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HERITAGE COLLEGE
POLICY #17

CONCERNING
PROGRAM EVALUATION

Preamble[1]

Heritage College is proud of its programs. It believes ongoing program improvement, based on reliable and valid evaluation data, is essential.

The present policy rests on three pillars.

1. The College is firmly committed to the principle of evaluation.
2. Individuals directly involved with program implementation are responsible for the evaluation.
3. Widespread active participation ensures accurate results and accepted recommendations.

ARTICLE 1
Purpose

The purpose of the present policy is to ensure that the programs offered by Heritage College are regularly and formally assessed, revised and modified to keep them relevant, current and exemplary of a high standard of education.

The present policy serves as a model for all program evaluation activities including those requested by external agencies.

1.1 Policy Objectives

The College has adopted a policy for the evaluation of programs that will:

- define the approach to program evaluation and outline the program evaluation process and activities, ensuring that all evaluations:
  - use rigorous methodology to ensure technically accurate information;
  - respect ethical standards that guide the dissemination of all information;
  - can be implemented within the resources available to the College;
- ensure that programs are evaluated continuously by those directly involved to:
  - promote the active participation of management, faculty, students, professionals and, when applicable,

labour market representatives and university personnel;
  - incorporate the efforts and opinions of participants to build on strengths, identify weaknesses and propose solutions;
- ensure that findings translate into concrete action plans that contribute to the improvement of the program.

ARTICLE 2
Application

The present policy pertains to all DEC and AEC programs at the College.

ARTICLE 3
Provisions

3.1 Objectives of Program Evaluation

Program evaluation ensures that each program:

- enables its students to achieve the competencies;
- prepares students to pursue further education or to enter the job market;
- is viable[2].

Program evaluation specifically addresses the following criteria[3]:

- the relevance of the program,
- the coherence of the program,
- the value of teaching methods and student supervision,
- the appropriateness of human, material and financial resources, according to educational needs,
- the effectiveness of the program,
- the quality of program management.

3.2 Approach to Program Evaluation

Program evaluation consists of an annual cycle of ongoing program evaluation activities and

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[1] See the Glossary for explanations of frequently-used terms.

[2] A program is viable when it attracts, registers and successfully graduates a sufficient number of students to render it resource-effective within the College.
[3] CEEC, *General Guide to the Evaluation of Programs of Studies*, May 1994, p. 9.

less frequent in-depth program evaluation activities.

Each program shall be evaluated continually by its program committee, which shall report its findings annually to the Academic Dean in the program committee annual report.

In Continuing Education, the program committee reports its findings to the Director of Continuing Education and the Academic Dean within six months of program completion.

The program committee reviews available data as described in article 3.3.3 and itemized in *Reference Document #P17.1, Program Evaluation Data Sources* to assess program performance on an annual basis.

The in-depth program evaluation takes place whenever necessary and at least every seven years as identified in *Reference Document #P17.2, Program Evaluation Calendar*. The in-depth program evaluation will focus on all criteria cited within the present policy. The Program Evaluation Report will be submitted to the Academic Dean.

The Academic Dean can require a DEC program to undergo an in-depth evaluation at any time. Similarly, the Academic Dean, after consultation with the Director of Continuing Education, can require a program leading to an AEC to undergo an in-depth evaluation at any time.

Such an evaluation may be deemed necessary when the ongoing program evaluation activities and data indicate:

- significant changes when compared to past years;
- that students are not achieving the competencies;
- inadequate preparation of students for further education or the job market;
- questionable viability.

Three conditions trigger an evaluation: major changes mandated by the Ministry to an existing program, or an internally-driven program revision, or the implementation of a new program.

Program evaluation activities must document the benefits and challenges resulting from the changes. This will take the form of an in-depth evaluation and will take place two years after the implementation of a new or revised pre-university DEC program, three years after the implementation of a new or revised career DEC program, or following the implementation of a new or revised AEC program.

3.2.1 Program Committee

The Program Committee oversees the cycle of program excellence: development, implementation and ongoing improvement. It also produces annual program reports.

At a minimum, the Program Committee comprises:

- department faculty; the program coordinator assumes the role of Chairperson,
- the Modern Languages coordinator or a designate,
- the English coordinator or a designate,
- the Philosophy/Humanities coordinator or a designate,
- the Physical Education coordinator or a designate,
- an Academic Advisor,
- an Education Advisor.

In Continuing Education, the Program Committee comprises, at a minimum:

- program faculty,
- an Education Advisor,
- industry representative(s).

3.2.2 Program Evaluation Committee

The Program Evaluation Committee oversees the in-depth evaluation of a program and comprises:

- the program coordinator, who assumes the role of Chairperson,

- program department teachers, as appropriate,
- an Academic Services representative,
- a student representative from each program year.

In Continuing Education, the Program Evaluation Committee comprises:

- program faculty,
- an Education Advisor,
- industry representative(s),
- the Director of Continuing Education.

3.2.3 Program Information System

The College program information system maintains the following statistics:

- data on students:
  - before college,
  - during college,
- data on teacher demographics and factors of teaching management,
- data on program management.

Annually, these data provide a snapshot of a given program; over time the data provide program trends.

3.2.4 Program Feedback Tools

Students and teachers experience program implementation at both the course and program levels. The program committee shall consider their feedback annually.

So that they can make recommendations for program improvement, teachers are encouraged to:

- invite student feedback on their courses; and
- reflect on the objectives and content of their courses in relation to the program's objectives.

Program committees are encouraged to invite feedback from graduated students and Program Advisory Committees (see

Reference Document #P17.3, Program Evaluation Outline). Program Advisory Committees may be necessary for Continuing Education programs only when industry input within their program committees is insufficient.

3.3 Process of Program Evaluation

3.3.1 Program Evaluation Outline

The program evaluation outline, (see *Reference Document #P17.3*) provides the program committee and program evaluation committee with the required program evaluation criteria.

The program committee reviews the criteria at the beginning of the academic year in an effort to prioritize their evaluation activities. Program committees are expected to address all criteria formally within five to seven years, in preparation for conducting their in-depth program evaluation.

Continuing Education programs shall strike a schedule of program evaluation activities suitable to the frequency of program implementation.

3.3.2 Participation

Program evaluation activities require the participation of those parties internal to the College, i.e., College authorities, faculty, students, non-teaching professionals, as well as those parties external to the College, i.e., graduates, representatives from universities, other colleges and industry, as appropriate.

In all program evaluation activities, from information gathering to the conclusions and recommendations, the teachers and students in the program are implicated directly and frequently.

3.3.3 Data Collection, Analysis, Interpretation

Using both objective and subjective means, data are gathered from:
- the program information system,
- the program advisory committee (PAC),
- the teachers, current students, graduates and early leavers,
- College services, such as Human Resources, Finance, and others.

The tools for doing so are identified in *Reference Document #P17.1*.

The information gathered is reviewed, analyzed and interpreted by the program committee according to the program evaluation outline (*Reference Document #P17.3*).

3.4 Results of Program Evaluation Activities

Annual program committee reports and the Program Evaluation Reports shall provide the following:

- a description of the program,
- a description of the process of evaluation,
- the findings, supported by relevant data,
- the conclusions, recommendations, decisions and planned actions, related to:
  - student success, i.e., students achieving the competencies,
  - program relevance,
  - program viability,
- appendices of questionnaires, data and other documents relevant to the evaluation.

The program committee shall submit its annual report to the Academic Dean by June 15 of each year.

In Continuing Education, the program committee shall submit its Program Evaluation Report to the Director and the Academic Dean within six months of program completion.

The program evaluation committee shall submit its Program Evaluation Report to the Academic Dean at the conclusion of the in-depth evaluation. The Academic Dean, in consultation with the Academic Senate, shall deposit the Report for the approval of the Board of Governors.

ARTICLE 4
Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 Board of Governors

The Board of Governors adopts the present policy and all revisions thereto. It also approves the Program Evaluation Reports.

4.2 Academic Senate

With respect to the adoption and revision of the present policy, in accordance with article 4.1 of *Heritage College Bylaw #4*, the Academic Senate makes recommendations to the Board of Governors which relate to matters within its jurisdiction.

4.3 Academic Dean

The Academic Dean has the duty to:

- provide annual PIS data to each program. (see *Reference Document #P17. 1*);
- provide generic tools to facilitate the work of program committees and program evaluation committees;
- draw up a calendar of in-depth program evaluations;
- sit *ex-officio* on all program evaluation committees;
- review all annual program reports;
- review all Program Evaluation Reports;
- maintain the permanent archive of all annual program reports and Program Evaluation Reports;
- recommend the adoption of the Program Evaluation Reports to both the Academic Senate and the Board of Governors.

The Academic Dean facilitates:

- the timely collection and storage of data, information and documents that will be used to establish a baseline for ongoing program

improvement initiatives and for any in-depth program evaluation;

- the development of a set of standard program data reports and program evaluation tools that meet the needs of program committees and program evaluation committees.

4.4 Director of Continuing Education

The Director of Continuing Education has the duty to:

- provide annual PIS data to each program. (see *Reference Document #P17.1*);
- review all Program Evaluation Reports;
- provide generic tools to facilitate the work of program committees and program evaluation committees;
- draw up a calendar of in-depth program evaluations for Continuing Education programs;
- sit *ex-officio* on all program evaluation committees;
- provide a summary of Program Evaluation Reports at Academic Senate.

4.5 Program Committee

The program department leads the design and manages the ongoing improvement of the program; the general education representatives participate and actively contribute, as required. As a whole, the program committee:

- schedules the annual work of the program committee;
- collects related program data for the annual program review (see *Reference Document #P17.1*);
- analyzes the data received and makes recommendations for program improvement;
- submits annual reports to the Academic Dean, for regular education; and to the Academic Dean and the Director of Continuing Education, for continuing education;
- may strike a subcommittee for the purposes of in-depth evaluation activities.

4.6 Program Evaluation Committee

The Program Evaluation Committee:

- implements an in-depth program evaluation, as required;
- submits Program Evaluation Reports to the Academic Dean, for DEC programs, and to the Academic Dean and the Director of Continuing Education, for AEC programs.

4.7 Program Advisory Committee (PAC)

The PAC is appointed to:

- assist the Board in establishing and maintaining programs relevant to the needs of the community served by the College;
- advise the College staff in interpreting the competencies of the program required by the Ministry;
- advise regarding the implementation of a curriculum to meet the competencies;
- assist in the evaluation of the program and its curriculum, bearing in mind the needs of the community, and the provincial and national educational requirements, where applicable;
- assist the College in identifying and elaborating future opportunities for career training or university admission;
- advise the College on requirements for new programs of study to meet new developments in the community;
- review enrolment patterns in the program to ensure that the principle of equal access exists for women, aboriginal people, visible minorities and persons with disabilities.

The Committee usually has ten members but may vary from six to fifteen members and comprises:

- potential employers, professions, universities and other educational institutions related to the program,
- three graduates of the program, of varying seniority,
- College staff, as non-voting members of the Committee serving as resource persons.

The term of appointment may be one, two or three years. The maximum length of membership should not exceed six years.

4.8 Departments

Each department shall encourage its teachers to:
- invite student feedback on their courses;
- reflect on the objectives and content of their courses in relation to the program's objectives;
- make recommendations for program improvement.

Program departments shall:

- request that graduating students complete the program exit survey;
- request graduates complete the alumni survey;
- analyze and report on the alumni survey findings.

General Education departments shall attend program committee meetings.

4.9 Teachers

Teachers shall:

- actively participate in program committee meetings;
- make recommendations for course and program improvement;
- attend PAC meetings.

4.10 Students

Students shall complete course evaluations and program exit surveys.

ARTICLE 5
Revision

The present policy will be reviewed at least every five (5) years, and revised when deemed necessary.

GLOSSARY

AEC: Attestation of College Studies.

CEEC: *Commission d'évaluation de l'enseignement collégial.*

DEC: Diploma of College Studies.

The Ministry: Ministry of Education, Recreation and Sports.

PIS: Program Information System.

Program: an integrated set of learning activities leading to the achievement of educational objectives based on set standard.

Program Evaluation Report: A comprehensive, written self-evaluation of an academic program, that encompasses all seven criteria put forth by the *Commission d'évaluation de l'enseignement collégial* in its publication, *General Guide to the Evaluation of Programs of Studies*.

Related Documents

This document is to be used in conjunction with:

- *Heritage College Bylaw #4 concerning Academic Senate[4].*
- *Reference Document #P17.1, Program Evaluation Data Sources[5].*
- *Reference Document #P17.2, Program Evaluation Calendar[6].*
- *Reference Document #P17.3, Program Evaluation Outline[7].*

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[4] Copies of this document are available from Academic Services.

[5] Ibid.

[6] Ibid.

[7] Ibid.