



# The OL Connection

February 2024

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## Headlines

### Update on the Official Languages Regulations Reapplication Exercise

As announced in the previous issue, the Official Languages Regulations Reapplication Exercise (OLRRE) was launched on September 21, 2023. Since, the Part IV Regulations team has completed the verification of the initial application of the Official Languages (Communications with and Services to the Public) Regulations in the System for Official Languages Obligations (SOLO). SOLO will be reopened as soon as the necessary technical adjustments are finalized. Persons responsible for Official Languages (PROL) will receive a message shortly, which will provide details on the next steps.

#### Information sessions

Invitations to the focused information sessions will be sent in the coming weeks. Only those institutions concerned by the group of rules to be discussed at a single session will be invited to attend. Information sessions will focus on:

- Automatic rules (**ALL institutions**);
- Principle of proportionality and consultations (**select institutions**);
- Service areas (**select institutions**);
- Measurement of demand (**select institutions**).

PROL must attend these information sessions before undertaking the next OLRRE steps.

For more information on the OLRRE, please consult this [fact sheet](#).

## Launch of the Annual Official Languages Review Exercise

The annual Official Languages Review Exercise is just around the corner and is scheduled to be launched at the end of March 2024. This exercise, jointly conducted by Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat (TBS) and Canadian Heritage (PCH), aims to collect information provided by federal institutions, and is used in part to monitor compliance on official languages. TBS and PCH will use the information collected through the exercise to prepare their respective Annual Reports on Official Languages (amongst other data sources). The Official Languages Reviews will also be shared with Parliamentary committees on official languages: The Standing Senate Committee on Official Languages (OLLO) and The Standing Committee on Official Languages of the House of Commons (LANG).

### New this year

The modernized *Official Languages Act* **strengthens TBS responsibilities** in terms of monitoring, auditing and evaluating official languages within federal institutions. We have therefore revised the methodology for the official languages review exercise, and have updated the questions that will be asked to federal institutions to reflect these new responsibilities (e.g. monitoring of Part VII by TBS, including on positive measures (subsection [41\(5\)](#)) and on language clauses in federal/provincial-territorial agreements (paragraph [41\(7\)a.1](#))).

The new methodology now includes **a two-year cyclical exercise**, except for approximately 30 federal institutions required to submit an Official Languages Review on an annual basis. The questions revised by TBS and PCH have been merged, and additional evidence or explanations will be requested for monitoring and other purposes. **The new questionnaire will now be available through the System on Official Languages Obligations (SOLO)** and will be accompanied by an instruction sheet for the new questions.

**An invitation to an information session in February** will be sent by the end of January to Persons Responsible for Official Languages (PROL) and Coordinators on Part VII of all federal institutions required to submit an Official Languages Review in 2023-24, to inform them of these changes. They will receive a preliminary version of the revised questionnaire and instruction sheet in advance.

All questions relating to the Official Languages Review Exercise can be addressed to TBS' Official Languages Centre of Excellence at: [OLReview-BilanLO@tbs-sct.gc.ca](mailto:OLReview-BilanLO@tbs-sct.gc.ca).

## Toolbox

### New official languages tool for institutions in the core administration

The Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat's Workforce Business Intelligence Services and Official Languages Centre of Excellence (OLCE) have developed a new tool to support institutions in the core public administration when updating official languages data in their human resources information systems.

The interactive tool will help those entering the data – and the Persons Responsible for Official Languages who may be called upon to support them in interpreting certain cases – when their federal department or agency hires, promotes or transfers an employee to another position, or when the language requirements of positions are revised, or new second language evaluation results are available. The aim is to have a consistent and standardized approach across the core public administration. The human resources information systems of all these federal departments and agencies feed the Position and Classification Information System (PCIS), from which the OLCE

draws part of the statistical data on official languages for the Treasury Board's [Annual Reports on Official Languages](#), which are tabled in Parliament.

This document entitled [Position and Classification Information System – Official Languages Tool](#) is available on the GCwiki page of the [Community of Official Languages/Tools/Language of work - wiki](#) in GCcollab. It is a complement to the [Position and Classification Information System \(PCIS\) - Departmental Guide](#), which is currently under revision. To consult the Tool, users must download the document on their desk and open it into their Excel application. **Note:** When opening the document in OneDrive or SharePoint, some IT Administrators prevent the built-in macros from working for security reasons.

The document includes instructions in both official languages. Under the “General Information Générale” tab, you can select the language of your choice (line 3, top left), then enter the appropriate Appointment Official Languages Status (AOLS) code or the Linguistic Status of Incumbent (LSI) code to access various scenarios or situations. In the Scenario section, click on the action drop-down menu: the options will be displayed in the language chosen above.

We invite you to share this tool with your colleagues in your respective federal institutions.

## Glossary: Official Languages (Communications with and Services to the public) Regulations

We are pleased to announce the publication of a new [glossary](#) in the *Official Languages (Communications with and Services to the Public) Regulations' Toolbox* on the Community of Official Languages' GCwiki site. Its purpose is to provide and facilitate the search of various definitions for terms commonly used in the context of the application of Regulations by compiling them into a single document.

## New tools and Hub on language training

The Treasury Board Secretariat's Official Languages Centre of Excellence (OLCE) is also pleased to launch its [Language Training Hub on GCwiki!](#) This hub aims to be a one-stop shop for second official language training. As we continue to roll out new products, information will be shared with you.

Under the "Tools" tab, you will find three new guidance tools for second official language training within federal institutions.

1. A [language training prioritization guide](#) that provides advice **to institutions and managers** to help them plan and prioritize access to language training. Among other things, this tool seeks to ensure equitable access by employment equity groups to language training;
2. A [best practices guide for managers](#) on how to create a workplace conducive to the learning and use of both official languages; and
3. A guide **for learners** that includes [free self-directed learning tools](#) at all levels (beginner, intermediate, and advanced).

These tools provide a preview of the new second official language training framework which will be launched in spring 2024. The framework will include guidelines on second official language training, an implementation handbook, and a series of learning paths.

We hope these new tools will help and inspire you to maintain and promote a culture of bilingualism in your institution as required by the *Official Languages Act*.

## Federal public servant's most frequently used languages of work in 2021

Not surprisingly, English is the language most often used at work by federal public servants, according to the 2021 Census data. This is the case for 81.7% of the 470,950 members of the federal public administration. French was the language used most often by 13.1% of respondents in this category. 5% responded that they used both French and English.

In the National Capital Region, where there are the most federal public servants in the country (149,255), 82.5% use English most often, 8.99% use most often French, and 8.5% use both English and French. Now, 62% of the 40,970 federal public servants surveyed who reside on the Quebec side of the NCR say they use English most often, 23.4% say they use French most often, and 14.6% say they use both French and English. On the Ontario side of the National Capital Region, 90.2% of the 108,285 public servants use English primarily, 3.5% use French most often, and 6.2% use both English and French. It should be noted that this data is based on place of residence, as a large proportion of federal public servants regularly travel back and forth across the Outaouais between their home and work locations.

In Quebec, excluding the National Capital Region, French predominates, with 71.9% of the 61,505 federal public servants surveyed stating that French is the language used most often, and an additional 10.9% stating that they use both French and English.

In New Brunswick, where the entire province is designated bilingual for the purposes of language of work in the federal public service, English is the language used most often by 80% of the 19,005 federal public servants surveyed, French is used most often by 11.2% of them, and 8.89% responded that both French and English are used.

### Most language used at work, according to the place of residence

Province, region	English	French	English and French
National Capital Region	82.5%	9%	8.5%
NCR (Ontario side)	90.2%	3.5%	6.2%
NCR (Quebec side)	62%	23.4%	14.6%
Quebec (excluding NCR)	18.2%	71.9%	10.9%
New Brunswick	80%	11.2%	8.9%
Federal Public Administration	81.7%	13.1%	5%

Finally, 125 public servants stated that they use most of the time an Aboriginal language at work: 55 live in Quebec, 10 in Ontario, 30 in Manitoba, 15 in Saskatchewan and 15 in Alberta. It should be noted that these 2021 Census data on the workforce and language of work did not take into account the active population of the Territories.

Source: A study of data from the 911 subgroup of the public sector category of the National Occupational Classification in [Languages used at work by industry groups and knowledge of official languages: Canada, provinces and territories, census metropolitan areas and census agglomerations with parts](#). Our data differs slightly because we have retained only those respondents who were working as federal public servants in 2020 and who were still working in the Public Service in 2021, in order to capture only those who had experience in the federal workplace environment.

## Official Languages: What you need to know about Section 91 of the Official Languages Act

Did you know that the language requirements of a position cannot be changed to fit a team member's language profile? Language requirements are based on the **position** and not the person in the position.

For example, the language requirements of a position cannot be changed for any of the following reasons:

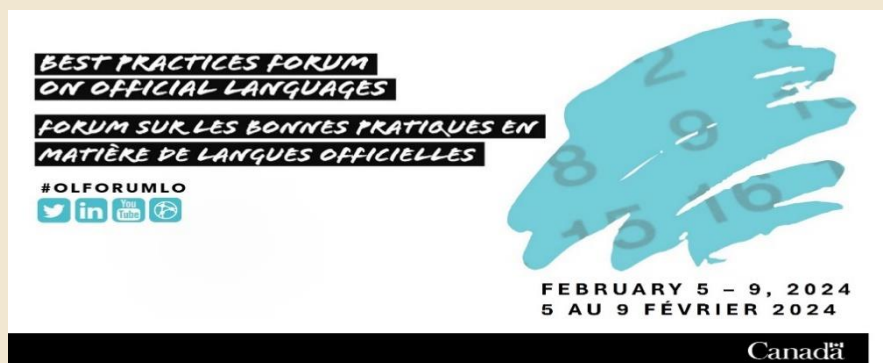
- we want to promote a team member
- no one on the team meets the position's language requirements
- we're having trouble recruiting people
- work environment in a region designated bilingual is temporarily unilingual
- the use of the second language isn't often required

The language requirements of a position must always be determined **objectively** and be based on the position's duties and responsibilities (as stated in the work description), and on the level of language skills required when the position is designated bilingual.

You can find tools and references to help you identify the linguistic requirements of a position on the [Community of Official Languages](#) GCwiki page.

## Community

### Best Practices Forum on Official Languages



The Best Practices Forum on Official Languages (Forum) is right around the corner! Join us for the flagship event on February 6, 2024, where senior management will discuss the modernized *Official Languages Act*. Panelists include:

- Francis Trudel, Associate Chief Human Resources Officer
- Isabelle Mondou, Deputy Minister of Canadian Heritage
- Raymond Th  berge, Commissioner of Official Languages

During this panel, you will learn how the Act has been strengthened to the benefit of all Canadians and you will better understand how key stakeholders are working together to help the federal government meet these new obligations. The webcast is open to all federal public servants and can be [accessed here](#) on February 6 at 11:00 a.m. (EST) or by visiting the Forum's [GCwiki page](#). In-person participation is limited to the community of practice (registration is required).

We also encourage you to participate in some of the many workshops taking place throughout the week! Workshops are open to all public servants and registration is not required. Simply join the workshop of your choice by clicking on the appropriate MS

Teams link at the time of the workshop. The Official Languages Centre of Excellence will be hosting three workshops over the course of the week:

- Overview of the Modernized *Official Languages Act* (co-presentation with our partners at Canadian Heritage)
- Introduction to Official Languages (OL 101)
- Update on the Second Official Language Training Framework

For more information about all the events, along with the links to participate in each, please visit the Forum's [GCwiki page](#).

Questions? Contact the organizing committee: [OLCEInformationCELO@tbs-sct.gc.ca](mailto:OLCEInformationCELO@tbs-sct.gc.ca).

## Government of Canada 2023 Student Exit Survey: Official Languages results

The [2023 Student Experience Survey](#) (SES) was administered from July 31 to September 15, 2023. A total of 5,471 students responded to the 2023 SES across 76 participating departments and agencies. The Survey themes for this year included recruitment, onboarding and orientation, work experience, work environment, workplace well-being, accommodations, as well as questions related to the pay. In this survey, there were three questions related to official languages.

89% of students said they were encouraged to work in the official language of their choice during their employment in federal departments and agencies in 2023, which is identical to the 2021 result, and a two percentage points' set back from the 2022 SES.

For the question "I was encouraged to work in the official language of my choice," 80% of the French-speaking respondents and 91% of the English-speaking respondents answered positively. In fact, only 7% of Francophones provided a negative answer, versus 1% among Anglophones. If we compare these results with those from the 2022 SES, we can see a decrease of 4 percentage points among the Francophones that provided positive answers -- equivalent to the 2021 SES results -- and of 2 percentage points among the Anglophones.

When asked if "The material and tools provided for (their) work, including software and other automated tools, were available in the official language of (their) choice", 96% of respondents provided positive answers, being 98% of English-speaking students and 91% of French-speaking students.

For 54% of the students, working in the official language of their choice was the 6th most important criterion for accepting their student employment offer in the federal public service, after gaining work experience in their field of study (82%), establishing contacts and networking opportunities for future work in the federal public service (77%), the timing of the job offer (76%), the job location (71%) and the salary (58%). However, the language criterion outweighed an educational requirement (e.g., CO-OP, internship, etc.) (53%), the recommendations from other students working in the federal public service (36%) and that there were no other job offers at the time (27%) as reasons to join the Public Service for a summer job. 57% of English-speaking students found that working in the official language of their choice was a decision criterion (out of 4,198 respondents), while 43% of the French-speaking students did (out of 1,254 respondents). However, this criterion was slightly or not at all important for 26% of the Anglophones and for 35% of the Francophones. When compared with the 2022 SES, the language of work criterion decreased in value by 10 percentage points.

In addition to the Survey's website, institutions can access the results through the Open Government web portal [at this address](#).

## Workshops offered by the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages

The Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages (OCOL) is offering public servants a series of free workshops on official languages. Visit their [website](#) to find out more about these workshops or for registration.



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Questions or comments? E-mail us at [OLCEInformationCELO@tbs-sct.gc.ca](mailto:OLCEInformationCELO@tbs-sct.gc.ca)

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