

Not sure about English or French positions? Let's demystify it!

English or French – Either/Or – Reversible. Does it all mean the same thing?

Yes! "English or French" is one of the four linguistic requirements: "Bilingual", "English Essential", "French Essential" and "English or French". We use different terms to designate this type of requirement.

What's the difference between English Essential, French Essential and English or French?

Such a good question! The "English or French" position is actually a unilingual position. The difference with a unilingual position is that for this requirement, the incumbent can choose the official language he will use as per his language of work. The incumbent will work fully in English or fully in French based on their preferred language. It therefore entails that the work can be performed 100% of the time in English or 100% of the time in French.

Really, the incumbent can choose their language of work?

We swear, it's true! BUT (you expected that, right!), the language chosen will remain the same as long as the incumbent occupies the position. Because the language of work is chosen by the incumbent, this type of requirement should always be used in offices designated as bilingual for language of work purposes.

Can we apply this requirement to any type of position?

Actually, no! Due to the mandate of the department, there are few English or French positions. This type of requirement should only be used where communication requirements are minimal. Little hint: when thinking about this requirement, ask yourself this, if the incumbent chooses French (or English):

- Would I need to rearrange functions within my team?
- Would I have to put administrative measures in place for some functions to be carried out?

If the answer is yes, this requirement is probably not suitable!

If I want to create a reversible position, what do I need to consider?

Two important factors:

1. Bilingual Capacity
2. Supervision and language of work rights

Bilingual capacity is when we organize our resources for developing and maintaining a linguistic capacity within the work unit to fulfill linguistic obligations to the public and to other employees. We therefore need to take into account all the positions in the work unit providing the same services and see if there is enough bilingual capacity to deliver the business. For example, if all employees in a reversible position decide to work in the same language, would you be able to provide the services?

In bilingual regions, employees occupying a reversible position can be supervised in the language of their choice and work in the language of their choice. For example, the incumbent may choose to work in French, but be supervised in English. **The supervisor must therefore be bilingual** and all work tools and meetings must be available in the language of their choice.

Of course, we recommend that you discuss with a classification advisor through the [Human Resources Service Centre](#) before proceeding with any change or creation with this requirement.