Accreditation follow-up visits
for teacher training programs

Reference framework and procedure
for accreditation follow-up visits
carried out between 2010 and 2013

*Courtesy Translation*
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1. Introduction

An accreditation follow-up visit is one step in the process used to analyze and evaluate teacher training programs. It was introduced by the Comité d’agrément des programmes de formation à l’enseignement (CAPFE) in order to gather all relevant information to ensure that the teacher training programs subject to accreditation meet ministerial guidelines and target the development of professional competencies.

After the first accreditation follow-up visits, carried out between 2004 and 2007, and the discussion days organized with the school and university communities in 2007 and 2008, CAPFE suggested possible ways to respond to the current challenges in the field of teacher training. These included ensuring an essential level of collaboration between the members of the pedagogical team and the representatives of various subjects in order to implement the program-based approach, determining a target level of professional competency development for future teachers, developing methods to evaluate and monitor their competencies, and ensuring a harmonious transition from university to actual teaching.

These possibilities have prompted CAPFE to review and redefine the elements on which it will focus during the second series of accreditation follow-up visits, scheduled to take place between 2010 and 2013.

The objective of this document is to describe, in a precise way, the reference framework for the second series of visits. CAPFE hopes that this will give universities all the information they need to prepare for a follow-up visit.

2. Accreditation of teacher training programs

For the purpose of recommending that the Minister of Education, Recreation and Sports accredit a teacher training program, CAPFE has designed an analysis process that includes three main steps:

1 The composition, mission and values of CAPFE are presented in Appendix 1.

• program evaluation
• program accreditation
• follow-up visit

This document is concerned only with the follow-up visit.

2.1 Follow-up visit

A follow-up visit allows CAPFE to evaluate the implementation of a teacher training program and the development of professional competencies.

During a visit, CAPFE examines whether the accredited program implemented by a university matches the draft program submitted for accreditation. If this is the case, it can recommend that the program accreditation be renewed by the Minister with or without conditions, or that it not be renewed.

If CAPFE considers that the program no longer meets the requirements, or if the conditions in which the program is implemented no longer allow the professional competencies to be developed, it may recommend that the program accreditation be revoked, suspended, revised or withdrawn by the Minister.

2.1.1 Foundations

Accreditation follow-up visits are conducted in accordance with the Education Act, the Basic school regulation for preschool, elementary and secondary education, the Québec Education Program and various other documents setting out ministerial orientations and policies.

The documents produced by CAPFE, such as program drafting and revision guides, are also used as references.

Last, the accreditation document setting out the conditions for program accreditation, and the report on the preceding follow-up visit, if any, may also be taken into account by the visiting committee, which determines whether the university has implemented the conditions set when the program was accredited.
2.1.2 Elements examined

During the second series of follow-up visits to analyze teacher training programs, CAPFE will focus not just on the fundamental criteria for analyzing a teacher training program but also on the following elements contained in the assessment document prepared by the university concerned:

- cooperation
- partnerships with the school community
- competency evaluation
- recognition of prior learning

Cooperation

A number of universities, when they presented their draft teacher training programs or took part in the thematic discussion days with the university community in 2008, indicated clearly to CAPFE that cooperation with other stakeholders, despite the difficulties encountered, was the best way to promote the successful implementation of the program-based approach, which is founded on a coherent education program and the decompartmentalization of subject areas in order to integrate learning.

As a result, CAPFE intends to examine the methods used by the universities to ensure cooperation between their faculties or departments of education and their other faculties or departments, and also between the university community and the school system, in order to implement a program-based approach.

Partnerships with the school community

Since the professionalization of teaching in 2001, practicums have played a leading role in teacher training programs.

CAPFE recognizes that schools have the final responsibility for selecting cooperating teachers but, because of the strategic role played by practicums in the teacher training process, it wishes to ensure that cooperating teachers and practicum supervisors are selected with all due rigour.
For this reason, CAPFE will ask universities to describe the partnerships they have established with the school community for the purpose of selecting and training cooperating teachers and practicum supervisors.

**Competency evaluation**

Since the adoption of the ministerial orientations on teacher training in 2001, all teacher training programs have focused on competency development. CAPFE recognizes that competency evaluation can be difficult, but still expects the universities to collect data and observations on the development of the 12 professional competencies by their students, and to present them to CAPFE during the follow-up visit.

CAPFE will be able to use the data and observations to support the third component of its mission, which is to advise the Minister on the expected competencies of elementary and secondary school teachers.

**Recognition of prior learning**

In 2009, CAPFE was informed that the recognition of teaching experience, especially in the field of vocational education, varied greatly from one university to another. The CAPFE chair, in a letter to the universities, stated that he did not oppose *de facto* recognition of the teaching experience of vocational education teacher training students, provided that the recognition related to mastery of the target competencies for the credited activities. However, in such a case, with the goal of guaranteeing the quality of the students’ learning, CAPFE wanted to know the criteria developed by the universities to grant equivalencies for practicum activities in order to recognize the competencies mastered.

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The follow-up visit will provide an opportunity to examine the procedures set up by the universities in this regard.

2.1.3 Additional topics of discussion with CAPFE

During the follow-up visits, CAPFE will wish to discuss certain points with the universities, even if they are not actually considered criteria for the accreditation of teacher training programs. These points, which have a determining influence on program quality, are:

- the conceptual framework
- research
- the ongoing improvement of teacher training programs

The conceptual framework

Since 2001, the frameworks for teacher training and for teacher training in vocational education have set the ministerial targets for teacher training. They define the general conceptual framework for teacher training programs, and therefore the type of teacher Québec hopes to produce.

The universities have submitted their programs to CAPFE under the general conceptual framework for teacher training, or in other words in accordance with this vision for teacher training. They have responded in a variety of ways to CAPFE's question relating to the "overall vision underlying the teacher training program." Some have added local colour to their program by adopting a conceptual framework or a more specific vision. For example, one university has added a competency relating to cultural diversity, because it considers that this will help prepare its students to face the multiethnic environment in which they will work. Another offers students the possibility of completing their fourth practicum in another country, because it believes that this facilitates the application of professional competencies.

Since it is important to have a clear, shared vision of the training mission in order to successfully implement a program-based approach, CAPFE would like to use the
follow-up visits to review this element with each university. Was the conceptual framework for the program clear at the outset? Is it shared by teachers? Has it changed? Is it still appropriate? If it requires revision, how does the university plan to ensure that all the people concerned will participate? These are some of the questions that CAPFE may ask.

Research

“To assist professionalization, research into teaching practices and also into training approaches must be a priority, and the results must be reinvested in the training of new teachers.”

Research in the field of teacher training must be used to support discussions of teaching training practices and help universities to make the best possible choices to promote the learning and success of students in the school system as well as of their own teacher training students. For this reason, CAPFE will ask universities to demonstrate more explicitly the links between research findings and their teacher training programs.

CAPFE will engage in discussions with the universities concerning their research projects and initiatives, to find out more about the pedagogical innovations that have guided or will guide the implementation of their teacher training programs.

The ongoing improvement of teacher training programs

Although all universities have established institutional mechanisms for the ongoing improvement of their teacher training programs, CAPFE wants to check the vitality of the programs and, in particular, the ability of the parties concerned to “pilot” their program.

CAPFE will examine the studies or reviews completed by the universities in this area. They must present a brief critical analysis of their teacher training programs and their

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4 Teacher Training: Orientations, Professional Competencies, Ministère de l’Éducation, 2001, p. 27.
implementation describing their strengths, any current challenges, and the actions taken to deal with those challenges. The presentation can be made orally, or included in the implementation report mentioned in point 2 of Appendix 3.

2.2 Procedure

Over the years, the procedure adopted by CAPFE for its accreditation follow-up visits to universities, and the documents required, have changed as a result of the observations made following the first series of follow-up visits and the comments made by universities.

For the second series of follow-up visits, three main sources of data will provide input for the members of the visiting committee:

- an assessment document prepared by the university
  
  This document must be based on the writing guide presented in Appendix 3, and sent to the CAPFE secretariat in quintuplicate at least four weeks before the scheduled date of the follow-up visit.

- follow-up actions taken by the university after the previous CAPFE visit or in response to the conditions set out in the document accrediting the program

- information gathered from various players interviewed during the visit

2.3 Typical visit

The follow-up visit will be carried out by a small group of CAPFE members (the chair, a university professor and a teacher), accompanied by the CAPFE secretary-coordinator.

If needed, CAPFE may ask a specialist or resource person who is not a CAPFE member to take part in the follow-up visit to provide support for its evaluation.

The number of days required for a follow-up visit will depend on the number of accredited programs to be examined. For a large number of programs, CAPFE may carry out two visits.
CAPFE may also delegate one member and the secretary-coordinator to check program implementation conditions on-site, for example in a library, laboratory or other facility.

During a follow-up visit, CAPFE will interview the people involved directly or indirectly in teacher training programs:

- the vice-principal
- the dean of the faculty of education or, in the component campuses of the Université du Québec, the dean of studies, the director of the module or program and the director of the education department
- members of the teaching faculty, including cooperating teachers and practicum supervisors
- students from the various programs and levels
- recent graduates with a job
- representatives of the school boards in the territory served by the university, such as directors of educational services, practicum coordinators, and school principals

Any person or group wishing to express a point of view may be heard by CAPFE. Each university is responsible for announcing a visit by CAPFE in accordance with the terms and conditions agreed upon by the university and CAPFE’s secretary-coordinator.

An example of a typical agenda for a follow-up visit is shown in Appendix 2.

2.4 Logistics

The secretary-coordinator, acting on behalf of CAPFE’s chair, asks the vice-principal to provide the name of a contact person with whom to settle the details of the follow-up visit (time, place, people to be convened, documents to be submitted, etc.), four to six weeks before the date of the visit.

2.5 Reports

At the end of the follow-up visit, the chair gives the university authorities a general assessment of the strengths observed and the
areas needing improvement. The visiting committee then prepares a report for CAPFE.

After CAPFE has adopted the report, the secretary-coordinator sends a copy to the vice-principal and the person responsible for the program at the university, who are then expected to make the report and its recommendations available to the people concerned at the university.

After receiving the report, the university has two months to respond and, if applicable, provide details or specify changes as requested by CAPFE. The university’s response is added to the report on the follow-up visit, and the final version is sent to the Minister.

2.6 Schedule of visits

As far as possible, CAPFE schedules accreditation follow-up visits to harmonize with the in-house assessments carried out by each university.

The schedule is available on the CAPFE Web site at http://www.capfe.gouv.qc.ca.

2.7 Expenses

The travel and accommodation expenses of CAPFE members who carry out a follow-up visit are reimbursed according to the ministerial directive in force.

However, CAPFE asks host universities to pay for a lunch on each day of a visit.
3. Conclusion

The first series of accreditation follow-up visits helped CAPFE improve and define its procedure for assessing teacher training programs. With the usual degree of collaboration from schools and universities, it is confident that it will be able to complete the second series of visits in a way that reflects the same commitment to ongoing program improvement.
The Comité d’agrément des programmes de formation à l'enseignement: composition, mission and values

Following the passage, in 1997, of Bill 180, An Act to amend the Education Act and various legislative provisions, the teacher training program accreditation committee was legally established under the name “Comité d'agrément des programmes de formation à l'enseignement” pursuant to section 477.13 of the Act. Its composition and mandate are defined in the sections following.

The committee is composed of nine regular members: the chair, four members from the university sector, and four members from the elementary and secondary education sector.

The Act states that at least two regular members of the committee must represent the English-language education sector, giving a legal foundation to what already existed in fact.

The Minister of Education, Recreation and Sports may also appoint two associate members to the committee, one chosen from among the employees of the Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport, the other from among the managerial staff of the school boards.

The mission of the committee is to advise the Minister on any matter relating to the accreditation of teacher training programs for the elementary and secondary levels. In the pursuit of its mission, the committee:

- examines and approves teacher training programs for the preschool, elementary and secondary levels
- makes recommendations to the Minister concerning teacher training programs required for the issue of teaching licences
- advises the Minister on the determination of the qualifications required of teachers at the elementary and secondary levels

The committee pursues its mission in compliance with the orientations and guiding principles for initial teacher training issued by the Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport. CAPFE also assumes the following responsibilities:
• It drafts and distributes the policies, procedures and tools (such as a guide for presenting draft programs for accreditation, a program analysis grid and a guide for drafting a report by a visiting committee) needed for the implementation of the professional accreditation process for initial teacher training programs.

• It defines the main terms used in the accreditation process.

• It explains how it performs its advisory role for the governmental accreditation of university programs leading to the issue of a teaching licence.

• It specifies the types of subcriteria or signs it uses to assess compliance with the specified training criteria of each aspect, component and resource of a program submitted for accreditation.

• It establishes, for each part of its mandate, the mechanisms and modes used to communicate with
  • universities, including the internal authority responsible for the program submitted for accreditation
  • the Conférence des recteurs et des principaux des universités du Québec (CREPUQ)
  • the Table de concertation MELS-Universités
  • other school or educational organizations involved in teacher training
  • the Minister of Education, Recreation and Sports as the mandating government authority and person responsible for accrediting university programs leading to the issue of a teaching licence

• It specifies the rules of ethics relating to confidentiality and conflicts of interest.

• It advises the Minister of Education, Recreation and Sports on the definition of the competencies teachers are expected to display.
It drafts an annual report for the Minister of Education, Recreation and Sports and CAPFE’s main representatives, including the organizations mentioned above.

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The values that guide CAPFE members in the pursuit of their mission are competence, rigour and transparency, quality, autonomy and equity.

- **Competence**: Each CAPFE member must perform his/her duties with professionalism, using his/her knowledge, abilities and experience to achieve the results targeted.
- **Rigour and transparency**: The procedure for evaluating teacher training programs is specified and detailed in the various guides produced and distributed by CAPFE.
- **Quality**: CAPFE members are dedicated to the ongoing improvement of teacher training programs, the optimum development of the professional competencies of students, and the increased professionalization of teaching.
- **Autonomy**: CAPFE is accountable to the Minister for the quality of the teacher training programs it accredits and recommends to the Minister that lead to the award of teaching licences.
- **Equity**: All the teacher training programs submitted by the universities are evaluated using the same criteria.
Appendix 2

Typical agenda for a follow-up visit

Name of university

Date of visit

Place of visit

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1. Welcoming address by the vice-principal

2. Welcoming address by the CAPFE chair

3. Review of the objectives of the follow-up visit and presentation of the members of the visiting committee

4. Presentation of the assessment

LUNCH\(^5\)

5. Meetings with students

6. Meetings with representatives form the university and school communities\(^6\)
   - program directors
   - lecturers
   - professors
   - coordinators of practical training
   - school board representatives with responsibility for practical training
   - graduates
   - cooperating teachers

\(^5\) The lunch period is always reserved for private discussion by the members of the visiting committee.

\(^6\) These meetings may be scheduled over a period of several days, depending on the number of programs examined and the type of intervention involved.
7. Open discussion
8. Verbal report of the visiting committee
9. End of the follow-up visit
1. General information concerning all of the university’s accredited programs

   o Cooperation

   Present the methods used by the university to ensure cooperation between the education faculty or department and the other faculties or departments, and between the university and schools for the implementation of a program-based approach.
o **Partnerships with schools**

Describe the partnerships established with schools to select and train cooperating teachers and practicum supervisors.

o **Competency evaluation**

Present the data and observations gathered on the development of the 12 professional competencies by students in the program.

o **Recognition of prior learning**

Present the criteria developed by the university to grant equivalencies for practicum activities to recognize previously mastered competencies.

o **Quality of the language of instruction and second languages**

Describe the effort made by the university to improve the quality of the language of instruction and of second languages, if any.

o **Practical training**

State how the university has ensured that practical training is linked to the development of professional competencies.

o **Consideration for government action plans with a link to teacher training**

Present the methods used by the university to ensure consideration in its teacher training programs for government action plans with a link to teacher training, such as the *Action Plan to Promote Success for Students With Handicaps, Social Maladjustments or Learning Disabilities, “I care about school!”* (Action strategy on student retention and student success), *Diversity: An Added Value* (a policy aimed at ensuring equal opportunities for all, in particular women, people with disabilities, young people, people living in poverty and immigrants).

**2. Specific aspect of each program**

o **Implementation report**
Report on the implementation of the program, focusing on the main difficulties encountered and the solutions proposed.

3. Monitoring of accreditation conditions (if applicable)

If the program was accredited on certain conditions, the university must explain what action has been taken.

4. Additional topics of discussion with CAPFE

- The conceptual framework
- Research
- Ongoing program improvement

See point 2.1.3 for more details.

5. Remarks and comments

Add any information or comment that will help CAPFE to assess the implementation of the accredited teacher training programs.