

**APPROVAL
OF
INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS**

**MINISTÈRE DE L'ÉDUCATION, DU LOISIR ET DU SPORT
DIRECTION DES RESSOURCES DIDACTIQUES**

2010

What is the BAMD?

Since 1980, the Bureau d'approbation du matériel didactique (BAMD) has evaluated and approved instructional materials, using criteria approved by the Minister and developed in accordance with the orientations and content of programs of study that have received ministerial approval. The BAMD is a service of the *Direction des ressources didactiques* (DRD) and is also responsible for publishing and updating the list of *Instructional Materials Approved by the Minister of Education, Recreation and Sports*.

What is the CCERD?

The *Comité-conseil sur l'évaluation des ressources didactiques* (CCERD) is an advisory committee that plays a role in approving instructional materials through the following mandates that were assigned to it by the Minister:

- to recommend the Minister's approval of instructional materials, based on analyses carried out by the BAMD
- to advise the Minister on any matter related to the evaluation, approval, implementation and review of instructional materials

The CCERD is made up of thirteen members appointed by the Minister. Nine of these are associated with the education system (French and English sectors; public and private sectors; elementary and secondary levels), one member is from the university community, two members are parents of students and one member represents the publishing companies affiliated with the Association nationale des éditeurs de livres (ANEL).

Why do instructional materials need to be approved?

The approval system ensures that all materials comply with the provisions of the *Education Act* that concern instructional materials.

Section 462, in particular, stipulates that, "The Minister may draw up a list of textbooks, instructional material or classes of instructional material approved by him which may be selected for the teaching of the programs of studies established by him." In exercising his or her authority to draw up the list of approved instructional materials, the Minister ensures the quality of instructional packages on the market, since they meet the evaluation criteria developed by the Minister.

What types of instructional materials can be approved?

Many resources of various kinds are used in teaching and learning. The Minister has specified those that must be submitted for approval. They include instructional packages and reference works for classroom use.

To be eligible for ministerial approval, an instructional package must meet the following definition:

An instructional package consists of a number of tools, including a printed textbook for students and a printed or electronic teacher's guide. It may also include other electronic elements.

The instructional package is designed specifically for teaching and learning, and is considered a support, interface and reference tool. It should also aim to expand students' cultural horizons and promote social values.

It should form a coherent package based on the broad areas of learning and present suggestions for developing cross-curricular competencies.

The textbook and the teacher's guide should cover the entire program for a subject, or several subjects in the case of cross-curricular learning.

As for reference works for classroom use, these are tools essential to the school environment (dictionaries, grammar guides, atlases), in regular and frequent use by students. In the case of dictionaries, only general works are included (spelling, encyclopedic or visual dictionaries). Specialized dictionaries, such as synonym, antonym or rhyme dictionaries, are not included in this category.

In order to provide teachers with a variety of choices, the Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport approves several instructional packages and reference works for classroom use for each subject, according to the cycles and levels of instruction.

For reasons of educational relevance, approval applies to instructional materials directly connected with official programs of study and with the Policy on the Evaluation of Learning and the frameworks for the evaluation of learning.

In this regard, it is important to note that, considering the right to free instructional materials stipulated in the *Education Act* and the pedagogical orientations of each program, exercise books are excluded from ministerial approval by an administrative directive adopted in 1990.

Finally, some resources are regarded as complementary materials (see the [FAQ](#) section) and are not submitted for the Minister's approval.

What are the functions of instructional materials?

Instructional materials serve as an interface

They give shape to the program and offer a current reading of the program from the points of view of both teachers and students. This interpretation is worked out through a set of teaching approaches consistent with the competency-based approach advocated in the Québec Education Program (QEP).

Instructional materials serve as a support

By providing teachers with concrete tools to help carry out the curriculum prescriptions of the subjects in the classroom, instructional packages serve to support teaching. These packages also serve as a support to students in that they help them to develop the competencies prescribed in the QEP through the use of various tools and learning and evaluation situations.

Instructional materials serve as reference documents

The students' textbook is a material resource consisting of a collection of tasks, activities and information, supplemented with a toolbox (strategies, techniques, attitudes and processes). The reference function extends beyond the school context, as it plays a key role in the relationship between school and family.

Instructional materials serve as cultural references

This function is related to the educational aims of the QEP. In this respect, the instructional package can be considered an excellent means of helping students construct their world-view, construct their identity and empower themselves. The integration of cultural references into the various subjects plays a crucial role in this process.

Instructional materials represent social values

Québec is an open and modern democratic society, and its values must be reflected in instructional packages submitted to the Minister for approval.

How are materials approved?

Seven aspects are taken into consideration in evaluating instructional packages submitted for approval. The same aspects, with appropriate adjustments, apply to reference works for classroom use. For this purpose, reference frameworks specific to dictionaries, grammar guides and atlases have been developed.

Pedagogical aspects

The evaluation criteria related to pedagogical aspects are used to verify that instructional materials conform to the requirements of the QEP.

Sociocultural aspects

The evaluation of sociocultural aspects ensures that the materials adequately represent the diversity of Québec society and are free of discrimination and sexism.

Material aspects

The evaluation of material aspects verifies that certain requirements are met concerning durability, legibility, accessibility of information, etc.

Advertising aspects

The evaluation of advertising aspects ensures that the instructional materials are free of all forms of advertising (including Web site addresses in the components intended for students).

Toponymical aspects

The Commission de toponymie du Québec reviews many works intended for students and ensures that the rules and conventions of toponymy are respected.

Conventional aspects

This evaluation verifies that the materials observe the standard language rules, the health and safety rules, the rules and conventions of the International System of Units (SI) and other writing standards. It should be noted that when submitting any instructional materials to the BAMD for approval, a publisher must provide attestations of linguistic revision, scientific revision and conformity with the International System of Units, as

well as other writing standards.

Appropriateness of religious content

The Secrétariat aux affaires religieuses issues an opinion on all materials intended for the teaching of the Ethics and Religious Culture program. Other materials dealing with religious content may also be submitted to the SAR.

How is the process of approval carried out?

Upon receipt of any instructional materials, the administrative staff does a preliminary verification of its eligibility and its components. The person responsible for the file then sends the material to three people who analyze its pedagogical aspects. These people are education consultants and working teachers who have received specific training on the checklist of evaluation criteria and the content of programs in their own subject specialty.

The sociocultural, advertising and material aspects are evaluated simultaneously. If required, the materials may also be submitted to the Commission de toponymie du Québec or to the Secrétariat aux affaires religieuses.

The various evaluation results are processed by the person responsible for the file, who submits a report to the Comité-conseil sur l'évaluation des ressources didactiques. After studying the file, this committee submits its recommendation to the Minister, or the Minister's representative. The recommendation may be an approval or a refusal.

The Minister's decision and the final evaluation report are sent to the publisher. A list of compulsory or recommended modifications is included in the report, if applicable. Naturally, approval depends on the publisher's response to the modifications required. When all the conditions for approval have been met, a certificate of approval is issued and the materials are registered in the official list on the Web site of the BAMD. The whole approval process normally takes three months.

The approved materials remain on the list as long as the program is in use. The period of approval for reference works for classroom use is seven years, with the possibility of renewal.

FAQ

Q. What type of materials are eligible for approval by the Minister of Education, Recreation and Sports?

- A. As permitted by the *Education Act*, the Minister approves basic instructional materials, which include two types of works: instructional packages and reference works for classroom use (dictionaries, grammar guides, atlases).

Q. What is meant by “complementary materials?”

- A. Complementary materials cover only part of a program of study or do not constitute either an instructional package (teacher’s guide and student’s textbook) or a reference work for classroom use (dictionary, grammar guide, atlas). These materials, which are not considered basic instructional materials, may be used in the classroom without any particular authorization of the Minister. This also applies to literary or musical works that are not evaluated by the Ministère. It is therefore up to each individual school to set up a mechanism for evaluating and selecting these tools.

Q. Are exercise books eligible for approval by the Minister?

- A. Although they may be used in the classroom, exercise books are not considered to be basic instructional materials, and they are not approved by the Minister. An approved instructional package should contain sufficient activities so that there is no need to buy exercise books. As with complementary instructional materials, it is the school’s responsibility to decide on their use, after it does the necessary consultations, in particular with the governing board, as stipulated in the *Education Act*.

Q. What is the difference between the terms “in conformity with” and “approved?”

- A. The mention “in conformity with the MELS program” appearing on certain works does not mean that the materials have been approved by the Minister. To consult the list of approved materials, which is the only official reference concerning ministerial approval, please visit the Web site of the Bureau d’approbation du matériel didactique at www.mels.gouv.qc.ca/bamd/info_ang.htm.

Q. How can complementary materials be presented to school boards and schools?

A. On the Web site of the BAMD, the Ministère posts only the official list of approved materials. Since complementary materials are not subject to ministerial approval, individuals or groups can communicate directly with school boards or schools to present their materials. For a list of school boards and schools, refer to the home page of the Ministère's Web site and click on "Recherche d'un organisme scolaire."

Q. Does the Ministère buy textbooks?

A. The purchase of textbooks is the responsibility of school boards who receive an annual grant from the Ministère that may be spent on instructional materials. Also, with the implementation of the curriculum reform, additional funding has been invested in replacing textbooks on a large scale.

Q. How are instructional materials chosen by the schools?

A. The *Education Act* provides for a sharing of responsibilities in this area. On the one hand, teaching personnel choose the types of instructional approaches that meet the needs and objectives set for each class or student under their responsibility. They then make suggestions to the school administration concerning the instructional materials that correspond to their needs. On the other hand, the school administration is responsible for approving the teachers' choices and requests. As for the school board, it ensures that for the teaching of programs approved by the Minister, the school will use the textbooks, instructional materials and categories of instructional materials approved by the Minister.

Q. Can the BAMD advise on the purchase of materials?

A. The Minister follows the process strictly and approves a variety of materials that may differ in presentation and quality. It is up to the schools to make careful choices that meet both the needs of their students and their teaching staff. Parents who wish to be consulted on this matter are invited to contact the personnel of their child's school.