



Supporting and Promoting Canada's Linguistic Duality

Colleges and Institutes Canada's Submission
to the Cross-Canada Official Language
Consultation 2016

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Colleges and Institutes Canada (CICan) is the national and international voice of Canada's publicly supported colleges, institutes and polytechnics. Its members work with industry and social sectors to train 1.5 million learners of all ages and backgrounds at campuses serving over 3,000 urban, rural, and remote communities in Canada.

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Introduction

Bilingualism lies at the heart of Canadian identity and enriches our culture immensely to the benefit of all. We must continue to make conscious efforts to promote and teach both official languages and to support the vitality of official language minorities across the country. Education has a tremendous responsibility in this regard.

Canada's colleges and institutes take this responsibility very seriously. Serving over 3,000 communities from coast to coast, they are key contributors to the advancement of our two official languages. Whether by helping students pursue postsecondary studies in their first language, helping new immigrants learn one of our official languages, or encouraging second language learning, for the vast majority of our members, teaching and promoting official languages is all in a day's work.

Many colleges and institutes in official language minority communities also contribute to the vitality of these populations. They often engage in activities that go well beyond education and play the role of community hubs where official minority languages are not only taught, but where their cultures can also grow.

This brief, submitted as part of the Cross-Canada Official Languages Consultations 2016, focuses on the contribution of colleges and institutes in maintaining the vitality of Anglophone and Francophone minority communities, as well as the essential role they play in providing second language learning and promotion, and in helping immigrants become part of our diverse, multicultural society. This document was developed in consultation with our members most directly concerned with these issues, specifically, Anglophone CEGEPs in Quebec and Francophone colleges in minority Francophone communities. We hope that it will contribute to the important reflection within the federal government and be taken into consideration in the development of Canada's new action plan for official languages.

A. Vitality of Minority Francophone Communities

Many colleges and institutes are situated in Francophone minority communities across the country. Because access to postsecondary education in French is very limited in many regions, the role these institutions play is of utmost importance. Furthermore, Francophone communities have often demonstrated a deep attachment to these establishments. Many, including Saskatchewan's Collège Mathieu, founded in 1918, have profoundly marked the history of their regions, while other, more recent institutions are the result of long campaigns and public pressure to increase access to postsecondary education in French.

A 1. Community Support

By maintaining close ties with their communities, colleges and institutes are able to meet the specific needs of minority Francophone populations. In many regions, particularly where Francophone populations are very much in the minority, meeting these needs includes addressing the historical lag in services that are considered essential by Francophone civil society. This is particularly true of health services, early childhood education, and legal services, sectors in which minority Francophone communities in different parts of the country are still working to assert their rights. Given that colleges and institutes play a vital role in training qualified workers, they are essential in ensuring the availability of French services in these sectors and that French speaking professionals have the skills and knowledge required to contribute to the management of these services. However, meeting these needs requires offering a diversity of programs which presents a challenge in many Francophone communities, where colleges are faced with limited resources and strong competition from Anglophone institutions.

One way to overcome these difficulties is for colleges and institutes to develop partnerships facilitating the delivery of training programs that would otherwise be unavailable in the minority language. For example, thanks to a partnership with the Collège communautaire du Nouveau-Brunswick (CCNB), Collège Acadie is able to offer a bilingual nursing assistant program on Prince Edward Island, where French-language health services remain somewhat rare. Similarly, in Vancouver, Collège Éducacentre offers a bilingual health care attendant program in partnership with Collège La Cité in Ottawa.

Access to these and other minority language programs improves French-language services. In minority communities where Francophones face assimilation and Francophone institutions often have difficulty offering services equivalent to those offered to the majority, the presence of qualified workers sensitive to minority realities can make all the difference.

A 2. Employer Support

The availability of professional training at French-language colleges and institutes makes it is easier for minority Francophones to envision careers in their own communities. By working with the community and engaging with local employers through consultative committees, not only do these institutions contribute to their regions' economic vitality, but they also provide their graduates with the skills they need to fully integrate the local labour market. Because French-language colleges and institutes in minority communities produce a French-speaking or bilingual workforce, they help public, private, and community employers in their regions offer bilingual services that meet the needs of all Canadians.

Colleges and institutes also play a critical role in essential skills development. This is particularly true in Francophone minority communities, most of which have numeracy and literacy rates that trail slightly behind those of their English-speaking neighbours, according to Statistics Canada¹.

By offering training adapted to their communities' realities, colleges and institutes are ideally positioned to ensure that everyone, including members of official language minorities, possesses the tools required to join the labour force.

¹Skills in Canada: First Results from the Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC), 2013.

French-language member institutions in minority communities:

- La Cité (Ontario)
 - Collège Acadie (Prince Edward Island)
 - Université Sainte-Anne, College Studies Division (Nova Scotia)
 - Collège Boréal (Ontario)
 - Collège communautaire du Nouveau-Brunswick (CCNB) (New Brunswick)
 - Collège Éducentre (British Columbia)
 - Collège Mathieu (Saskatchewan)
 - Collège nordique francophone (Northwest Territories)
 - École technique et professionnelle, Université de Saint-Boniface (Manitoba)
-

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Because many French-language colleges and institutes serve rural, geographically dispersed populations, training delivery systems must be modernized. This includes not only developing rural campuses, but also creating digital tools that will make it possible to expand French-language program offerings throughout Canada and reach learners spread out over a large territory. The government should also support partnerships between colleges, universities, and other postsecondary institutions in order to provide a greater diversity of programs to francophone minority communities.
- Earmark funds to train French-language professionals in health services, early childhood education, legal services, and other sectors essential to the vitality of minority language communities.
- Allocate a budget to reinforce minority language institutions' capacity and help them cover additional costs associated with delivering training in a minority language and the specialized services their students require.
- Extend overall language planning efforts into the postsecondary sector so that colleges and institutes are able to continue the work begun by the country's school boards. This will also make it possible to familiarize graduates who will be working in minority communities with the challenges of transmitting the French language and of actively providing French-language services in the workplace.

B. Vitality of Anglophone Communities in Quebec

As with French-language colleges and institutes outside Quebec, English-language CEGEPs make an essential contribution to the vitality of Quebec's Anglophone minority. These institutions allow many Quebec Anglophones to receive quality training in their first language and contribute to the socio-economic development of their communities and Quebec as a whole. Some predominantly Francophone CEGEPs also offer English-language programs in regions where access to such services would otherwise be very difficult.

Although English-language institutions in Quebec are well integrated into their communities, many Quebec Anglophones have concerns about their vitality. Because most provincial institutions, including the majority of the province's professional associations, function in French, English-language CEGEPs face numerous challenges that range from resource translation to finding internship placements.

Because English is the majority language of the country as a whole, the issue of assimilation is different in Quebec than for Francophone minorities elsewhere in Canada. However, particularly in regions where very few services are offered in English, assimilation remains a concern. This is why access to minority language training, which Quebec's English-language CEGEPs have been providing for nearly 50 years, must be ensured.

In addition to producing qualified, often bilingual, workers, these institutions also provide many services that engage directly with the community. For example, John Abbott

College has developed a project called JAC Health Caravan, to provide basic health care services and workshops on healthy living to Anglophones in the Laurentian region. Through this initiative, students from a variety of health services programs can apply what they've learned and offer services to people in minority language communities where English-language health services are relatively rare.

As with French-language colleges in minority communities, these colleges and CEGEPs meet many of their community's needs and play roles that extend far beyond their educational mandate. They encourage a sense of belonging within the community and reinvigorate the minority culture by working in collaboration with many English-language institutions actively engaged in cultural, economic, and social activities.

English-language member institutions in Quebec:

- Champlain Regional College
- Cégep Heritage College
- Cégep John Abbott College
- LaSalle College
- TAV College
- Vanier College

French-language member institutions offering English-language programs:

- Cégep de Sept-Îles
- Cégep de la Gaspésie et des îles

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Earmark funds to train English-language professionals in sectors identified as essential to the vitality of official language minority communities in Quebec, identified in consultation with English-language CEGEPs and community associations.
- Allocate a budget to help minority language institutions cover additional costs associated with delivering minority language training.

- Ensure that funds intended to support language minorities are reserved for minority language institutions and kept separate from other initiatives associated with learning English as a second language.
- Allocate funds to encourage student mobility, particularly between urban and rural colleges, and support students from less privileged backgrounds whose financial status may present an obstacle to mobility.

C. Applied Research and Inclusive Innovation

In addition to training a workforce that meets the labour market's needs, colleges and institutes in minority communities use their applied research expertise to help stimulate innovation in local businesses. While this represents one of the Canadian college sector's overall strengths, it is particularly true within minority communities. Because it is generally more difficult to access minority language resources, colleges and institutes play a crucial role in bridging specific gaps and offering concrete, customized support to local businesses and organizations.

For example, CCNB coordinates a provincial value-added wood products program. This initiative supports innovation and commercialization in New Brunswick's wood industry by offering the services of two industry experts specialized in

productivity or marketing and knowledgeable about specific issues facing forestry businesses in the province's rural and francophone regions.

Colleges and institutes working with minority populations can also support their communities through social innovation. For example, La Cité College contributes to the Research Group on Social Inclusion in Ontario (Groupe de recherche sur l'inclusion social en Ontario [GRISO]), whose objective is to implement and evaluate a new internship to increase the social inclusion of people with intellectual disabilities. By calling on colleges and institutes' existing expertise and knowledge of their communities, such initiatives provide innovative solutions to a variety of social issues.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Ensure that funds allocated to research in the postsecondary sector are used in ways that take the needs of official language minority communities into consideration.
- Call upon colleges and institutes' expertise in local development and innovation as part of the multi-year Official Languages Action Plan.
- Encourage the development of inclusive innovation initiatives for francophone minorities by supporting applied research in colleges and institutes.

D. Second Language Learning

Canada's colleges and institutes provide a significant number of the country's language training programs. Whether as part of high school equivalency programs, professional training, or programs specifically designed for second language learning, colleges and institutes offer a variety of language courses in English and French.

Courses are offered to newcomers as well as to all Canadians who wish to learn the other official language. English and French-language colleges and institutes are key providers of the Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) program. Financed by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, this program has been providing French and English language learning support to adult newcomers with permanent residence status since 1992. With over 60,000 newcomers registering each year, this program represents a major contribution to newcomer integration and essential skills acquisition. As a result, colleges and institutes

have developed significant expertise in second language instruction whether they are situated in minority communities or not.

Language training has become an area of expertise in many minority French-language colleges and institutes, which in turn encourages bilingualism in their communities. Language learning centres at the CCNB in New Brunswick, Collège nordique francophone in the Northwest Territories and Collège Éducacentre in British Columbia are excellent examples of this. English-language CEGEPs also contribute to bilingualism not only through their anglophone students, but also through francophone students who register to improve their English. In contexts where students must be prepared to work in the majority language at least some of the time, developing language skills in both official languages is generally included in most programs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Make use of colleges and institutes' existing expertise to further develop second language programs for newcomers and unilingual Canadians.
- Encourage immersion graduates who wish to pursue postsecondary studies in French and improve their language skills to attend French-language colleges and institutes.
- Encourage student mobility between provinces and territories in order to increase exchanges between language communities and facilitate the learning of both official languages.
- Include the promotion of language training opportunities offered by colleges and institutes in refugee and immigrant processes.

E. Diversity and Multiculturalism

Colleges and institutes across the country contribute to the diversity of Canadian society by welcoming an increasing number of international students and new Canadians. Every year, over 56,000 international students² choose to study at a Canadian college; many then decide to stay in their host country, where they are perfectly positioned to join the labour force. For many immigrants, colleges and institutes constitute an essential gateway to success.

For many postsecondary institutions, Canada's bilingual status represents a considerable advantage for international recruitment. Although all of our members share this key advantage, it is especially significant for colleges and institutes in minority communities, who are particularly well equipped to benefit from Canada's linguistic duality.

These institutions' services also facilitate the integration of newcomers to Canada. In addition to offering second language courses and professional training focused on employment, they can also help many foreign-trained professionals upgrade their skills or obtain recognition for existing qualifications.

Furthermore, Canadian colleges and institutes maintain a significant presence in other countries, where they act as ambassadors for Canada and its postsecondary education system. Their training expertise is in high demand in many developing countries, where our model is seen as an example to be followed. Over the past forty years, Colleges and Institutes Canada has facilitated exchanges with over 100 different countries³, including many member countries of the Organisation internationale de la Francophonie.

An international presence facilitates student mobility. Through various mobility initiatives, Canadian students can learn more about the world by spending a semester in another country or by completing an international internship. Many colleges also have mobility initiatives for instructors. In both cases, participants learn about other cultures and other ways of doing; they not only return better equipped to work in an increasingly globalized world, but are also more likely to make our communities more welcoming and more open to diversity.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Support international student mobility programs in order to facilitate international experiences and intercultural exchanges. Unfortunately, the number of Canadian students who spend a semester in another country is relatively low. Barely 3% have had the opportunity to do so.
- Encourage international partnerships and promotional campaigns to bring more international students to Canada.
- Finance integration programs for immigrants, specifically, courses to obtain equivalencies and language training to acquire essential language skills in one of our official languages.
- Ensure that colleges and institutes are included in arrival and immigrant recruitment and integration strategies, particularly in official language minority communities.

²Emsi, Demonstrating the Value of Canada's Colleges and Institutes, Report submitted to CICan, 2016.

³Association of Canadian Community Colleges, Education for Employment: A 40 year History of ACCC International Partnerships, 2012.

Conclusion

Canada's colleges and institutes are major actors who contribute to the vitality and prosperity of their communities from coast to coast. The same is true in official language minority communities, where postsecondary institutions have always played a key role in ensuring the survival and growth of the minority. The contribution of these institutions is absolutely essential to maintaining the vitality of these communities and, as such, has earned a place in the next Official Languages Action Plan.



Member Colleges and Institutes



Colleges and Institutes Canada
Collèges et instituts Canada

Yukon

- Yukon College

Northwest Territories

- Aurora College
- Collège Nordique Francophone*

Nunavut

- Nunavut Arctic College

British Columbia

- British Columbia Institute of Technology (BCIT)
- Camosun College
- Capilano University
- Collège Éducentre*
- College of New Caledonia
- College of the Rockies
- Douglas College
- Emily Carr University of Art + Design
- Justice Institute of British Columbia
- Kwantlen Polytechnic University
- Langara College
- Native Education College**
- Nicola Valley Institute of Technology (NVIT) **
- North Island College
- Northern Lights College
- Northwest Community College
- Okanagan College
- Selkirk College
- University of the Fraser Valley
- Vancouver Community College
- Vancouver Island University (VIU)

Alberta

- Alberta College of Art + Design
- Bow Valley College
- Grande Prairie Regional College (GPRC)
- Keyano College
- Lakeland College
- Lethbridge College
- Medicine Hat College
- NorQuest College
- Northern Alberta Institute of Technology (NAIT)
- Northern Lakes College
- Olds College
- Portage College
- Red Deer College
- SAIT Polytechnic: Southern Alberta Institute of Technology

Saskatchewan

- Carlton Trail College
- Collège Mathieu*
- Cumberland College
- Dumont Technical Institute**
- Great Plains College
- North West College
- Northlands College
- Parkland College
- Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies**
- Saskatchewan Polytechnic
- Southeast College

Manitoba

- Assiniboine Community College
- École technique et professionnelle, Université de Saint-Boniface*
- Red River College
- University College of the North
- Manitoba Institute of Trades and Technology

Ontario

- Algonquin College
- Cambrian College
- Canadore College
- Centennial College
- Collège Boréal*
- Conestoga College Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning
- Confederation College
- Durham College
- Fanshawe College
- First Nations Technical Institute**
- Fleming College
- George Brown College
- Georgian College
- Humber College Institute of Technology & Advanced Learning
- Kenjgewin Teg Educational Institute (or KTEI)**
- La Cité*
- Lambton College
- Loyalist College
- The Michener Institute of Education at UHN
- Mohawk College
- Niagara College
- Northern College
- Sault College
- Seneca College
- Sheridan College
- St. Clair College
- St. Lawrence College

Quebec

- Cégep André-Laurendeau*
- Cégep de Chicoutimi*
- Cégep de Jonquière*
- Cégep de l'Abitibi-Témiscamingue*
- Cégep de la Gaspésie et des Îles*
- Cégep de La Pocatière*
- Cégep de Matane*
- Cégep de Rivière-du-Loup*
- Cégep de Sainte-Foy*
- Cégep de Saint-Félicien*
- Cégep de Saint-Laurent*
- Cégep de Sept-Îles*
- Cégep de Sherbrooke*
- Cégep de Thetford*
- Cégep de Trois-Rivières*
- Cégep de Victoriaville*
- Cégep Édouard-Montpetit*
- Cégep Garneau*
- Cégep Limoilou*
- Cégep Marie-Victorin*
- Cégep régional de Lanaudière*
- Cégep Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu*
- Champlain Regional College
- Collège André Grasset*
- Collège de Maisonneuve *
- Collège LaSalle*
- Collège Lionel-Groulx*
- Collège Montmorency*
- Collège Shawinigan*
- Cégep Heritage College
- Cégep de Rimouski*
- Institut de tourisme et d'hôtellerie du Québec*
- John Abbott College
- TAV College*
- Vanier College

Newfoundland and Labrador

- Centre for Nursing Studies
- College of the North Atlantic
- Fisheries and Marine Institute of Memorial University of Newfoundland

New Brunswick

- Collège communautaire du Nouveau-Brunswick (CCNB)*
- New Brunswick College of Craft and Design
- New Brunswick Community College (NBCC)

Prince Edward Island

- Collège Acadie Î.-P.-É.*
- Holland College

Nova Scotia

- Université Sainte-Anne - Collège de l'Acadie*
- Dalhousie Agricultural Campus, Dalhousie University
- Nova Scotia Community College

Associates

- Association des collèges privés du Québec*
- Association québécoise de pédagogie collégiale*
- Atlantic Provinces Community College Consortium (APCCC)
- BC Colleges (BCC)
- Canadian Association of Diploma in Agriculture Programs (CADAP)
- Canadian Association of College and University Student Services (CACUSS)
- Colleges Ontario
- Fédération des cégeps*
- Forum for International Trade Training (FITT)
- Tra Vinh University

* *Francophone*

** *Indigenous*

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