



SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL FOR OFFICIAL LANGUAGES BEST PRACTICES

Why a Self-Assessment Tool?

Linguistic duality in the Canadian public service has moved beyond mere obligation: it has become a symbol of leadership, respect, understanding and communication with others.

The Canada School of Public Service's Official Languages Committee designed this self-assessment tool to promote a workplace in which all employees are fully engaged in official languages issues and where everyone recognizes and integrates linguistic duality into their daily work. Section 2 of the **Official Languages Act** describes linguistic duality as "... ensur[ing] respect for English and French as the official languages of Canada and ensur[ing] equality of status and equal rights and privileges as to their use in all federal institutions...".

Managers must take all necessary measures to ensure we respect our language of work obligations. As leaders, managers undoubtedly play a key role in the implementation and promotion of best practices. Employees also play a key role when they integrate these best practices into their work habits.

The objectives of this self-assessment tool are the following:

- Allow all public service employees to conduct a self-assessment, while reflecting on their department's obligations with respect to bilingualism and on how they can help their department meet these obligations.
- Foster linguistic duality by providing clear examples of daily **best practices** that can be widely applied in the workplace.
- Provide employees with links to **reference documents** to enhance or update their knowledge of various aspects of the *Official Languages Act* (e.g. language of work, active offer) and of their tangible impact in the workplace.

Note: *This self-assessment tool covers the most common best practices to promote the use of both official languages without necessarily reflecting all of the legal nuances of the federal public service's policy tools on bilingualism. If you do not work in a designated bilingual region for language-of-work purposes or if you are not in a bilingual position, some sections of the present document will not apply to you.*



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How often do you integrate linguistic duality into your daily work?
Complete the questionnaire and find out!

	0 – Never	1 – Sometimes	2 – Often	3 – Always
Awareness	0	1	2	3
1. I pay the same attention and lend equal importance to what my colleagues say, regardless of which language they use.				
2. I take advantage of opportunities to improve my knowledge of official languages issues (e.g. registering for OL-related events or training).				
3. When I have questions on the subject, I consult websites and links on official languages, including the Official Languages Act , the OL section on my department's intranet or the Council of the Network of Official Languages Champions, etc.				
4. I foster and actively contribute to bilingualism at work by applying best practices.				
5. I help raise awareness among my colleagues about their official languages rights and about the institution's official languages obligations (e.g. I freely address any perceived breaches of obligations or lack of awareness of rights with my colleagues or manager).				
Total – Awareness	/15			
Communication and Client Service	0	1	2	3
6. When colleagues or clients communicate with me, I invite them to speak in their preferred official language. If I am unable to communicate with them in their preferred official language, I make sure I find a colleague who can.				
7. When delivering services to my clients, I send out the documents (printed or electronic) in the official language of their choosing.				
8. My out-of-office messages (voice and text) are in both official languages.				
9. When writing e-mail, I respect the rules regarding the order of official languages based on the location of my workplace.				



10. When using GCconnex, GCpedia or other collaborative tools, I use both official languages in order to reach as many colleagues as possible.				
Total – Communication and Client Service	/15			
Bilingual Meetings and Events	0	1	2	3
Complete either section A or B, depending on your role.				
A) Facilitators of bilingual meetings or events				
11. When organizing a meeting, conference or event, I send out invitations in both official languages.				
12. At the start of a meeting, I advise participants that they may communicate in the official language of their choice (in designated bilingual regions for purposes of work).				
13. When hosting a meeting, conference or event, I use both official languages equally. If I don't feel fully at ease in my second language, I either ask someone to co-chair the meeting or I organize 2 different events for each official language.				
14. When hosting a meeting or event, I encourage the group to participate in both official languages by using the lesser-used official language.				
15. Follow-up material for the meeting or event is available in both official languages.				
Total – Bilingual Meetings and Events – Facilitators	/15			
B) Participants of bilingual meetings or events				
11. During a meeting or an event, I take an interest in what is being said, regardless of the language used by the speaker.				
12. When participating in a meeting or in an event, I speak in the language of my choice.				
13. During a bilingual meeting or event, I request any necessary clarification in the language of my choice.				
14. As a participant in a bilingual meeting or event, I try to help maintain the balance between the 2 languages (e.g. by speaking in the underrepresented language, even though it is not my responsibility to do so).				



15. After participating in a bilingual meeting or event, I request follow-up material in the language of my choice if it has not been duly provided.				
Total – Bilingual Meetings and Events – Participants	/15			
Maintenance of Language Skills	0	1	2	3
16. I consider my language training needs when completing my annual training plan and I talk about these needs with my immediate supervisor.				
17. I regularly use my second official language at work to maintain my language skills.				
18. I help my colleagues who wish to practise their second official language.				
19. I participate in activities and initiatives to maintain my second-language skills (e.g. language exchanges or special second-language days).				
20. I regularly re-evaluate my commitment to linguistic duality (e.g. by completing the Self-Assessment Tool for Official Languages Best Practices every year).				
Total – Maintenance of Language Skills	/15			

		Totals
Awareness		/15
Communication and Client Service		/15
Bilingual Meetings and Events		/15
Maintenance of Language Skills		/15
Total		/60

See next page for results



Self-Assessment Results

If you have an unsatisfactory result in any section, we recommend working on aspects related to that particular section. We also invite you to consult the reference documents listed on page 7.

<p>51-60</p>	<p>Congratulations! You are an official languages ambassador. Your exemplary behaviour demonstrates that you are committed to respecting official language requirements and that you value linguistic duality at work. Feel free to remind your colleagues of these official languages requirements and best practices.</p> <p>Stay informed of events and new developments by visiting the website of the Council of the Network of Official Languages Champions, among others.</p>
<p>36-50</p>	<p>You're doing a good job treating official languages equitably in the workplace. You put effort into respecting the requirements of the Official Languages Act. Continue to integrate best practices into your everyday work and promote them within your team to become an ambassador of linguistic duality.</p> <p>Stay informed by consulting your department's Official Languages page on the intranet, as well as the Official Languages page on GCcampus.</p>
<p>21-35</p>	<p>You might be aware of the importance of using both official languages at work but you need to increase your knowledge and skills in this area. Learn more about the requirements of the Official Languages Act, especially if you occupy a bilingual position. Make sure that all your communications at work respect these requirements. Look for opportunities to integrate best practices. To improve your results, we encourage you to consult your department's Official Languages page on the intranet, as well as the Official Languages section of GCcampus.</p>
<p>0-20</p>	<p>Now that you are aware of the importance of linguistic duality, it is time to take action! Review your answers and identify some requirements and/or best practices. Challenge yourself to integrate at least 1 of them into your everyday work. Consult the Official Languages section of GCcampus for help.</p>



Resources to Improve Fluency and Language Skills

Is it difficult for you to respect the official languages requirements or to apply best practices in your daily work due to a lack of confidence or competence in your second-language skills?

The resources offered by the Canada School of Public Service may be useful. The School supports official language learning and the maintenance of language skills for public servants across the country. It thus contributes to strengthening the culture of bilingualism within the public service.

The School offers many [online language learning products](#) in French and English that can help public servants improve or maintain their language skills. The catalogue of online language training tools includes practical self-paced exercises and interactive products designed to improve reading and oral comprehension, pronunciation, grammar, written expression, and fluency in the use of the second official language.

You can also consult the [Official Languages](#) section of GCcampus if you would like to know more about the services available to departments or if you want to access other resources related to official languages.

Did you know?

If you occupy a bilingual position, it is because your work requires you to use your second official language on a regular basis. This regular use of your second official language will in turn help you to maintain your language skills and feel more at ease in your second official language.

If you occupy a unilingual position, regular practice of your second official language at work will help you to develop your competencies, and could serve as a launching pad as you progress in your career in the federal public service.

Improving and maintaining your second-language skills is part of your professional development. Feel free to ask your manager about in-person language training opportunities as part of your performance agreement and incorporate them into your learning plan.

Your team can adopt a variety of concrete, creative and varied ways to promote the development and maintenance of second-language skills, including language partnering, mentorships, and designated English or French days. Talk to your manager and your team about what you can do.

Bilingualism is everyone's business!



Reference Documents

- [*Common Services Policy*](#)
- [*Directive on Official Languages for Communications and Services*](#)
- [*Directive on Official Languages for People Management*](#)
- [*Guideline to Acceptable Use of Internal Wikis and Blogs within the Government of Canada*](#)
- [*Official Languages Act*](#)
- [*Treasury Board policies, directives, standards and guidelines*](#)
- [*Policy on Official Languages*](#)
- [*Self-Assessment Tool: Leadership Competencies Profile for Official Languages*](#)
- [*Standard on Web Usability*](#)
- [*Values and Ethics Code for the Public Sector*](#)