



ASSOCIATION DES CADRES
DES COLLÈGES DU QUÉBEC

REFERENCE FRAMEWORK FOR
PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCIES
FOR CEGEP SENIOR STAFF

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	3
INTRODUCTION.....	4
Defining the profession.....	4
Benefits and limitations of the reference framework.....	5
PRESENTATION.....	6
Definitions.....	6
Diagram of the CEGEP senior staff competency framework.....	7
Chart of the CEGEP senior staff competency framework.....	7
Core competency	
Motivational leadership.....	8
Essential competencies	
Collaboration.....	9
Communication.....	10
Team and workforce management.....	11
Financial and material management.....	12
Planning and organization.....	13
Critical thinking.....	14
Problem solving.....	15
Supporting competency	
Professionalism.....	16

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INTRODUCTION

In 2013, the ACCQ produced its first *Reference framework for professional competencies for CEGEP senior staff in higher education institutions*. This document was updated in 2017 with minor modifications.

The changing role of CEGEP senior staff, in light of the major transformations in the world of work in recent years, has prompted the Association's professional affairs committee to propose that a new updating exercise be carried out. With this in mind, a decision was made to reflect on the evolving role of senior staff in the college network in the 2023-2027 strategic plan adopted by the General Assembly on November 2, 2022. Among the actions to be prioritized in this respect, updating the *Reference framework for professional competencies* (skills repository) ranked at the top of the list. It was against this backdrop that the Association called on Nancy Brassard to assist it in this process, and formed an advisory group to collaborate on the project, which began in the fall of 2023.

DEFINING THE PROFESSION

In the *Standard job classification plan and classification guide for senior staff positions in general and vocational colleges- March 2022**, senior staff positions are defined as follows:

*Senior staff positions involve responsibility for or management of the programs, activities, and resources of one or more specific fields of operation. In addition, these positions are characterized by the performance of duties that entail representing the College before various bodies, committing the College financially within the limits set out in College policies, and/or representing the College in the management of personnel under its responsibility.**

Although it in no way imposes a model administrative structure to be adopted by the CEGEPs, the classification plan assigns senior staff positions to one of the following three CATEGORIES:

- DIRECTORIAL senior staff positions
- COORDINATION senior staff positions
- MANAGERIAL senior staff positions

What's more, working as a senior staffer in the college network means wearing a hat that comes in all sorts of shapes and colours. It entails working in a constantly changing environment and keeping abreast of the latest trends in order to fulfil the educational mission of one's institution of higher education. And it involves working for and with students, guiding and motivating staff and teams in a caring manner, and efficiently managing the resources under one's wing.

*Our translation.

BENEFITS AND LIMITATIONS OF THE REFERENCE FRAMEWORK

A competency framework has several possible uses. Its primary purpose is to serve as a reference, a manual, enabling the individuals to whom it is addressed to structure their own professional development. However, it is important to note that this document is in no way intended to guide the initial training of senior staffers, but rather to inspire the ACCQ in the preparation of its own professional development activities. Consequently, although it may help to orient human resources management activities such as recruitment, training, evaluation, and the like, it has not been officially designed for these purposes by the ACCQ. The reference framework may, however, prove its value in helping CEGEP senior staffers meet some of their needs, including

- self-assessment and reflection for existing and aspiring senior staffers.
- the presentation of job-relevant competencies during induction and integration activities.
- the identification of training needs.
- the job posting structure for recruitment and staffing.
- other needs as they arise.

INTRODUCTION

DEFINITIONS

The *Reference framework for professional competencies for CEGEP senior staff* includes one core competency, seven essential competencies, and one supporting competency.

A reference framework takes the form of a repository of generic competencies required to perform the duties associated with a set of target positions. Competencies are broken down into key actions.

The core competency is the central foundation of this reference framework and is made up of the prerequisites that must be demonstrated and mastered by anyone wishing to occupy a CEGEP senior staff position. In this respect, motivational leadership has been targeted and is presented in the form of key actions constituting a person's expertise in action, including knowledge, know-how, pragmatic skills (getting things done), and interpersonal capabilities (soft skills).

Essential competencies constitute the indispensable expertise in action of any CEGEP senior staffer who performs supervisory functions, regardless of the classification level, the distinct nature of the position, or the issues specific to the organization. Seven competencies have been identified as common to all positions: collaboration, communication, team and workforce management, financial and material management, planning and organization, critical thinking, and problem solving.

Each of the essential competencies is of equal importance and should be mastered or developed in order for CEGEP senior staffers to perform their duties proficiently. However, each competency (or a series of them) may come into play to a greater or lesser extent, depending on the situation facing the senior staffer in question.

The supporting competency is considered to be the requisite competency underpinning all the key actions of CEGEP senior staffers. In the present reference framework, professionalism has been identified as such, and is set out in a series of behaviours to be adopted in the exercise of senior managerial duties.

A key action consists of a generic action spelled out in behaviours that are as observable and measurable as possible. To perform the job to its full potential, all the key actions should be mastered by senior staffers at all supervisory levels. However, these requirements will vary according to the complexity and context of the job in question.

DIAGRAM OF THE CEGEP SENIOR STAFF COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK



CHART OF THE CEGEP SENIOR STAFF COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK



CORE COMPETENCY

MOTIVATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Individuals who master this competency guide and inspire the members of their team to achieve common objectives, building on the values of the institution and their characteristics, while recognizing the contribution of each individual team member. Motivational leaders inspire trust and ensure that the right conditions are in place to foster the commitment, motivation, and mobilization of their team, colleagues, and members of the college community, in a harmonious and collaborative work environment. Such leaders support the development of the competencies of the employees under their responsibility, based on the needs of the organization, as well as on the employees' own aspirations and talents. In this way, motivational leaders foster the development of employees' professional autonomy, initiative, critical judgment, results orientation, and more. In so doing, they ensure that the essential conditions for attracting and retaining staff are put in place or maintained and contribute to the network's reputation as an employer of choice.

KEY ACTIONS

- Developing and adapting action strategies based on organizational dynamics and CEGEP policy.
- Listening to and learning about employee health and wellness.
- Exercising influence from a perspective of the common good and inspiring trust.
- Demonstrating consistency and cohesion in actions and decisions.
- Demonstrating managerial courage.
- Sharing knowledge and expertise with colleagues.
- Spearheading transformation or organizational change projects with conviction and assurance to generate commitment.
- Recognizing value and building on each person's strengths.
- Seizing opportunities to develop the CEGEP.
- Actively engaging in the realization of the mission and the achievement of the objectives targeted by the CEGEP's strategic plan as regards their area of responsibility.
- Supporting the competency development of staff members under their responsibility.
- Conveying constructive feedback.
- Ensuring that conditions conducive to collaboration and goodwill are in place and respected.

ESSENTIAL COMPETENCIES

COLLABORATION



Individuals who master this competency contribute positively to the networks of dialogue and interaction with the various internal collaborators and external partners involved in a given context. They work in concert with others toward a common goal and promote openness and cooperation among stakeholders.

KEY ACTIONS

- Assisting and supporting various stakeholders in achieving objectives.
- Creating and maintaining positive interpersonal relationships.
- Developing business, sharing, and mutual aid networks.
- Encouraging and valuing diversity of opinions and viewpoints.
- Promoting the CEGEP's involvement in its community.
- Informing and involving internal and external partners to ensure the proper management of files.
- Favouring a dynamic based on concerted action and collective strategies.

COMMUNICATION



Individuals who master this competency demonstrate clear, precise, and transparent verbal and written communication skills, as well as flexibility in adjusting to different contexts, modes, and tools of communication. They practice active listening and create opportunities for dialogue and the sharing of ideas, while ensuring an efficient flow of information.

KEY ACTIONS

- Tailoring communications to the context and the people to whom they're addressed while remaining objective and ensuring that the message is understood.
- Ensuring the circulation and sharing of information required to make informed decisions, with a view to supporting the meaning of actions and the proper management of files.
- Creating meaningful communication activities on a regular basis.
- Disseminating and supporting the organization's vision and priorities to members of the college community and partners.
- Clearly stating objectives and expectations.
- Listening to the college community and partners.
- Being persuasive, courteous, and to the point.
- Demonstrating openness and inclusion.
- Fostering the exchange of ideas and facilitating discussions about the key issues facing the organization.
- Mastering the main communication tools and promoting their effective use.

TEAM AND WORKFORCE MANAGEMENT



Individuals who master this competency contribute to and oversee the implementation of all the rules, practices, and behaviours needed to attract, recruit, engage, and foster the development and progression of their staff. This competency also involves deploying strategies to improve the contribution and progress of work teams.

KEY ACTIONS

- Acting preventively and proactively in maintaining a good work climate and team cohesion.
- Ensuring the monitoring of developments and innovations in their sector of activity and encouraging teams to embrace change.
- Coordinating the activities of their work team with the CEGEP's organizational dynamics.
- Defining the roles and responsibilities of team members and ensuring an appropriate workload.
- Evaluating staff and encouraging their training and professional development.
- Setting up or maintaining the conditions needed to inspire team members to embrace the objectives pursued.
- Recognizing the contribution of the team and its members.
- Equipping team members with the information, tools, and resources needed to provide services.
- Ensuring the availability and optimal distribution of staff (in terms of numbers and skills) conducive to achieving objectives.

FINANCIAL AND MATERIAL MANAGEMENT



Individuals who master this competency allocate the funds assigned to their unit or department efficiently and effectively, according to the priorities set for the realization of all the projects under their responsibility, whether for their unit, department, or the CEGEP as a whole.

KEY ACTIONS

- Understanding their sector's challenges and risks and mastering the available tools.
- Based on the CEGEP's strategic objectives and priorities, developing the action plan for units or departments: objectives, required resources, results targets, and measurement indicators.
- Carrying out the reporting exercise.
- Conducting periodic monitoring using observable, measurable indicators and planning adjustment or adaptation measures accordingly.
- Mastering the rules for planning and allocating material and financial resources.
- Optimizing the use of resources in line with the priorities set by the CEGEP's strategic plan.
- Ensuring sound management of public funds and compliance with the various regulations in force.

PLANNING AND ORGANIZATION



Individuals who master this competency contribute to the organization's strategic thinking and decision-making. They identify efficient strategies guided by the CEGEP's mission, vision, and guidelines, and ensure their implementation, in conjunction with the various units and departments. This competency also involves orchestrating activities related to service delivery or projects to be carried out.

KEY ACTIONS

- Anticipating and assessing the spin-offs, constraints, and risks inherent in decision-making.
- Ensuring the development, implementation, and continuous improvement of procedures and processes.
- Optimizing the resource management required to achieve results.
- Participating in the drafting of the CEGEP's development plan, regulations, policies, programs, budgets, and staffing plan.
- Prioritizing the actions to be implemented.
- Structuring the operations timetable to meet deadlines.

CRITICAL THINKING



Individuals who master this competency analyze data from the CEGEP context from a systemic perspective. They understand the expectations and challenges of different groups and partners (internal and external), and take them into account in their strategies.

KEY ACTIONS

- Adapting actions to changing social, economic, political, technological, and environmental contexts.
- Adopting a personalized approach to management that meshes with the institution's organizational culture as part of an evolutionary process.
- Supporting reasoning with evidence and facts from the context.
- Considering the realities (challenges and issues) of different individuals, groups, and partners.
- Regularly evaluating the effectiveness of their actions in implementing the CEGEP's strategic plan.
- Measuring the scope of these actions and their impact on the CEGEP's outreach.

PROBLEM SOLVING



Individuals who master this competency synthesize and review a situation in its various components, recognizing the important or underlying issues and extrapolating the judgments relevant to decision-making. This competency involves both the ability to organize elements systematically and compare the various facets of an issue or an obstacle and to define cause-and-effect relationships in order to solve problems as they arise.

KEY ACTIONS

- Developing and maintaining a reflective stance and a critical perspective as regards their professional practice.
- Considering the various alternatives for making informed, innovative, and sustainable decisions.
- Assessing the information (facts), identifying the problem and its challenges, then consulting stakeholders.
- Demonstrating tolerance in the face of ambiguity and uncertainty.
- Objectively assessing their ways of being and acting and taking the measure of personal resources and limits, with a view to continuous improvement.

SUPPORTING COMPETENCY

PROFESSIONALISM

Individuals who master this competency deploy a set of skills and behaviours often related to the ethics and interpersonal capabilities (soft skills) of people in their day-to-day work situation. Their professionalism especially emerges when representing their unit or department on CEGEP committees and official bodies, including the CEGEP board of governors and senior management committee, or in the presence of other external partners.

HOW TO BEHAVE

- Exercise power and influence ethically and professionally.
- Demonstrate self-control in all situations.
- Base actions and decisions on institutional priorities and values.
- Ensure consistency between what one says and what one does. (Talking the talk and walking the walk.)
- Commit to personal and professional development, learn from one's mistakes, and do what it takes to progress.
- Keep up to date with management trends that influence professional practice.
- Encourage ethical questioning within the CEGEP and one's work teams.
- Work conscientiously, methodically, and rigorously.

COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS

CEGEP senior staffers who wish to submit comments or suggestions regarding the reference framework can send them to the following address: info@accq.qc.ca