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## POLICY IKAA

### Evaluation of Student Learning & Promotion – Continuing Education

According to the Ministry of Education Policy on Evaluation, the definition of the evaluation of learning is as follows:

*Evaluation is the process whereby a judgment is made on a student's learning on the basis of information gathered, analyzed and interpreted, for the purpose of making pedagogical and administrative decisions.*

#### Purpose of Evaluation

The two primary purposes of evaluation are support for learning and recognition of competencies. They both have distinct characteristics; but should be considered complementary.

##### 1. Evaluation to Support Learning

- ▶ When a learning sequence begins (cycle, course, or module), the teacher will verify what the student has learned so far in order to know where to begin.
- ▶ The teaching and learning activities are then adjusted based on the student's characteristics and potential.
- ▶ The teacher regularly informs the students about their strengths and weaknesses and suggests any needed enrichment or support measures.
- ▶ The student will use the continuous feedback to take charge of their learning.

##### 2. Evaluation to Recognize Competencies

- ▶ Toward the end of the learning sequence (cycle, course, or module), the goal of the evaluation is to report the level at which the competency has been developed.
- ▶ This evaluation refers to the competencies outlined in the program and provides the basis for decisions related to the certification of studies.
- ▶ Recognition of competencies can also be used for the purposes of recognizing prior learning.

#### Process of Evaluation

Evaluation is a complex process that is based on the teacher's judgment which must be based on guidelines to maintain the credibility of evaluation activities. The process is a series of stages whose order can vary depending on the situation.

##### 1. Planning

- ▶ The goal of the evaluation should be clearly established.
- ▶ The choice of evaluation means must correspond to the chosen goal.
- ▶ There should be flexible and rigorous planning in order to integrate the evaluation into the learning activities.
- ▶ The planning should be adapted to various situations and pedagogical methods.

##### 2. Information Gathering and Interpretation

- ▶ Information gathering and interpretation methods must be adapted to the purpose of the evaluation and its underlying goal.
- ▶ The instruments used must provide enough relevant information so that a judgment can be made as to the level at which the competencies have been developed and knowledge acquired.
- ▶ The gathered information is compared with the expected outcome. This is referred to as criterion-referenced interpretation

### 3. Judgment

- ▶ Even though it is a separate stage, judgment is a factor throughout the evaluation process.
- ▶ The teacher judges the student's progress and development of competencies. It comes into play when choosing evaluation methods and criteria.
- ▶ Judgment makes it possible to report on student learning and leads to decision making.
- ▶ Since judgment relies on analysis and synthesis of the information gathered, it must be preceded by information gathering and interpretations. Judgment is possible only if quality information on student learning is available.

### 4. Decision/Action

- ▶ Evaluation leads to decisions and actions.
- ▶ In a situation involving evaluation to support learning, judgment often consists of an informal assessment and the ensuing decision serves to regulate the teaching or learning process.
- ▶ In a situation involving evaluation to recognize competencies, decisions are more formal in nature and they can have serious consequences for student's educational plans.
- ▶ Because evaluating also means informing, the results and the decisions concerning a student must be communicated to the student, his or her parents in the case of a minor, and all school stakeholders who may need the information.
- ▶ Formal examinations are not handed back to the student. These exams are the property of the school board and should a student question the final result, he/she can do by requesting a re-read through the Centre Director.

## Responsibilities related to the evaluation of learning of our various stakeholders

**The Student:** The student has the responsibility to become actively involved in the learning process, including participating in the setting of learning goals. To be able to monitor their competency development, students can learn to evaluate themselves and to participate in evaluation with their teacher or their classmates. Student participation would be at the level of evaluation to support learning. Gradually making students more autonomous and accountable will lead to successful learning.

**The Teacher:** Teachers have the main responsibilities for evaluating their students. The teacher selects the means of evaluating the progress of students and assesses continually and periodically the achievement of competencies and needs of the students entrusted to his/her care. (Education Act, article 19). The teacher supports learning by providing students with ongoing feedback from a variety of sources to enable students to set new goals for learning with the aim of self-improvement. Feedback is provided both on a regular basis as well as more strategic moments such as at the end of a unit of study, or at the end of a cycle. The teacher provides varied assessment and evaluation opportunities that reflect different learning styles and multiple intelligences. The teacher provides students with a clear description of the expectations and evaluation criteria at the beginning of a unit, module, project or course of study. The teacher uses professional judgment to interpret the results of assessment in the evaluation process. The teacher reports these results, as required, to the student, parent/guardian (if student is a minor), school administration and the school board. The teacher participates in professional development related to student assessment and evaluation procedures.

**The Centre Directors:** Centre Directors must approve the standards and procedures for the evaluation of learning proposed by teachers and inform the governing board of the approved proposals. The centre director also plays an important role with the school team or the program team in academic and vocational centres. He/she must act as a facilitator for these teams and ensure the pedagogical supervision of teachers, in particular, with regard to the evaluation of learning. The centre director will provide pedagogical leadership to teachers regarding the evaluation of learning.

**The School Board:** The school board is responsible for ensuring that each of their adult education and vocational training centres evaluates student learning and administers the examinations imposed by the Minister. The school board assures that the regulations of the MELS are followed in each of its schools. The school board will develop policy and procedures with regard to student assessment and evaluation in consultation with centre directors, teachers, and parents and students where appropriate. The school board will assure that the structures for consultation on evaluation by school board committees are in place. The school board will provide opportunities for professional development and help share best practices related to assessment and evaluation procedures and philosophy.

**The Government and the Minister of Education:** Are responsible for setting the rules that govern the evaluation of learning and the certification of studies, the diplomas, certificates, and other official attestations awarded by the Minister of Education, and the conditions under which they are to be awarded. The Minister is responsible for determining the criteria and conditions for recognizing scholastic and experiential learning and also decides on the general education subjects and the vocational specialties for which he/she sets examinations.

**Professionals:** Professionals working with students and teachers also collaborate in the evaluation of learning by helping teachers to decide on the most appropriate pedagogical actions to support students in their learning.

**The Parents of Students who are Minors:** Parents' observations of their children's learning process can be helpful to educators who in turn can take necessary action. Parents of students with specific needs are also involved in evaluation.

**The Businesses and Organizations:** Businesses that take in student trainees are partners of the vocational training and the adult education centres for certain types of programs. Their collaboration is needed in the evaluation of learning, in particular with regard to practicums.

### **Guiding Principles**

The school board's vision of "Learning for All" is anchored in a commitment to fundamental values of openness, leadership, and cooperation in a caring and learning environment. The essence of this policy is that student evaluation is an integral part of good teaching practice. It is treated as an ongoing and comprehensive process that is pervaded by careful planning and systematic implementation. Evaluation is a critical element that influences teacher decision making and guides student learning.

The guiding principles of student evaluation are the following:

- ▶ The values of justice, equality, equity, coherence, openness and rigor are essential to ensure quality evaluation.
- ▶ Evaluation in the course of learning must be an integral component of all aspects of the learning process.
- ▶ Evaluation of learning must be based on the teacher's professional judgment.
- ▶ Evaluation of learning must respect differences. Teachers may adapt evaluation conditions, but must maintain the same standards.
- ▶ Evaluation of learning must be carried out in conformity with the education programs and programs of study. Compliance with the programs prescribed by the Ministère de l'Éducation is essential to ensuring the coherence of the evaluation process.
- ▶ Evaluation in the course of learning must allow the student to play an active role in evaluation activities, thereby increasing the student's accountability.
- ▶ Evaluation of learning must involve the collaboration of all stakeholders, while taking into account their respective responsibilities.
- ▶ Evaluation of learning must reflect the ethical standards shared by the various stakeholders.
- ▶ Evaluation of learning must contribute to improving the student's quality of spoken and written language.
- ▶ Evaluation for certification purposes must render account of the acquisition of competencies and thus uphold the value that society accords to official certification documents.
- ▶ Recognition of prior learning must allow for the recognition of an individual's competencies regardless of the conditions under which the learning was acquired.

### **Evaluation of Learning in General Education in the Adult Sector**

Learning in general education in the adult sector is described in terms of competencies. Hence, competencies are the focus of the evaluation. The evaluation of competencies requires the use of a greater variety of evaluation instruments, conditions, processes and procedures at the beginning of, during and at the end of the learning, as well as for the purpose of recognizing experiential learning.

### **Certification of Studies**

Students usually take general education courses in the adult sector to obtain a Secondary School Diploma (SSD). The conditions for obtaining the SSD have been harmonized with those in general education in the youth sector. There are other certification documents that the Ministère can issue which will allow the holders to enter the job market, and may also encourage adults to pursue their secondary studies for the purpose of obtaining an SSD. These documents are:

- ▶ The sociovocational integration services certificate
- ▶ The Attestation of Equivalence of Secondary Studies (AESS)
- ▶ The General Educational Development Testing Service (GED)

There is a shared responsibility between the Ministère and the Centres to develop evaluation for certification purposes. The Ministry imposes examinations for certain programs and courses in order to ensure uniform evaluation for certification purposes. Adult education centres are responsible for producing other examinations that are developed in accordance with the definitions of the domain.

### **Instruments for the Evaluation of Learning**

#### *Observation Instruments:*

- ▶ Evaluation given during training serves as support for learning.
- ▶ The activities help to establish the level of learning and determine whether students are learning competencies in real-life situations.
- ▶ Are adapted to facilitate the judgment that the teacher must make on the results obtained and on the learning strategies used by the student.

#### *Examinations for certification purposes:*

- ▶ An examination is scheduled for each course.
- ▶ Takes place regularly—examinations in general education may be administered by adult education centres at any time during the year.
- ▶ That are under the responsibility of the adult education centre must be developed in accordance with the definitions of the domain, thereby ensuring compliance with provincial standards.

#### *Evaluation for Placement Purposes:*

- ▶ Plays a diagnostic and preventive role. It is necessary whenever an adult's schooling is interrupted.
- ▶ Are undergoing a major change of orientation within the scope of the *Government Policy on Adult Education and Continuing Education and Training*.

### **Reporting of Results**

#### *The Statement of Learning Achievement*

- ▶ Students receive a statement of learning achievement four times a year from the Ministère.
- ▶ The results are dichotomous (pass/fail) or are presented as a percentage mark. A pass is awarded if the result is equal to or above the minimum performance standard of 60%.
- ▶ Marks from a local evaluation are not added to marks obtained on a ministerial examination.

#### *The Statement of Competencies*

- ▶ It will provide information on the results for each course and in the context of the recognition of scholastic or experiential learning.
- ▶ It will render account of the learning level attained with respect to the programs of study.
- ▶ It will facilitate the pursuit of the personal learning plan and give more autonomy to adults in continuing education and training.

### **Recognition of Experiential Learning**

The recognition of experiential learning allows adults to have their prior learning recognized regardless of where, when and how the learning took place. It relates to training content, programs, and other references. It may also relate to the competencies formulated in references put forth by educational partners in Quebec and elsewhere. The procedures and instruments used must be adapted to the various learning situations.

#### *Instruments and Services*

**The Prior Learning Examination:** This exam gives an overall picture of an adult's prior learning in English as a second language.

**The Fields of Generic Competencies:** The fields of generic competencies provide a reference framework of competencies in areas of activities specific to adults. These competencies are drawn from life experiences and are evaluated according to a specific procedure. Adults can earn credits associated with optional subjects for the purpose of obtaining an SSD.

**Secondary Studies Equivalency Test (SSET):** Adults who pass this test are awarded an Attestation of Equivalence of Secondary Studies. (AESS) This attestation satisfies the requirements to enroll in vocational training. This test does not serve as a prerequisite for postsecondary education.

**The Tests of the General Educational Development Testing Service (GED):** These tests will allow an adult to obtain a diploma that is equivalent to an SSD.

**Record of Learning:** This will not be used as an evaluation tool for the recognition of experiential learning. It is a methodical inventory of the adults' prior learning which will facilitate access to the recognition of experiential learning.

### **Evaluation of Learning in Vocational Training**

Partners in the workplace, educational institutions, and the Ministère, work together to identify the competencies that are to be included in the programs of study. During and at the end of each program, the general and specific competencies required to perform a job are the focus of the evaluation activities.

### **Certification of Studies**

There are two ministerial certification documents that will provide access to the job market:

- ▶ The Diploma of Vocational Studies (DVS)
- ▶ The Attestation of Vocational Specialization (AVS)

The Ministry can also award the Attestation of Vocational Education (AVE) that will lead to the practice of a semiskilled occupation. The school board can develop and implement a short-term program that leads to the carrying out of specialized tasks related to a job. The school board would then award the Skills Training Certificate (STC).

- ▶ Each program competency must be the focus of evaluation for certification purposes.
- ▶ Evaluation that is used in the course of learning can not be used to determine the result of the final evaluation in a course.
- ▶ More than one competency can be evaluated at the same time, providing that each is certified separately.
- ▶ Evaluation for certification purposes must focus on all the important aspects of the competency.
- ▶ The evaluation situation must resemble a real work situation as closely as possible.
- ▶ In the case of recognition of equivalences, an individual may have a competency recognized without having to be evaluated. The ministère establishes training equivalences.
- ▶ An individual may ask to take a compulsory examination in order to be given the credits without taking the corresponding course(s). It is up to the institution to determine the individual's level of preparedness.
- ▶ The criteria and the minimum performance standard are predetermined for each competency.
- ▶ Marking and the expression of results are dichotomous. The student receives either a "pass" or a "fail" as a result.
- ▶ A "fail" can only be given to a student who has undergone an evaluation for certification. Dropping a course or not attending an examination cannot justify a "fail".
- ▶ Student's have the right to retake an examination certifying a competency after having failed the examination. To have this right, students must demonstrate that they have done the necessary remedial work. The result obtained on the retake will become the official result.
- ▶ The Ministère may impose examinations to uphold the value that society accords to the official certification documents awarded by the Ministère. The institutions, however, are responsible for developing most of the examinations.

### **Instruments for the Evaluation of Learning**

*Observation Instruments:*

- ▶ During the training period, evaluation must be at the service of learning.
- ▶ Evaluation activities are used to verify the level of competency developed during the basic learning phase and during the practice of complex aspects of the competency.
- ▶ Evaluation activities are used to verify that the competency can be transferred to a similar real-life situation.
- ▶ The evaluation enables the teacher to make a judgment on the results obtained as well as on the learning strategies used by the student.

*Examinations for certification purposes:*

- ▶ The criteria that are used to verify the attainment of a competency are presented in the form of *Table of Specifications* or *Analysis and Planning Tables*.
- ▶ These tables are used as references in order to develop evaluation situations, which must reflect the actual conditions in which the competency will be applied in the workplace.
- ▶ The situations must require that students use the different facets of the competency—knowledge, behaviours, and know-how.
- ▶ The educational institution is responsible for developing the evaluation instruments that the Ministère does not produce. The values and orientations that are set out in the *Policy on the Evaluation of Learning* are used as references.

## **Reporting of Results**

*The Statement of Marks*

- ▶ Students will periodically receive from the Ministère a statement that indicates the results obtained in the evaluation of the modules.
- ▶ When minors pursue their education in both general education and vocational training simultaneously, their parents are entitled to receive the report cards and other types of communication provided for in general education in the youth sector.

*The Statement of Competencies*

- ▶ Indicates all of a program's competencies and is issued to students who earn a DVS or an AVS.
- ▶ The result is either a "pass" or a "fail".
- ▶ Students who are in a program leading to an Attestation of Vocational Education (AVE) are issued a statement of competencies for semiskilled occupations by the Ministry as soon as the educational institution attests that a "pass" decision has been made.

## **Recognition of Prior Learning**

- ▶ Adults who can demonstrate that they have acquired competencies targeted by a program without having enrolled in the program are entitled to have their prior learning recognized.
- ▶ The evaluation conditions must be flexible, while remaining rigorous and reliable.
- ▶ The evaluation instruments must recognize the competencies already acquired, but also identify those that need to be developed.
- ▶ The performance to be attained to have the competency recognized is that required for entry into the job market, in accordance with the program of study.
- ▶ The school system and businesses will play a role in organizing the evaluation of prior learning and in recognizing competencies.
- ▶ The process for recognizing prior learning will lead to the identification of training that needs to be completed. This training can be completed in a school setting or elsewhere. The educational institution will help the adult to select the methods or means appropriate to his/her situation.

End.