# Writing an Institutional Research Policy

**ARC** | Association pour la recherche au collégial

**ARC?**

As a professional association, ARC fosters the development of research throughout the college system, in particular through the dissemination of position papers on research issues, the hosting of research-related activities and conferences, the establishment of research support measures, the awarding prizes and, more recently, through meta-research projects.

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# Writing an Institutional Research Policy

A research policy is a reference document that enables an institution to state its research philosophy and define its research mission. ARC recommends that the first stage of an institutional research plan should be the drafting of the research policy. The more the community participates in this project, the more likely it will be to subscribe to the standards, principles, values and objectives set forth in this policy as well as in the institution's other research-related policies.

# What do "Research" and "Innovation" Mean?

Definitions of the terms "research" and "innovation"
vary according to the sources used and the contexts in which they are found.

## Research

"Mental activities and work involved in the discovery of new knowledge in the fields of science, literature or art."

[ARC translation] *Grand dictionnaire terminologique,* s.v. "Recherche,"
http://www.granddictionnaire.com/btml/fra/r_motclef/index1024_1.asp
(accessed March 23, 2009).

"Investigation or experimentation aimed at the discovery and interpretation of facts, revision of accepted theories or laws in the light of new facts, or practical application of such new or revised theories or laws."

*Merriam-Webster Online*, s.v. "Research,"
http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/research
(accessed March 15, 2009).

"Systematic investigation to establish facts, principles or generalizable knowledge."

Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans. 1998 (with 2000, 2002 and 2005 amendments).
http://www.pre.ethics.gc.ca/english/policystatement/policystatement.cfm
(accessed March 26, 2009).

" … 'research', within the context of higher education, means original scientific, technological and engineering, medical, cultural, social and human science or educational research which implies careful, critical, disciplined inquiry, varying in technique and method according to the nature and conditions of the problems identified, directed towards the clarification and/or resolution of the problems, and when within an institutional framework, supported by an appropriate infrastructure[.]"

UNESCO, *Recommendation concerning the Status of Higher-Education Teaching Personnel,* General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, meeting in Paris for its 29th session,1997.
http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=13144&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html
(accessed March 23, 2009).

" … innovation-related activities such as developing new or enhanced products and processes; disseminating and bringing new knowledge to market; building and testing prototypes; and carrying out non-routine laboratory testing or field studies, etc."

Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, *Institutional Eligibility Requirements*, 2006, updated August 6, 2008.
http://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/NSERC-CRSNG/eligibility-admissibilite/inst-etab_eng.asp
(accessed March 23, 2009).

"Field or set of methodical, objective, rigorous and verifiable activities designed to discover logic, dynamics or coherence in an apparently random or chaotic set of data in order to provide an original explicit response to a well-defined problem or to contribute to the development of a field of knowledge."

[ARC translation] Renald Legendre, *Dictionnaire actuel de l'éducation*, s.v. "Recherche," 3rd ed. Montréal: Guérin, 2005, p. 1135.

## Institutional Research

"Research on the nature and function of an institution."

[ARC translation] Renald Legendre, *Dictionnaire actuel de l'éducation*, s.v. "Recherche institutionnelle," 3rd ed. Montréal: Guérin, 2005, p. 1152.

## Basic Research

"Work undertaken essentially for the purpose of pushing back the boundaries of scientific knowledge with no specific practical application in view. It can lead to the discovery of new laws and phenomena."

[ARC translation] *Grand dictionnaire terminologique*, s.v. "Recherche fondamentale," 2002, updated November 30, 2008.
http://www.granddictionnaire.com/btml/fra/r_motclef/index1024_1.asp
(accessed March 23, 2009).

"Research which is directed toward increase of knowledge in science. In such research, the primary aim of the investigator is a fuller knowledge or understanding of the subject under study rather than any practical application there of."

*Termium, The government of Canada's terminology and data bank*, s.v. "Basic research,"
http://www.btb.termiumplus.gc.ca/
(accessed March 13, 2009).

## Applied Research

"Work concerned with determining the benefits that discoveries, knowledge, generally obtained by basic research, can contribute to a given area of activity."

[ARC translation] *Grand dictionnaire terminologique*, s.v. "Recherche appliquée," 2002, updated November 30, 2008.
http://www.granddictionnaire.com/btml/fra/r_motclef/index1024_1.asp
(accessed March 23, 2009).

"Research pursuing concrete and precise objectives likely to find an application in medical practice (diagnosis, treatment)."

*Termium, The government of Canada's terminology and data bank*, s.v. "Applied research".
http://www.btb.termiumplus.gc.ca/
(accessed March 13, 2009).

## Research and Experimental Development

" … creative work undertaken on a systematic basis in order to increase the stock of knowledge, including knowledge of man, culture and society and the use of this stock of knowledge to devise new applications."

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *Frascati Manual 2002: Proposed Standard Practice for Surveys on Research and Experimental Development*, OECD Publications, 6th ed. Paris, chap. 2.
http://oberon.sourceoecd.org/vl=647187/cl=23/nw=1/rpsv/factbook/070101.htm
(accessed March 23, 2009).

## Social Innovation

"Social innovation… can be summarized as 'any new approach, practice, intervention, or new product that is developed to improve a situation or resolve a social problem and that has been adopted by institutions, organizations or communities.'"

Camil Bouchard with the collaboration of the Groupe de travail sur l'innovation sociale, *Contribution à une politique de l'immatériel*, Québec: Les Publications du Québec, 1999, p. 2. *Quoted in Innovation in the CEGEPs from the Stakeholders' Perspective*, Research Report, Survey for the Conference of the Fédération des cégeps, 2006, p. 19.

## Technological Innovation

"By technological product innovation we mean the development and commercialization of a more efficient product with a view to providing the consumer with objectively new or enhanced services."

Gouvernement du Québec. Ministère de la Recherche, de la Science et de la Technologie, *Québec Policy on Science and Innovation: Knowledge to Change the World*, 2001, p. 10.
http://www.frsq.gouv.qc.ca/en/publications/pdf/MRST_SavoirChanger.pdf
(accessed March 23, 2009).

# What is an Institutional Research Policy?

An institutional research policy enables an institution to state its research philosophy and define its research mission. In such a document, the institution generally presents its organizational structure, states what support is provided for research and defines key concepts in its research activities.

This explains why ARC recommends that the first stage of an institutional research project should be to write the research policy. Indeed, many benefits are associated with having such a policy in place. Thus, research as an activity carried out by a few individuals becomes part of the institution's broader mission, which in turn contributes to the development of knowledge.

- A research policy promotes the integration of research into all the institution's activities.

- A research policy demonstrates the institution's commitment to research and innovation activities: research activities are not driven solely by the people involved in a field, but by the organization and resources available to them as well; this ensures a stronger foothold in research activities.

- The adoption of a research policy creates a favourable environment for carrying out research projects, encouraging the involvement of stakeholders such as personnel and external bodies (funding agencies, partners or sponsors) in the project.

- The elements of the research policy together make up the internal reference framework for research, and this framework makes it easier to draft other research-related policies.

- The existence of a research policy helps ensure that research activities will be recognized.

- The adoption of a research policy provides stability to activities while they are in progress and even encourages research development within an institution, and, more broadly, the college network.

The federal and provincial agencies that provide financial assistance for research do not require educational institutions to have a research policy in order to give them grants. Institutions are free to adopt such a policy and include in it whatever elements they consider appropriate, since no compliance assessment is involved.

« Un programme harmonieux de la recherche suppose un continuum d'activités qui s'étend de la recherche fondamentale jusqu'aux programmes technologiques en passant par la recherche finalisée et appliquée. »

Pierre Joliot,, *La recherche passionnément*, Paris: Édition Odile Jacob, 2001, p. 28.

# What are the Elements of a Research Policy?

Since institutions are free to adopt a research policy and to include in it whatever elements they consider appropriate, the list of elements that such a document may contain is open-ended. By reading policies currently in force in the college network, one can create a list of the elements found within them. While the order and names of elements vary from one policy to another, any institution wishing to draft its own policy can refer to the list below as an aid.

- ☐ **Preamble**
- ☐ **Field of application of the policy**
- ☐ **Objectives of the policy**
- ☐ **References to other institutional documents**
- ☐ **Definitions of terms**
- ☐ **Institution's objectives and research priorities**
- ☐ **Organizational framework and support available for research activities**
- ☐ **Subjects or types of research**
- ☐ **Issues involved in the research**
- ☐ **Guidelines**
- ☐ **General principles**
- ☐ **Roles and responsibilities**
- ☐ **Legal framework, code(s) of ethics or charter of ethics**
- ☐ **Dissemination of research results**
- ☐ **Development of research skills**
- ☐ **Research involving human subjects**
- ☐ **Integration of research into other activities at the college**
- ☐ **Implementation, evaluation and review of the policy**
- ☐ **General provisions**
- ☐ **Appendices**
    - ☐ Diagram describing the institution's different research groups
    - ☐ Other research-related policies
    - ☐ Other reference documents

# Research and the Law

Two Québec laws structure the way in which colleges operate: the **General and Vocational Colleges Act** and the **Act Respecting Private Education**.

The **General and Vocational Colleges Act** explicitly recognizes the place that research occupies in CEGEPs' activities. Section 6.0.1. sets forth the activities to which a college may contribute.

"A college may, in addition,

a) contribute, by labour training activities, applied research, technical assistance to enterprises and the provision of information, to the development and realization of technological innovation projects, the implementation and diffusion of new technology and the development of its region;

b) carry out studies or research in education and support those members of its staff who take part in subsidized research programs;

c) supply services or allow the use of its facilities and equipment for cultural, social, sporting or scientific purposes, priority being given, however, to needs of full-time students … ."

Since the **Act Respecting Private Education** makes no mention of research-related activities, a private college's involvement in research or innovation activities depends entirely on the goodwill of the college, which can make such decisions about its involvement in those spheres of activity as it considers appropriate.

"Creativity, vitality, the quality of training and the availability of human resources affect the performance of a research and innovation system."

Gouvernement du Québec. Ministère de la Recherche, de la Science et de la Technologie, *Québec Policy on Science and Innovation: Knowledge to Change the World,* 2001, p. 7, **http://www.frsq.gouv.qc.ca/en/publications/ pdf/MRST_SavoirChanger.pdf** (accessed March 23, 2009).

"Knowledge must be recognized as a value in itself."

Gouvernement du Québec. Ministère de la Recherche, de la Science et de la Technologie*, Québec Policy on Science and Innovation: Knowledge to Change the World,* 2001, p. 5. **http://www.frsq.gouv.qc.ca/en/publications/ pdf/MRST_SavoirChanger.pdf** (accessed March 23, 2009).

# Where is the Directory of College Network Research Policies Housed?

In association with the College Documentation Centre (CDC), ARC maintains an up-to-date directory of institutional research policies. This directory, which can be accessed on the Association's Website, lists research policies that are brought to ARC's attention. Among the bibliographical references found in this document is a list of research policies compiled by ARC. Wherever a policy can be accessed via the Internet, you can click on the reference and a hyperlink will take you to the Website; the other policies can be obtained either by submitting a request to the CDC or by directly approaching the institution.

| College Documentation Centre | www.cdc.qc.ca<br>info@cdc.qc.ca<br>514 364-3320, extension 241 or 178 |
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# What Support Can ARC Offer?

The Association is continuously improving the services it offers to institutions that want to develop research or research governance. These services include providing guides, information sessions, directories, email distribution lists and a bank of resource persons. This means, for example, that a member can ask the Association to be paired up with another member who has experience in drafting research policies. In the areas of guidance and support as well as in the other services it provides to its members, ARC works in a spirit of true collegiality.

« La beauté de notre métier réside dans le fait que les progrès de la science ne reposent pas exclusivement sur les découvertes de quelques rares génies, mais également sur l'activité créatrice plus modeste pratiquée au quotidien [par] de très nombreux chercheurs. »

Pierre Joliot, *La recherche passionnément*, Paris: Édition Odile Jacob, 2001, p.16.

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http://www.pre.ethics.gc.ca/eng/policy-politique/tcps-eptc/
(accessed March 26, 2009).

Cégep André Laurendeau.
*Politique institutionnelle de la recherche*, 2009.

Cégep de Chicoutimi.
*Politique de recherche*, 1998.

Cégep de Drummondville.
*Politique institutionnelle de recherche*, 2005.
http://www.cdrummond.qc.ca/informations/renseignements/documents_officiels/documents/POLo_001.pdf
(accessed December 3, 2008).

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*Politique institutionnelle de recherche,* 2006.

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www.cegep-rimouski.qc.ca/serv/cahigest/E-12.pdf
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*Politique institutionnelle de recherche*, 2003.

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http://azimut.cstj.qc.ca/pls/portal/docs/PAGE/PGR_ORG_JER/PGE_SJ/PGE_SJ_LE_COLLEGE/PGE_SJ_COLL_POL_REGLES/PGE_SJ_POL_REGLES_PORTLET/POLITIQUE_INTEGRITE_RECHERCHE_1.PDF
(accessed December 29, 2008).

Cégep de Saint-Laurent.
*Politique institutionnelle de recherche,* 2001.
http://www.cegep-st-laurent.qc.ca/public/f1ca7e5b-dc2b-4338-bad5-9dc4e5c46f21/mes_documents/cegep/reglements_et_politiques/politique_recherche_sl.pdf
(accessed December 3, 2008).

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*Politique de la recherche,* 2007.

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http://www.cegep-lanaudiere.qc.ca/Repertoire/000019/Fichiers/Politique_recherche%202009-02-10.pdf
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*Politique institutionnelle de recherche* – numéro 37, 2008.
http://www.collegemv.qc.ca/CMS/Media/2251_294_fr-CA_0_pol_37_institutionnelle_recherche.pdf
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http://www.collegeshawinigan.qc.ca/web/section/lecollege/Textes%20réglementaires/Pol%2030.pdf
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Gouvernement du Québec. *Act Respecting Private Education,* Éditeur officiel du Québec, c1992, updated December 15, 2008.
http://www2.publicationsduquebec.gouv.qc.ca/dynamicSearch/telecharge.php?type=2&file=/E_9_1/E9_1_A.html
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http://www2.publicationsduquebec.gouv.qc.ca/dynamicSearch/telecharge.php?type=2&file=/C_29/C29_A.html
(accessed January 5, 2009).

Gouvernement du Québec. Ministère de la Recherche, de la Science et de la Technologie. *Québec Policy on Science and Innovation: Knowledge to Change the World,*  2001.
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*Grand dictionnaire terminologique*, 2002, updated November 30, 2008.
http://www.granddictionnaire.com/
(accessed March 23, 2009)

Legendre, Renald. *Dictionnaire actuel de l'éducation*, 3rd ed. Montréal: Guérin, 2005.

*Merriam-Webster Online*, s.v. "Research".
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