

INSTITUTIONAL POLICY ON THE EVALUATION OF PROGRAMS

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Institutional Policy on the Evaluation of Programs

1. PREAMBLE

To advance its academic mission, Dawson College is committed to the continuous improvement of its programs of study. Continuous improvement means that programs are evaluated on a regular basis and that the findings from the evaluations are used to improve program quality. Dawson's approach to the evaluation of programs is an incremental, three-tiered process in which programs have the opportunity to review and respond to issues and challenges as they occur and are given the support to conduct further analyses when needed.

In order to be most effective, program evaluation requires the full and active participation of faculty, students, graduates, managers, non-teaching staff and external stakeholders, and must draw upon the knowledge and expertise of the program faculty.

By regularly evaluating programs, the College also fulfills its obligation for accountability to the ministry responsible for higher education in Quebec and to its quality assurance body. This policy establishes the framework for evaluating Dawson's DEC and AEC programs and in doing so satisfies the requirements of Article 24 of the College Education Regulations (CQLR, chapter C-29, r. 4).

2. OBJECTIVES

The Institutional Policy on the Evaluation of Programs (IPEP) aims to ensure that programs are evaluated in a manner that:

1. promotes the active participation of major stakeholders;
2. draws quantitative and qualitative information from a variety of reliable sources;
3. uses an analytical approach that allows evidence-based conclusions to be reached;
4. provides useful and timely recommendations that contribute to the improvement of the program.

3. EVALUATION ETHICS; CONFIDENTIALITY AND TRANSPARENCY

Program evaluations will be carried out so as to comply with the following principles:

- 1) Confidentiality: No nominal or other identifying information about individuals that is collected through surveys, interviews, focus groups, or other means, will be disclosed in any context. All data collected will be reported in an aggregated form only and any written comments will be reported anonymously. All data collected will be kept strictly confidential by the Office of Academic Development and the Quality Assurance and Planning Office.
- 2) Transparency: Individuals who provide information through surveys or other means must be informed for what purpose the information will be used and how it will be used. The data collected must be used for that purpose and in that manner only.

4. EVALUATION CRITERIA

There are six required criteria for the evaluation of DEC and AEC programs. The specific criteria that are addressed in a given evaluation depend upon the type of evaluation being conducted.

- 4.1 Program Relevance
The evaluation of program relevance aims at determining the extent to which a program is able to meet the needs of the industry and/or university and to adequately prepare students for the workforce and/or university.
- 4.2 Program Coherence
The evaluation of program coherence aims at determining if and how a program's structure (i.e. sequencing of courses, ponderation) contributes to the development of program competencies within terms and from term to term.
- 4.3 Program Effectiveness
The evaluation of program effectiveness aims at determining a program's ability to attract, retain and graduate competent students. It also aims at determining if a program's assessment methods allow it to attest to the student's attainment of the program objectives to ministerial standards.
- 4.4 Quality of Teaching Methods and Support for Students
The evaluation of the quality of teaching methods and student support aims at determining if pedagogical activities that teachers use in their courses are contextually effective and competency- based. It also looks at the support and feedback that the program gives to students.
- 4.5 Appropriateness of Resources
The evaluation of the appropriateness of resources aims at determining whether a program has adequate human, financial and material resources for meeting program goals and objectives.
- 4.6 Quality of Program Management
The evaluation of the quality of program management aims at examining the structures that promote a program approach and the effectiveness of planning, management, evaluation and communication.

Other criteria may be added to an evaluation with the approval of the program dean or the Academic Dean.

5. INFORMATION SYSTEM AND INDICATORS

The College's information system on the performance of programs contains the following indicators:

- Course success rates in the first semester;
- Retention rates;
- English Exit Examination pass rates;
- Graduation rates;
- Graduate satisfaction;
- The acceptance rate of pre-university graduates into Quebec universities;
- The rate of employment in the field for graduates of technical programs;
- Employer feedback;
- Enrolment in the program;
- Number of applications to the program;
- Pass rates;
- Success rates of graduates in professional certification examinations.

The indicators reside in systems that are maintained by the QAPO, Academic systems and IST.

6. DEFINITIONS

6.1 Annual Review

The annual program review is a yearly examination of a program's status with respect to the six evaluation criteria listed in IPEP. The annual review is conducted and approved by the program committee. Its goal is to identify problems that need to be addressed in a timely manner and to determine if any issue requires further analysis.

6.2 In-depth Evaluation

In-depth evaluation involves the systematic collection and analysis of data on two or more evaluation criteria in order to make recommendations to improve the program. There are three types of in-depth evaluations: focused, expanded and accreditation.

Focused evaluation

A focused evaluation is an in-depth evaluation of at least two, but no more than three, evaluation criteria that have been identified in an annual review as requiring further examination and follow-up.

Expanded evaluation

An expanded evaluation is an in-depth evaluation of four or more criteria or other significant issues identified in an annual review or focused evaluation.

Accreditation

Accreditations are in-depth evaluations that are required by an external body. For the purposes of compliance with IPEP, the College may complement the accreditation with additional criteria.

7. REQUIREMENTS

7.1 Annual Review

7.1.1 Each DEC program (including profiles) and each AEC program shall perform an annual review using the six evaluation criteria. Other criteria may be added to an annual review with the approval of the program dean.

7.1.2 The data required for conducting annual reviews shall normally be submitted to programs and profiles by November 15.

7.1.3 The annual review for DEC programs (including profiles) and AEC programs shall be submitted to the program dean as part of the annual report.

- The annual review for DEC programs and profiles shall normally be submitted to the program dean by January 15.
- The annual review for AEC programs shall be submitted to the program dean by the date determined by the program dean.

7.1.4 Recommendations stemming from the annual review shall be included in the annual work plan.

7.2 In-depth Evaluation

7.2.1 Focused evaluations are requested by a program committee, the program dean

or the Academic Dean. They are undertaken when at least two, but no more than three, evaluation criteria have been identified in an annual review as requiring further examination and follow-up.

Focused evaluations are completed within two terms and supported by College resources. Focused evaluations that go beyond two terms require the approval of the Academic Dean who shall determine the appropriate course of action.

7.2.2 Expanded evaluations are requested by a program committee, by the program dean or the Academic Dean when one of the following situations arises:

- a. a program has had at least four years of poor performance on more than one indicator (see article 5) for four or more evaluation criteria;
- b. a program's performance has not improved in accordance with the parameters of the action plan or other established criteria within four years of a focused evaluation;
- c. an authorized external body requests the evaluation of a program.

Expanded evaluations are completed within four terms and supported by College resources. Expanded evaluations that go beyond four terms require the approval of the Academic Dean who shall determine the appropriate course of action.

7.2.3 An evaluation plan shall be developed for a focused or an expanded evaluation and shall contain the following components:

- a list of relevant committees with their membership;
- a statement of the purpose for the evaluation;
- a list of the criteria selected for the evaluation;
- a list of guiding questions for each selected criterion;
- data sources for each question;
- a critical path.

An evaluation report containing recommendations based on the evaluation results shall be developed for a focused or an expanded evaluation and shall contain the following components:

- a list of relevant committees with their membership;
- a description of the evaluation process;
- an analysis of the data for each selected criterion;
- conclusions based on the data analyses;
- recommendations that flow from the conclusions.

7.2.4 An action plan shall be developed that addresses the recommendations in the evaluation report.

- The program dean shall work with the program committee in the case of a DEC program, or with the program or cohort coordinator in the case of an AEC program, to develop an action plan stemming from an in-depth evaluation report.
- For a focused evaluation, the plan shall be developed within three months of the evaluation report being approved by the Academic Dean. The three-month period shall be established in accordance with faculty availability.
- For an expanded evaluation, the plan shall be developed within four

months of the evaluation report being recommended to the Board of Governors by the Senate. The four-month period shall be established in accordance with faculty availability.

8. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

8.1 Program Committee for DEC Programs

- Conducts and approves the annual reviews as part of the annual report for the programs and profiles for which it is responsible and makes recommendations on issues that require further analysis in the annual work plan.
- May recommend a focused or an expanded evaluation to the program dean.
- Provides advice to the program dean on the development of the action plan for a focused or an expanded evaluation, as appropriate.

8.2 Program Evaluation Committee (PEC) for DEC Programs

The PEC reviews the evaluation plans and the evaluation reports for focused and expanded evaluations and formulates recommendations to address issues that have been identified in the evaluation report. The PEC recommends the evaluation plan and the evaluation report to the Academic Dean.

Its membership includes the members of the program committee and the following individuals:

- Program Dean;
- Dean of Academic Development;
- A professional from Academic Development who supports evaluation;
- At least one student currently enrolled in the program;
- At least one recent graduate of the program;
- At least one representative from the workplace for a technical program;
- At least one representative from a university for a pre-university program;
- An Academic Advisor;
- Other members of the college community or external community whose input the program dean deems important for the evaluation.

The Dean of Academic Development (Chair) and the professional from Academic Development who supports evaluation are non-voting members of the program evaluation committee.

The PEC proposes to the program dean the faculty members who will serve on the writing committee to carry out the evaluation.

8.3 Program Evaluation Committee (PEC) for AEC Programs

The PEC reviews evaluation plans and the evaluation reports for focused evaluations and expanded evaluations and recommends them to the Academic Dean.

Its membership includes the following members:

- Program Dean responsible for the AEC program;
- Dean of Academic Development;
- A professional from Academic Development who supports evaluation;
- Program or cohort coordinator;
- At least one teacher from the program;

- At least one student currently enrolled in the program;
- At least one recent graduate of the program;
- At least one representative from the workplace;
- Other members of the college community or external community whose input the program dean deems important for the evaluation.

The Dean of Academic Development and the professional from Academic Development who supports evaluation are non-voting members of the program evaluation committee.

The PEC proposes to the program dean the faculty members who will serve on the writing committee to carry out the evaluation.

8.4 Program Dean

- Ensures that annual reviews are conducted for each DEC program (including profiles) and each AEC program within his or her sector.
- Approves additional evaluation criteria after discussion with the program committee for annual reviews for DEC programs or the program evaluation committee for focused or expanded evaluations.
- Reviews and approves annual reviews as part of the annual report.
- Makes requests to the Academic Dean for focused or expanded evaluations for DEC programs and profiles and AEC programs within his or her sector.
- Develops an action plan stemming from a focused or expanded evaluation report after receiving advice from the program committee.
- Oversees the implementation of the action plan.

8.5 Dean of Academic Development

- Chairs the program evaluation committees for DEC and AEC programs.
- Collaborates with the program dean and manages the process for focused and expanded evaluations.
- Ensures that appropriate human resources are assigned to support in-depth program evaluations.
- Provides support to program evaluation committees.
- Ensures that survey instruments are developed to collect relevant information for in-depth evaluations.
- Provides assistance as required for the analysis and interpretation of data collected for in-depth evaluations.
- Provides assistance as required for the drafting of the evaluation plan and the evaluation report for in-depth evaluations.
- Makes in-depth evaluation reports available to the college community.

8.6 Director of Information Systems and Technology

- Ensures that information systems that contain data for evaluation meet the needs of the various users.

8.7 Coordinator of Quality Assurance and Planning

- Provides data and other relevant information for annual reviews and in-depth program evaluations.
- Develops survey instruments to collect relevant information for annual reviews.
- Provides templates for surveys and other data gathering instruments for in-depth

evaluations.

- Provides support to programs for their annual reviews.
Works with the Dean of Academic Development and the program deans to develop, to respond to and to support data requests as appropriate.

8.8 Dean of Academic Systems

- Collaborates with the Quality Assurance and Planning Office to ensure the accuracy of enrolment and application data.

8.9 Academic Dean

- Approves evaluation plans for focused evaluations for DEC programs and profiles and AEC programs.
- Reviews evaluation plans for expanded evaluations and brings them to Senate for review.
- Approves the inclusion of additional criteria for focused or expanded evaluations for DEC programs and profiles and AEC programs.
- Approves evaluation reports for focused evaluations for DEC programs and profiles and AEC programs.
- Reviews evaluation reports for expanded evaluations and brings them to Senate for review.
- Approves action plans stemming from focused and expanded evaluations for DEC programs and profiles and AEC programs.
- Determines appropriate course of action when focused and expanded evaluations are not completed within their prescribed terms.

8.10 Senate

- Reviews and recommends to the Board of Governors evaluation plans for expanded evaluations.
- Reviews and recommends evaluation reports to the Board of Governors for expanded evaluations and for evaluation reports being submitted to an external body as appropriate.
- Receives accreditation reports.
- Recommends the adoption of this policy to the Board of Governors.

8.11 Board of Governors

- Adopts this policy.
- Reviews and adopts program evaluation reports for expanded evaluations and for evaluation reports being submitted to an external body as appropriate.
- Receives accreditation reports.

9. POLICY REVIEW AND REVISION

The implementation and effectiveness of this policy will be reviewed as part of the quality assurance process mandated by the Commission d'évaluation de l'enseignement collégial. The Academic Dean is responsible for acting upon the recommendations that may arise from this process.

The Senate recommends any revision of this policy to the Board of Governors.

The Board of Governors is responsible for approving revisions of the policy after receiving advice from the Senate.

10. APPLICATION OF THE POLICY

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

11. EFFECTIVE DATE

This policy comes into effect upon the date of its adoption by the Board of Governors.