

RECOGNITION OF STUDENT INVOLVEMENT

CHAMPLAIN REGIONAL COLLEGE - LENNOXVILLE

REFEREE'S GUIDE¹

What qualifies as student involvement and who is eligible?

In order to define what is recognized as student involvement, we will first define the terms "student" and "involvement."

1. What qualifies as student involvement?

Two forms of "student involvement" may be recognized on transcripts:

1. Contributory involvement

Where students contribute significantly to one or more extracurricular activities that require them to take on responsibilities, take initiative, show leadership and enhance learning

2. Participatory involvement

Where students participate significantly in one or more extracurricular activities in the following categories: social and community involvement, entrepreneurship, science, politics, athletics/sports, educational and academic activities, or cultural and artistic activities

These two types of involvement are recognized not only for activities students carry out within the college, but also for those in which they participate in the neighbouring community or even outside Québec. Some external activities are supported by the college (e.g. a practicum outside Québec organized by college personnel), whereas others are carried out independently (e.g. volunteer

¹ author, M. de l'Éducation et M. de l'Enseignement supérieur (n.d.). Recognition of Student Involvement at the College Level. [online] [www.education.gouv.qc.ca](http://www.education.gouv.qc.ca/en/contenus-communs/enseignement-superieur/guidance-and-support-for-students/recognition-of-student-involvement-at-the-college-level/). Available at: <http://www.education.gouv.qc.ca/en/contenus-communs/enseignement-superieur/guidance-and-support-for-students/recognition-of-student-involvement-at-the-college-level/>

work at a community centre). In the latter case, it is up to each college to specify the conditions under which involvement can be recognized on the student's official transcript (e.g. someone in charge of involvement must validate the information provided by the student concerning the number of hours committed to specific activities). Colleges must provide an application form for this purpose.

One-time participation in one or more extracurricular activities (e.g. donating to a food drive, participating in a demonstration, or attending a sports game or musical production) will not be recognized. The criteria used to evaluate whether or not a student's activity is **significant** are provided in detail in Section 5 of this guide.

However, an eligible activity might include one in which the student develops personal skills that have an impact on the community (e.g. performing in a show or concert for the public).

2. Who Is Eligible?

Acknowledgement on an official transcript may apply to an individual who was a full-time student during each term he or she wishes to be recognized for student involvement². The colleges should, however, determine eligibility criteria based on their own context (e.g. for regular education or continuing education, on the main campus or at a branch) as well as on the requirements of certain projects (e.g. an international cooperation practicum done during the summer holidays).

Areas of student involvement

The tripartite committee has retained seven areas of student involvement. Practical definitions for each of these areas, which cover all activities carried out by students during their college studies, are presented below. The definitions are based on the objectives of the activities and on the type of learning acquired.

These areas have been defined so as to be mutually exclusive, but overlap may nonetheless exist. In cases that are not clear cut, for example, when students complete a multidisciplinary activity and acquire a large variety of skills, they should be allowed to decide the area in which they would like recognition. Thus, students would be able to align their academic path with their personal development.

For activities undertaken outside Québec but within Canada, the appropriate area of activity should be determined (e.g. community involvement, science) and the words "Outside Québec" should be added to the entry. For activities undertaken outside Canada, the word "International" should be added to the entry instead.

² Minutes, Septième rencontre du comité tripartite sur la reconnaissance de l'engagement étudiant, January 26, 2004.

1. Definitions

1. Social and community involvement

This area includes activities that improve the quality of life of a community, provide a type of support, assistance or solidarity, and contribute to developing citizenship. Skills such as interpersonal communication, leadership, organization and teamwork are recognized.

Examples: Implementing environmental projects (e.g. setting up a recycling system, purchasing reusable cups, encouraging double-sided printing); being an active member of a religious group (e.g. organizing assistance programs such as food drives or “meals on wheels”); participating in an international cooperation project; actively participating in a student life organization or club (e.g. student newspaper, student radio, Amnesty International).

2. Entrepreneurship

This area includes activities that put students at the heart of a business project; involve starting, managing or networking a business; and contribute to cultivating entrepreneurial spirit. Aptitudes and skills such as creativity, leadership, teamwork, autonomy and responsibility³ are recognized, as well as learning related to corporate law, finance, accounting and marketing.

Examples: Starting up a small student business; creating a mini resource centre within the CEGEP; creating and managing a major, self-funded activity; actively participating in a student entrepreneur club. The MELS already supports colleges in this area of activity through the Introduction to Entrepreneurship measure. Other measures will be added as part of the action plan for the Youth Entrepreneurship Challenge.

3. Science

This area includes scientific or technical activities that involve research, testing or communication, and that raise the level of interest and knowledge in science and technology. Learning associated with methodology, rigour, ingenuity, analysis and synthesis is recognized.

Examples: Regularly participating in science competitions (e.g. science fairs, “Science, on tourne!”), Science Azimuts”); designing and conducting a meaningful extracurricular experiment; preparing and presenting research at a science conference; actively participating in skills competitions; contributing in a major way to a research group.

4. Educational and academic activities

This area includes co-curricular activities that are an extension of the student's program of study and career path (excluding practicums and courses that are part of the curriculum) such as upgrading activities, peer learning programs, activities that complement the program of study or

³ According to the definition of the Secrétariat à la jeunesse in Youth Entrepreneurship Challenge: Three-Year Action Plan, 2004-2005-2006, p. 2.

emphasize academic achievements and that foster a culture of excellence and continuing education. Learning similar to that acquired in the student's program of study is recognized.

Examples: Regular involvement in “noncredit” upgrading activities; starting up projects that showcase academic achievements; organizing a workshop related to the program of study; volunteering as an instructor in a support centre.

5. Politics

This area includes activities that focus on two aspects: defending the rights and interests of students, young people or other social groups; and participating in national and international societal debates, as a representative or active member, in order to influence other students, college decision makers, governments, etc. Skills such as leadership, negotiation, conflict resolution, organization and interpersonal communication are recognized.

Examples: Sitting on the executive committee of a student association; being an active member of an organizing/political action/social action committee; being involved on an ongoing basis in the local chapter of a political party; organizing awareness weeks on political issues (e.g. the environment, globalization).

6. Athletics/sports

This area includes activities that go beyond merely practising a sport for recreation: they concern student athletes as well as volunteer student trainers and members of sports committees. Characteristics such as personal discipline, team spirit and perseverance are recognized.

Examples: Being part of an intercollegiate sports team or acting as a volunteer trainer; active enrollment in a sports-study program; organizing sports activities on a regular basis.

7. Arts and culture

This area includes activities that result in the public display of work, that involve creating, producing, organizing or exhibiting work in order to enrich cultural life. Learning related to singing, painting, dance, acting, sculpting, music and creative writing is recognized.

Examples: Writing and producing a musical or comedy (e.g. year-end show, talent show, Cégeps en spectacle), a play or dance performance (e.g. local troupe, intercollegiate events); publishing a collection of short stories, poetry or comic book (e.g. creative writing contests); organizing an exhibit (e.g. in the hallways of the college, at the Exposition intercollégiale d'arts plastiques); regular involvement activities related to the performing arts (e.g. lighting engineer on a “technical committee” at the college).

Evaluation criteria and minimum standards

A two-step evaluation procedure is suggested. The first step is based on four factual criteria that are objectively verifiable and are shared by all areas of involvement. The second step is based on four qualitative criteria that are more subjective and are measurable according to the areas of involvement.

1. Factual criteria and standards

1. The concept of involvement presupposes that activities take place regularly over a period of time and not on a one-time basis (e.g. the concept of involvement would not apply to an activity that takes place for only one weekend).

Significant involvement is also implied, in that it requires a certain number of hours of work. Even if this criterion has no bearing on the quality of the learning and results, it ensures a minimum standard for all recognition.

Consequently, since the recognition will appear on a student's transcript, we feel it justifiable that at least **60 hours per term** be required for students to be eligible to apply for recognition. For those activities that require the 60 hours to be spread over two terms, the hours of involvement must fall within a period of about six months.

Students may combine several activities in one area in order to accumulate 60 hours. In these cases, different sponsors may attest to the student's participation in the activities. However, an assortment of activities in different areas cannot be used to make up the 60 hours required for recognition.

Colleges are free to increase the minimum number of hours to meet their specific requirements or for specific areas of involvement.

2. The involvement must take place during college studies, that is, during a term in which the student was considered to be enrolled full-time, as defined in section 24 of the General and Vocational Colleges Act⁴. Colleges should be somewhat flexible when recognizing certain projects, especially those undertaken during summer holidays. This criterion applies only to the period in question for the application: individuals involved in a project before starting or after completing college could, for example, have their involvement recognized for the period during which they were students.
3. In order to have involvement recognized, a student must have attained or even exceeded the college's minimum academic standing requirements, as stipulated in its regulation on

⁴ Under section 24 of the General and Vocational Colleges Act, "A full-time student is a student registered for at least four courses in a program of college studies, for courses totalling at least 180 periods of instruction in such a program, or, in the cases determined by government regulation, for a lesser number of courses or for courses totalling a lesser number of periods. The status of a student shall be determined by the college, for each term, at the time the student registers for courses; the status shall be reviewed, if necessary, on the final date fixed by the Minister as the last day on which students may abandon courses without incurring a failing mark."

academic achievement.

4. Activities considered for recognition must be done on a volunteer basis, not for financial compensation or for course credits. However, recognition may be granted when a student's efforts greatly exceed the remuneration received. For example, a student who is paid 5 hours per week for a project on which he or she works 20 hours per week could have the unpaid hours recognized as student involvement.

2. Qualitative criteria

In addition to factual criteria, the study on the current situation in colleges identified four specific criteria to be used to evaluate the qualitative value of a student's involvement.

1. The extent to which the student has attained his or her **objectives**, as evidenced by an evaluation of the consequences and benefits of the activities.
2. Knowledge and **skills** acquired during the activities
3. The personal qualities, **attitudes or aptitudes** called into play during the activities.
4. The level of **responsibility** or the degree of leadership assumed during the activities.

These criteria are designed to make it easier to assess significant involvement and distinguish between what should, and should not, be recognized as student involvement. They complement the definition of student involvement given in Section 2.1 and serve as a springboard for further exploration in each area of involvement. The Evaluation Form in Appendix 3 may be used for this purpose.