

Canadian Co-Curricular Recognition Program Guidelines

Developed in collaboration with the Canadian Co-Curricular Records Network (now CACUSS
Co-Curricular Records Community of Practice)

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Introduction

Background

Co-curricular recognition (CCR) programs offered by post-secondary institutions in Canada are official documents that formally acknowledge the valuable learning that occurs outside of the classroom. An effective CCR program facilitates student reflection on these experiences, promotes greater student engagement, and provides a verified document appropriate for a variety of applications. Although given a great deal of attention, it is important to note that the document is only a small part of the process. The greater accomplishment is student engagement in meaningful and impactful experiences (Carini et al 2006).

In recent years many institutions from coast to coast have adopted CCR programs resulting in a variety of printed formats. Each record has a slightly different designs and there is a range in the level of content that outlines an individual student's experiences. With this growing number of institutions with CCR programs and with more and more students utilizing (or seeking to utilize) their CCR program records externally, now is a critical time for the Professionals Network to discuss a national set of standards, or at least a set of common principles.

For that reason we are proposing the following set of guidelines to be discussed at a national level with professionals attending the annual CCR Summit, the Canadian Association of College and University Student Services (CACUSS) annual national conference, and the Canadian Association of Career Educators and Employers (CACEE) annual national conference.

We look forward to the greater discussion and the ultimate outcome of a shared standard in this field.

Kimberly Elias and Chris Glover

CCR Program Guidelines

Defining a Co-Curricular Recognition Program (CCR)

A co-curricular recognition (CCR) program provides an official document validating a student's achievement and involvement through a specific post-secondary institution's defined co-curricular programming. Co-Curricular programming provides students with diverse opportunities to engage in activities identified as fostering lifelong learning through personal growth and development, developing employability skills, and enhancing transferable skills beyond what is recognized on the student's academic transcript.

Students are encouraged to reflect on their co-curricular experiences and to articulate on their Co-Curricular Record/Transcript their learning, skill development, and achievements. Students and alumni can use their CCR official document to showcase their skill development to employers and to include as supporting documentation in their portfolios as well as in application packages such as graduate school and bursaries.

(Developed collaboratively by professionals from Conestoga College, Sheridan College, and the University of Toronto in March, 2016.)

Part 1: Outcomes, Competencies, and Reflection

The primary focus of CCR Programs is to engage students in meaningful and intentionally designed co-curricular experiences, resulting in student learning. It is strongly recommended that CCR Program Policies and/or Guidelines include outcome domains and an opportunity for students to reflect on their experiences to articulate achieved key outcomes.

As a starting point, institutions are encouraged to consider the domains and associated outcomes as identified by Council for the advancement of Standards in Higher Education in 2008. Those domains are:

1. Knowledge acquisition, construction, integration, and application
2. Cognitive complexity
3. Intrapersonal development
4. Interpersonal competence
5. Humanitarianism and civic engagement
6. Practical competence

Part 2: Eligibility

Criteria must clearly articulate the requirements for experiences to be recognized on the official document.

Policies should, at minimum be inclusive of experiences that promote new learning opportunities for students to complement their overall experience and require any or all of the following:

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- Be directly related to a student's experience while at the institution
- Encourage and support student growth and development
- Contribute to the greater life, atmosphere, and culture of the institution's community

Part 3: Validation

To ensure the integrity of the Co-Curricular Record, institutions must have a defined validation process.

The validation process must be housed within the institution, who may partner with a variety of community officials.

The process must clearly outline the roles of students, staff, faculty, and members of the community.

A validator is defined as a responsible individual who verifies student engagement in a particular experience.

Part 4: Official Record

Each institution's official CCR Program Record must have the following:

- Signature(s) of institution's officials
- Official branding of the institution
- A mechanism that ensures the validity of the document
- Dates of accomplishments
- Date of publication

Official records should include:

- Associated learning outcomes, competencies, and/or reflections as identified by the student and/or institution
- Details of the experience including but not limited to position (role), start date, end date, and hours

Reference to the institution's CCR Program Policy or Guidelines may appear on the CCR.

Role of the Canadian Co-Curricular Records Network

The role of the CCR Programs Professional's Network will be to review this proposed document on an annual basis for the next five years (2016-2021) as CCR Programs continue to evolve. It is our hope that the standards will one day carry a brand to be appended to each Canadian institution's official printed document provided it meets these standards/common principles.

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