make it possible to situate the programme in relation to similar programmes offered elsewhere (for Quebec data, it may be helpful to refer to the work of the Commission des universités sur les programmes).

Using the results of continuing evaluation and previous periodic evaluations assures that the evolution of the programme proceeds in an orderly manner.

- **Analysis**

A rigorous analysis of the programme should be based on the elements considered in each of the evaluation criteria described in the previous section, as well as on the consultations with students, graduates, professors, employers and others interested in the programme. Whatever the method of consultation (interview, focus group or questionnaire), steps should be taken to ensure that those sampled are representative of each category and that the results are carefully analyzed.

### **External Experts**

An evaluation by outside experts is an assurance of the legitimacy and the credibility of the process of periodic evaluation; this assurance is based on their recognized competence in the field of study or discipline of the programme, and on the independence of their judgment.

- **Selection Criteria**

The choice of external experts requires that strict selection criteria be established in the institutional policy so that their choice does not lead to controversy.

Accordingly, an external expert should not be a former member of the department nor a graduate of the programme; in addition, the expert should not have professional links with those in charge of the programme being evaluated nor with professors associated with it. The Commission expects to receive relevant information in this regard (brief curriculum vitae or equivalent) at the time that the institution forwards the evaluation documents selected to assist the Commission in its inquiry.

Depending on the type of programme being evaluated, it may be appropriate to call upon an expert from outside Quebec or a specialist attached to a public or private research organization. It may also be valuable to invite a representative of the relevant professional community to take part in the process. In any case, the group of external experts should include at least one university professor.

It may be sometimes difficult to find suitable experts who meet all the selection criteria established to assure their independence, so it would be wise to begin this selection procedure at the beginning of the periodic evaluation process.

- **Mandate**

The mandate of the external experts should enable them to formulate their own opinion on the programme, based in part on the self-study report, and to make recommendations for improving the quality and relevance of the programme. The experts should accordingly receive sufficient information on which to base their judgment and situate the programme in the contexts of Quebec, Canada and the international community.

It is also essential that the external experts make a visit to the institution to obtain all the information they need from the full-time and part-time academic staff, students in the programme, administrators and anyone else whom they wish to meet in order to develop their report.

- **Report**

It is up to the university to decide if it wishes a joint report or individual reports on the part of the external experts. Depending on the circumstances, one or other approach should allow the institution to profit fully from the expertise of each person.

### **Institutional Committee**

At the third state, an institutional committee develops a synthesis of all the elements which form part of the file, including commentaries received during the course of the process.

- **Composition**

The institutional committee is formed of professors who are not involved in the programme under evaluation and it may include academic administrators. This committee represents the academic interests of the university community and its role extends beyond the interests of individual administrative units.

In the Commission's experience, creating an institutional committee that is permanent is an advantage because it allows the institution to situate the periodic evaluation of programmes more clearly in the framework of an institutional perspective. It also provides a stability that allows the members of the committee to acquire experience in the process.

In determining the composition of a permanent institutional committee, the university should provide for the withdrawal or replacement by a substitute of any member who may be in a situation of conflict of interest, or the appearance of conflict of interest, in relation to the study of an evaluation file.

- **Mandate**

In discharging its mandate, the institutional committee should : (1) provide a critical analysis of the self-study report and of the advice of the external experts, taking into account the comments made by those responsible for the programme, (2) present the strengths and weaknesses of the programme, (3) prepare a synthesis of the various elements of the evaluation file and make recommendations for action by the university authorities.

These three elements of the mandate should be made explicit in the charge which the university gives to the institutional committee.

- **Final Report**

When the institutional committee completes the task assigned to it, the Commission believes that its report will provide all the elements needed to support the decisions that may need to be taken. Furthermore, the report forms the basis for the preparation of a summary of the evaluation needed to assure the dissemination of the evaluation results for the university community and the public.

### **Decision and Follow-up**

When the process of the periodic evaluation of a programme is completed, the report is presented to a decision-making body, which decides on the recommendations of the final report and on the action plan which flows from them.

The follow-up measures illustrate in large part the seriousness with which the institution takes the implications of the periodic evaluation of its programmes. If there is no follow-up to this operation, the primary purpose of the process cannot be attained.

The Commission suggests that an annual report be presented to the bodies involved in the process to provide an update of progress made in implementing the measures adopted following the periodic evaluation of a programme.

### **Dissemination of Results**

Among other purposes, the periodic evaluation of programmes is a response to the requirements of accountability of the university to its community and to society as a whole. The publication of a summary of the evaluation permits the university to inform the public of the results of the periodic evaluation of its programmes and the measures adopted to assure the quality of the education it provides.

Each university is responsible for defining in its policy how it intends to discharge this responsibility.

The evaluation summary should in each case include the following elements :

- Title of the programme
- Administrative unit responsible
- Basic information on the programme
- Brief description of the evaluation process and timetable
- Principal conclusions and recommendations of the institutional committee
- Action plan and follow-up measures adopted.

The Commission reminds the institution that it is expected to forward to the Commission a copy of the summary of the evaluation, for information.



## CONCLUSION

As a result of a study of the documentation of each institution pertaining to the periodic evaluation of programmes, its previous experiences, and the visits it has made to a number of universities, the Commission has concluded that the policies of the universities are generally consistent with the **Policy** of CREPUQ.

The positive response to improvements suggested by the Commission in the course of its work clearly indicates that Quebec universities are concerned about addressing the requirements of accountability. In addition, the seriousness with which they implement their respective policies demonstrates the importance they place on the periodic evaluation of the quality and relevance of their programmes.





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## APPENDICES

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## **APPENDIX A POLICY OF QUEBEC UNIVERSITIES FOR THE PERIODIC EVALUATION OF CURRENT ACADEMIC PROGRAMMES, CREPUQ, SEPTEMBER 28, 2000**

### **1. The Policy**

The universities are responsible for the planning and evaluation of their teaching and learning activities. They agree, however, that for purposes of accountability and openness, any institutional policy for the periodic evaluation of current programmes, in order to be credible, must meet the following requirements.

#### **1.1 Purpose of the evaluation**

The primary purpose of the periodic evaluation process is to improve the quality and relevance of academic programmes offered by the universities at all levels and in all academic areas, with a view to fostering their further development.

The present Policy deals with all degree programmes (bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees). Provided that appropriate adjustments are made, it can be applied to certificate and diploma programmes, and to the concurrent evaluation of several related programmes. It can also be applied to the evaluation of teaching and research units (departments, schools, faculties, institutes, etc.) provided that the focus remains on the programmes.

Moreover, it is understood that the reports submitted in the context of seeking accreditation of a programme by an authority other than the university may be used as part of the periodic evaluation.

#### **1.2 Stages in the evaluation**

The institutional policy for the periodic evaluation of academic programmes must consist of three distinct stages, as follows:

- a) Self-evaluation by the faculty members and students involved in the appraised programme, based on the record compiled during the previous periodic evaluation, the follow-up on recommendations and the results of continuing evaluation.
- b) Opinion of at least two external experts who are specialists in the discipline, and, if need be, the opinion of those who are in charge of professional internships or of representatives from the socio-economic sectors concerned.
- c) Final evaluation report by an institutional committee composed of faculty members who are not involved in the programme being evaluated and, depending on the institutional policy, academic administrators.

### **1.3 Evaluation criteria**

The institutional policy for periodic evaluations must specify that the evaluation of a programme should be based, as a minimum, on the following criteria:

- a) clarity and validity of the programme's learning objectives;
- b) compliance of the programme's objectives with the institution's mission and development plans;
- c) appropriateness of admission criteria for the programme with respect to the learning objectives;
- d) appropriateness of the programme's structure with respect to learning objectives;
- e) consistency between the content of learning activities and the development of the discipline or field of study;
- f) appropriateness of teaching, learning and assessment strategies with respect to the programme's objectives;
- g) appropriateness of human resources, including part-time faculty members and instructors, with respect to the training provided, considering especially the professorial resources required to ensure adequate supervision of students, and, in the case of graduate programmes, to constitute a critical mass of active researchers;
- h) appropriateness of physical and financial resources with respect to the programme's objectives;
- i) relevance of the programme under three aspects: institutional relevance (status of the programme within the institution), inter-university relevance (status of the programme within the Quebec university system), social relevance (with respect to society's expectations and needs regarding the education provided by the programme).

The institutional policy for periodic evaluations must also provide for indicators that reflect the evolution of the academic staff (degrees obtained, universities where degrees were obtained, teaching loads, research performance, major publications, amounts of the grants received, granting organizations, etc.) as well as the evolution of the student clientele (applications and registrations, graduation rates, length of studies, etc.).

### **1.4 Evaluation procedures**

The institutional policy for periodic evaluations must:

- a) designate an authority to be in charge of its implementation;
- b) provide for the preparation of an institutional manual for periodic evaluations;

- c) determine the frequency of evaluations, which must not exceed a ten-year cycle for an institution's entire range of programmes;
- d) provide, in the case of programmes offered through the cooperation of several units or several institutions, that the procedures for periodic evaluations will be determined in the agreement protocols or other relevant documents;
- e) determine who will be in charge and what procedure will be followed in order to implement the recommendations set out in the evaluation reports, and to establish an action plan;
- f) provide for the dissemination, both internally and externally, of the evaluation results (strengths and weaknesses, major recommendations, etc.).

## **2. Information to be forwarded to the Programme Evaluation Review Commission**

In order for the Commission to carry out its mandate, it must be well informed as to the evolution of periodic evaluation policies and practices and their consequences within the universities. To this end, each institution shall forward to the Commission:

- its institutional policy, together with manuals for periodic evaluations and other tools that might be developed for its implementation; it is understood that the Commission shall be notified as soon as possible as to any update of these documents;
- copy of the text to be used for the publication of the results of completed evaluations.



## APPENDIX B VERIFICATION PROCEDURE OF THE COMMISSION

The purpose of the evaluation procedure of the Commission is to examine the degree to which the institutional policy and practices of periodic evaluation of each university correspond to the aims, stages, criteria and processes defined in the CREPUQ **Policy**. This procedure takes place in the following manner.

### 1) Establishing a Verification File

After determining its schedule of verification in consultation with the universities, the Commission invites each institution to forward to it, at an appropriate time, a list of programme evaluations completed or in process.

In discussions with the institution concerned, the Commission picks two or three programmes which have been evaluated in the previous three years, ensuring that they are sufficiently diverse.

The Commission requests the institution to forward to it the evaluation files of the programmes selected and to include its institutional policy of periodic evaluation if has been modified since the previous verification.

The evaluation files of the programmes normally include each of the following :

- The self-study report.
- The reports of the external experts and their curriculum vitae.
- In the case of professional programmes, the report prepared by an external accrediting body, if relevant.
- The report of the institutional evaluation committee.
- The reactions of the directors of the programme.
- The action plan and follow-up measures.

The Commission undertakes to respect the confidential character of all documentation so identified.

### 2) Analyzing the documentation and requesting for further information, if necessary

An analysis of the institutional policy and the evaluation files made available to the Commission enables it:

- To study the conformity of the institutional policy with the CREPUQ **Policy**.
- To verify the conformity of the practices of periodic evaluation with the policy of the institution.

- To identify areas where more information is needed and to prepare for the visit of the members to the institution.

### **3) Visiting the institution**

The visit to the institution permits the Commission :

- To complete its study of the policy in effect for the periodic evaluation of programmes.
- To further its understanding of the way the institutional process is applied to the evaluation of the programmes forming part of the files which have been submitted to the Commission.

The members of the Commission meet with some of the senior administrators of the university, those responsible for applying the policy of periodic evaluation, as well as professors and students who took part in the preparation of the evaluations submitted to the Commission. The schedule, content and duration of these meetings are flexible and determined in consultation with the institution. Normally, the visit lasts one day and takes place in an atmosphere of exchange and dialogue.

### **4) Preparing the report**

The Commission then prepares a report of its observations concerning the policy and practices of periodic evaluation of programmes in the institution concerned.

### **5) Forwarding the report to the institution for comment**

The report is sent to the institution. When it has received it, the institution may make comments it considers appropriate to submit to the Commission. Except for errors of fact brought to its attention, the Commission considers its report final.

### **6) Adding comments by the institution in an appendix, if necessary**

If the institution wishes to add some comment to the final report, this is attached as an Appendix to the published report.

### **7) Forwarding the published report to the institution concerned**

The Commission forwards a copy of the published report, in the first instance, to the institution concerned.

### **8) Disseminating the published report to interested bodies and depositing the document on the Internet site of CREPUQ**

The report is deposited with the Board of Directors and the Committee on Academic Affairs of CREPUQ, then transmitted to the ministère de l'Éducation.



The report of the Commission is subsequently made available on the Internet site of CREPUQ ([www.crepug.qc.ca](http://www.crepug.qc.ca)). Relevant information is also contained in a summary table which describes the current state of periodic evaluation in Quebec universities.

**9) Verifying the application of the Commission’s recommendations, one year after publication of its report**

One year after the publication of the Commission’s report, the university informs the Commission about the follow-up taken in the light of its recommendations and the changes that have been made in its institutional policy and practices, if warranted.



## APPENDIX C MEMBERS OF THE PROGRAMME EVALUATION REVIEW COMMISSION<sup>6</sup>

Denyse L. Dagenais, president

Claude Hamel

Norman Henchey

Vincent Lemieux

Jean-Pierre Wallot

### **Former members**

Maurice L'Abbé (1991 à 1999)

Thérèse Guoin-Décarie (1991 à 1999)

Edward J. Stansbury (1991 à 1999)

Marcel Lauzon (1991 à 1995)

Yves Martin (1991 à 1995)

Gilles Boulet (1995 à 1997)

Pierre Potvin (1995 à 2001)

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<sup>6</sup> During the period of time needed to complete the Guide.



## APPENDIX D LIST OF REPORTS PRODUCED BY THE PROGRAMME EVALUATION REVIEW COMMISSION SINCE 2001

<b>Institution</b>	<b>Appraisal reports reviewed<sup>7</sup></b>
Université de Montréal (February 2002)	Rapport d'évaluation du département de philosophie Rapport d'évaluation du département de mathématiques et statistique Rapport d'évaluation de l'École de bibliothéconomie et des sciences de l'information
Université Laval (April 2002)	Rapport d'évaluation du programme de baccalauréat en architecture Rapport d'évaluation des programmes de maîtrise et de doctorat en sciences géomatiques Rapport d'évaluation des programmes de premier, deuxième et troisième cycles en sociologie
Bishop's University (February 2003)	Appraisal report of the department of history Appraisal report of the department of physics
Concordia University (March 2003)	Appraisal report of the Mel Oppenheim School of cinema Appraisal report of the department of exercise science Appraisal report of the department of psychology
Université du Québec à Rimouski (September 2003)	Rapport d'évaluation des programmes de premier cycle en lettres Rapport d'évaluation du programme de baccalauréat en géographie Rapport d'évaluation du programme de maîtrise en océanographie
Université du Québec à Chicoutimi (December 2003)	Rapport d'évaluation du programme de baccalauréat en biologie Rapport d'évaluation du programme de baccalauréat en sciences comptables Rapport d'évaluation du programme de baccalauréat en travail social
Institut national de la recherche scientifique (January 2004)	Rapport d'évaluation des programmes de maîtrise et de doctorat en sciences de l'eau du Centre INRS-ETE (eau, terre, environnement)
Université de Sherbrooke (April 2004)	Rapport d'évaluation des programmes de la maîtrise et du doctorat en radiobiologie Rapport d'évaluation du programme de la maîtrise en gérontologie Rapport d'évaluation du programme de baccalauréat en droit

<sup>7</sup> In the case of teaching and research units, university Centres and Schools, the Commission reviews the evaluation procedures of all the programmes included in the file submitted.



## APPENDIX E SELECTED INTERNET SITES (AS OF APRIL 2004)

Baker Don, *International Trends in Quality Assessment in Higher Education*. (2003).  
<http://peqab.edu.gov.on.ca/pdf/DonPresentationToCUCC.pdf>

Comité National d'Évaluation (CNE)  
<http://www.cne-evaluation.fr/versions/francais.htm>  
 CNE. Guide de l'évaluation des universités (janvier 2001), (44 pages - format pdf)

Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA)  
<http://www.chea.org/international/index.cfm>

Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC) Post-secondary Indicators  
<http://WWW.CMEC.CA/stats/pceip/1999/pceipmac/english/pages/quicklinkse.html#2>

Creamer, Don G. and Steven M. Janosik (1999). Academic Program Approval and Review Practices in the United States and Selected Foreign Countries  
*Education Policy Analysis Archives*  
<http://epaa.asu.edu/epaa/v7n23/>

European Network for Quality Assessment (ENQA)  
<http://www.engq.net/pubs.lasso>  
*Quality Procedures in European Higher Education: An ENQA Survey*

International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAHE)  
<http://www.inqahe.nl/db/downloads/downloads.php?id=504>

Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission  
<http://www.mphec.ca/english/gual.html>

Ontario Council on Graduate Studies  
<http://www.cou.on.ca/ocgs>

Ontario Post-Secondary Education Quality Assessment Board  
<http://peqab.edu.gov.on.ca/>

Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA)  
<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/public/heguide/guide.htm>

UNESCO Quality of Higher Education: Final Report  
[http://portal.unesco.org/education/ev.php?URL\\_ID=7966&URL\\_DO=DO\\_TOPIC&URL\\_SECTION=201&reload=1057256764](http://portal.unesco.org/education/ev.php?URL_ID=7966&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201&reload=1057256764)