HARMONIZING VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL TRAINING PROGRAMS IN ORDER TO RECOGNIZE PRIOR LEARNING

The Ministère de l’Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport (MELS) harmonizes its vocational and technical programs by establishing similarities and continuity between secondary- and college-level programs, in order to avoid overlap in program offerings, to recognize prior learning and to optimize the students’ progress.

This orientation has led to the application of organizational measures: the classification of the training programs in 21 training sectors on the basis of the compatibility of their competencies, the adoption of the so-called competency-based approach and the establishment of a process for developing and revising training programs common to both levels of education. These measures constitute the basis for the harmonization of the training programs.

Harmonization establishes consistency between training programs and is especially important in ensuring that the tasks of a trade or occupation are clearly identified and described. Harmonization makes it possible to identify tasks requiring competencies that are common to more than one program and to make sure they can be easily recognized. It is for this reason that the harmonization of training programs is an important aspect to consider in terms of the description of the trades and occupations and the conditions under which they are practiced.

Initially, training programs are harmonized by the MELS when they are developed or revised. The results, that is, the identification of common competencies, are presented in the harmonization tables that accompany the training programs.

CONTINUOUS TRAINING PATHS: A WAY TO FACILITATE ACCESS TO COLLEGE

Two related training programs selected by the MELS, one at the secondary level and the other at the college level, constitute a continuous training path.

The selection of a continuous training path is based on several conditions related to the students’ chances of success and their interest in the path. More precisely, the vocational training programs are chosen on the basis of their duration, their admission requirements, their continuity in terms of a natural career progression with the technical training programs as well as the amount of time students can save in their chosen college programs.

A continuous training path, selected by the MELS, is attributed to a single consortium of educational institutions so that they may develop the path and field-test its implementation. Subsequently, the continuous training path will be made available to other consortiums of educational institutions. The MELS will provide the consortium with technical and financial support.

Ten continuous training paths have already been attributed, and the MELS is considering 20 more: 10 in 2007-2008 and 10 in 2008-2009.

Once a continuous training path has been defined and developed, the Minister establishes the admission requirements for the path, in keeping with the College Education Regulations.
CONCLUSION

Difference:
The harmonization of vocational and technical training programs is a MELS orientation (Investir dans la compétence, October 1993) designed to reduce the overlap between such programs and to recognize previously acquired competencies.

The continuous training paths are an application of a regulatory provision (paragraph 2, section 2 of the College Education Regulations) which seeks to ensure the most direct transition possible between certain training programs leading to a Diploma of Vocational Studies (DVS) and others, leading to a Diploma of College Studies (DCS).

Sequence:
A continuous training path must, by definition, save students time in working toward their DCS. There must be a significant number of competencies common to the vocational and technical training programs, and the competencies must be accepted as equivalencies. The competencies are identified during the harmonization process. Harmonization precedes the emergence of continuous training paths.

Complementarity:
For effective recognition, at the college level, of competencies acquired at the secondary level, there must be increased access to certain technical training programs for the holders of some DVS. This is a precondition for the continuous training paths.

For example, the continuous training path Accounting and Management Technology enables the holders of a DVS to enroll almost directly in the corresponding technical training program, saving 340 hours toward their college diploma: 620 hours for the general education component acquired in the secondary Accounting program and 720 hours for the program-specific component at the college level.

VOCDATIONAL AND TECHNICAL PROGRAMS OF STUDY

ENSURING CONTINUITY BETWEEN VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL PROGRAMS OF STUDY

FOREWORD
This document, addressed to our partners in the education community and the job market — particularly educational institutions — is designed to answer various questions regarding the harmonization of vocational and technical training programs, and continuous training paths. The document should help readers gain a better understanding of the application of certain lines of action in the Vocational-Technical Training Collaboration Plan.