

Do You Want to Learn how to Determine the Language Requirements of a Position?

Have you ever wondered, what is Section 91 of the *Official Languages Act* and what does it have to do with the language requirements of a position? Section 91 sets out the need for objectivity when establishing the linguistic requirements of positions. This means that language requirements have to be based on the duties of the position as described in the job description and the linguistic obligations to the public and/or to employees. Language requirements should not be based on an employee/candidate's language proficiency.

Factors to consider when establishing the language requirements of a position:

- location of the position (bilingual region vs. unilingual region);
- specific tasks to be accomplished by the position as established in the job description;
- services to be provided by the position;
- forms of interactions (oral, written) required and with whom;
- bilingual capacity of the team; and
- whether supervisory or grievance responsibilities are applicable.

ESDC has a four step [Guideline on Identifying Language Requirements of Positions](#) to support managers in establishing language requirements:

- Step 1: Determine Official Language obligations.
- Step 2: Assess the bilingual capacity of their work unit.
- Step 3: Determine language requirements of positions as described in the job descriptions within their unit.
- Step 4: Determine the linguistic profile of a bilingual position.

Additional resources:

- Consult the Treasury Board Secretariat's [Qualification Standards in Relation to Official Languages](#) to learn the difference between the levels in the second official language.
- Consult the Treasury Board Secretariat's [language profiler](#) or the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages' [Tool for the linguistic identification of positions](#) to establish the language requirements for a position.

- Consult the [Official Languages Toolkit](#) to support you in your Official Language obligations.

For advice and guidance on establishing or modifying language requirements of position, contact your [Classification](#) advisor.