

Scales of Competency Levels



Ethics and religious culture
Secondary School Education
Cycle One

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ETHICS AND RELIGIOUS CULTURE

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FOREWORD

The scales of competency levels presented in this document constitute the official reference points that form the basis of the student competency reports for Ethics and Religious Culture that Secondary Cycle One teachers must prepare starting in the 2008-2009 school year.

Part I of this document is intended to provide additional information on the nature of these instruments and how they are meant to be used. The scales of competency levels are presented in Part II.

PRESENTATION

An Official Tool for All Teachers

These scales facilitate the recognition of students' competencies at the end of Secondary Cycle One, as provided for in the basic school regulation (section 30.1).

A Uniform Model for All Subjects

To ensure that the scales for all subjects have the same format, a model composed of five competency levels was selected. Table 1 outlines the general model that served as the basis for defining the competency levels for all the subjects, at both the elementary and secondary levels.

Table 1
Outline of the Scales of Competency Levels

Competency Level	Comprehensive End-of-Cycle Assessment
5	ADVANCED: competency development is above the requirements.
4	THOROUGH: competency development clearly meets the requirements.
3	ACCEPTABLE: competency development meets the requirements to a limited extent.
2	PARTIAL: competency development is below the requirements.
1	MINIMAL: competency development is well below the requirements.

The description of each competency level is consistent with the content of the Québec Education Program, but is not a literal reiteration of that content. It is not a matter of defining learning objectives, but of proposing reference points that can be used as a guide in making an assessment at the end of Secondary Cycle One with respect to the student's level of competency development.

In general, each level describes concrete achievements that are typical for the students who have attained them. When viewed in its entirety, each description implies that some choices had to be made so that only certain aspects, typical of that competency level, were retained. The purpose of this description is to provide a succinct picture of the competency level, not to propose an exhaustive list of the elements to be verified. It should be noted that the competency level descriptions appear in the form of structured paragraphs and these profiles pertain as much to the processes or procedures adopted by the student as they do to the results he or she finally achieves. The levels progressively subsume each other. In other words, an aspect of a competency deemed to have been acquired at a given competency level is presumed to have been acquired at the superior levels.

The Distinctive Feature of Level 1

The wide range of observable behaviours possible for a student exhibiting minimal competency development makes it difficult to draw up a typical profile for level 1. In fact, competency level 1 is attributed to students who have not attained level 2. Thus the description of level 1 is often brief and usually mentions that the student needs ongoing support to successfully carry out the tasks assigned to him or her. It is therefore important that students who are at risk of not progressing beyond the lower levels of the scale (1 and 2) be identified as early as possible, and given appropriate support.

Cross-Curricular Competencies

The descriptions contained in the scales for the various subjects take the cross-curricular competencies into account, since their development is closely linked to that of the subject-specific competencies. The presence of elements associated with cross-curricular competencies, particularly at the higher levels of the scales for each subject, indicates their importance for students' educational success and highlights the fact that they must be specifically targeted by planned learning and evaluation situations.

Using the Competency Levels

An appropriate evaluation process must be put in place¹ to ensure that the scales are used properly¹. Since the competencies are applied and developed within learning and evaluation situations, assessments with respect to competencies cannot be made unless such situations are at the heart of teaching practices. In general, the final situations are the most indicative of the student's level of competency development when it comes time to prepare a competency report.

Since the descriptions contained in the scales are relatively short, they cannot specify all the aspects that must be taken into account in making an assessment of competency development. Different evaluation tools apart from the competency scales (e.g. rubrics, checklists) are needed to gather more specific, complete information in order to give students feedback during the learning process and to provide a foundation for teachers' assessments. Since these are based on records attesting to the levels attained, it is important that teachers keep such records so that they can refer to them as needed.

The competency report is not the result of some mathematical calculation made on the basis of results recorded during the year; rather, it is an assessment of the level of competency a student has attained. Analysis of the observations made during the year makes it possible to obtain a portrait of the student's competency development, which is matched with one of the levels on the scale. Keep in mind that this act constitutes a global assessment and that the scales are not designed for analytical use. Teachers should not, therefore, carry out a point-by-point comparison of the statements for a given level with the record of what the student has learned.

¹ The document *Evaluation of Learning at the Secondary Level: Framework* provides more detailed information on the evaluation process. See < <http://www.mels.gouv.qc.ca/DGFJ/de/cadresec.htm> > .

In the interests of greater transparency, teachers are encouraged to familiarize the students and their parents with the scales, to ensure that they understand the competency level descriptions and the manner in which they will be used.

MAIN PRACTICES TO BE ESTABLISHED FOR PREPARING COMPETENCY REPORTS

- Provide students with frequent opportunities to demonstrate their competencies in various ways.
- Present the scales and their purpose to students and parents.
- Keep sufficient information on student learning in accordance with the criteria of the Québec Education Program.
- Construct each assessment gradually and update it using the latest learning and evaluation situations.
- Make a general association between a student's competency and one of the levels on the scale, without carrying out a point-by-point comparison between the observations made and each of the statements for the level.

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Competency 1: Reflects on ethical questions

At the end of Secondary Cycle One, the teacher must prepare competency reports at the end of the second year of the cycle after determining the competency levels attained by the students. Throughout the cycle, the teacher must present students with a variety of more or less familiar situations that enable them to demonstrate their competency in reflecting on ethical questions that involve the themes of freedom, autonomy and social order, in accordance with the requirements of the Québec Education Program and, more specifically, with the guidelines under the heading *Key Features of the Competency* (pp. 16 and 18 of the Ethics and Religious Culture program).

The learning and evaluation situations offered should enable students to do the following:

- analyze a situation from an ethical point of view:
 - describe a situation and put it into context
 - formulate ethical questions
 - compare points of view related to the situation

- examine a variety of references:
 - look for the role and meaning of certain references in different contexts

- evaluate options or actions with respect to community life:
 - examine the effects of certain options or actions on community life
 - select options or actions that foster community life

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Competency 1: Reflects on ethical questions

- 5** **Advanced competency development**
- Compares several elements of the situation in order to clarify it. Highlights the role of the references on which different points of view are based. Justifies, using references, the options or actions selected. Suggests possible ways to improve community life. Assesses his/her work process and makes, if needed, original suggestions.
- 4** **Thorough competency development**
- Demonstrates, through his/her comments, an understanding of the themes addressed. Compares different points of view related to a situation. Names references on which each point of view present is based. Identifies tensions and conflicting values present in a situation. Analyzes the consequences of certain options or actions for oneself and for others, and chooses options or actions to improve community life. Explains the steps in his/her reflective process and proposes means for overcoming obstacles.
- 3** **Acceptable competency development**
- Formulates ethical questions related to the situation. Identifies different points of view that arise from a given situation. Highlights, for a given option, positive and negative consequences for community life. Associates references to an option or an action. Describes the steps in his/her process of ethical reflection and takes into account possible means to improvement that have been suggested.
- 2** **Partial competency development**
- Outlines an ethical question related to a situation. Identifies some tensions present in a situation. Highlights, with help, some references present in a situation.
- 1** **Minimal competency development**
- Identifies, with help, points of view and references present in the situation. Selects, with constant help, options or actions that contribute to community life.

At the end of Secondary Cycle One, the teacher must prepare competency reports at the end of the second year of the cycle after determining the competency levels attained by the students. Throughout the cycle, the teacher must present students with a variety of more or less familiar complex situations that enable them to show their competency in demonstrating an understanding of the phenomenon of religion by showing an interest in Québec's religious heritage, key elements of religious traditions and different representations of the sacred and of mythical and supernatural beings, in accordance with the requirements of the Québec Education Program and, more specifically, with the guidelines under the heading *Key Features of the Competency* (pp. 20 and 22 of the Ethics and Religious Culture program).

The learning and evaluation situations offered should enable students to do the following:

- analyze forms of religious expression:
 - name and describe forms of religious expression
 - explain their meaning and role

- make connections between forms of religious expression and the social and cultural environment:
 - identify forms of religious expression in space and time
 - study their meaning and role in the life of individuals and groups
 - examine the similarities and differences

- examine various ways of thinking, being and acting:
 - develop further various ways of thinking, being and acting
 - assess the impact of different types of behaviour on life within society

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Competency 2: Demonstrates an understanding of the phenomenon of religion

Advanced competency development

5

Compares various forms of religious expression. Explains, using appropriate vocabulary, the meaning and role of forms of religious expression for members of the religious tradition concerned. Highlights the influence of religious traditions on the social and cultural environment from here and elsewhere in the world. Explains, using examples, the secular use of forms of religious expression.

Thorough competency development

4

Demonstrates an understanding of forms of religious expression. Compares, by demonstrating openness, different ways of thinking, being and acting within Québec society. Identifies the impact of certain types of behaviour on community life. Highlights the contribution made by religious traditions with respect to Québec society. Explains the main steps in his/her process.

Acceptable competency development

3

Describes forms of religious expression (language, architecture, customs, etc.) present in Québec's social and cultural environment. Compares various ways of thinking, being and acting in society here and elsewhere in the world. Identifies the consequences of different ways of acting within a context of diversity.

Partial competency development

2

States characteristics of religious traditions present in Québec society. Associates forms of religious expression in his/her environment with the corresponding religious tradition. Recognizes types of behaviour that are appropriate within a context of religious diversity.

Minimal competency development

1

Identifies, with help, some forms of religious expression. Identifies ways of acting specific to each of the great religious traditions.

At the end of Secondary Cycle One, the teacher must prepare competency reports at the end of the second year of the cycle after determining the competency levels attained by the students. Throughout the cycle, the teacher must present students with a variety of more or less familiar situations that enable them to demonstrate their competency in engaging in different forms of dialogue, including a discussion or a roundtable. Students will have learned about certain types of judgments (preference, value) and processes likely to hinder dialogue (straw man argument, false analogy, slippery slope and conspiracy theories), in accordance with the requirements of the Québec Education Program and, more specifically, with the guidelines under the heading *Key Features of the Competency* (pp. 24 and 26 of the Ethics and Religious Culture program).

The learning and evaluation situations offered should enable students to do the following:

- organize their thinking:
 - identify the subject of dialogue
 - make connections between prior knowledge and new knowledge
 - distinguish between what is essential and what is secondary in the different points of view expressed

- interact with others:
 - look for conditions that foster dialogue
 - express their point of view and pay attention to others' points of view
 - explain different points of view, using pertinent and coherent arguments

- develop a point of view:
 - use resources to find out more about the subject of dialogue
 - develop their understanding of different points of view
 - imagine various hypotheses

Advanced competency development

5

Uses all the elements (rules, references, resources, conditions) essential to engaging in dialogue. Explains the reasons for modifying or consolidating his/her point of view. Suggests ways of proceeding in addition to those provided in class. Reflects on his/her process and proposes means for overcoming obstacles.

Thorough competency development

4

Uses a process for organizing his/her ideas and structuring his/her thinking on topics involving ethics and religious culture. Verifies the reliability of sources mentioned in support of a point of view. Develops a point of view by incorporating elements taken from other points of view expressed. Justifies a point of view using reliable references and resources. Applies the rules that are conducive to dialogue and identifies types of judgments and processes likely to hinder it.

Acceptable competency development

3

Highlights some ideas and arguments contained in a point of view. Identifies some explicit resources useful for developing a point of view. Recognizes some types of judgments present in the points of view expressed. Modifies or maintains his/her point of view further to interactions with peers.

Partial competency development

2

Develops a coherent point of view to a limited extent. Applies the rules for engaging in dialogue. Associates arguments and ideas with the corresponding points of view. Implements the suggested approach for carrying out tasks.

Minimal competency development

1

Expresses, with help, a point of view in relation to the subject of dialogue and pays attention to others' points of view.

