



# Self-Assessment Tool For Official Languages Best Practices

## Why a Self-Assessment Tool?

Equality of status and use of English and French is no longer simply an obligation within the Canadian public service; it has become a symbol of leadership, respect, understanding and communication.

The purpose of this self-assessment tool is to foster a workplace where all staff are fully committed to respecting official languages obligations, and where everyone recognizes and uses English and French, while promoting the equal status of these two official languages in their daily lives. In this respect, section 2 of the **Official Languages Act** (OLA) aims to “ensure respect for English and French as the official languages of Canada and ensure equality of status and equal rights and privileges as to their use in all federal institutions [and] support the development of English and French linguistic minority communities in order to protect them while taking into account the fact that they have different needs.”

Managers must ensure that they take the necessary steps to comply with official languages obligations. As leaders, they certainly play a key role in establishing and promoting good 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 public servants to assess themselves, while reflecting on their institution’s bilingualism obligations and the contribution they can make to the equitable treatment of both official languages.
- Provide clear examples of **best practices** that everyone can adopt in their daily lives to promote the equitable use of both official languages.

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



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

0 - Never	1 - Sometimes	2 - Often	3 - Always
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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 (for example, registering for related events or training).				
3. When I have questions on the subject, I consult websites and links on official languages, including the <b>Official Languages Act</b> (OLA), the OL section on my federal institution's intranet, the <a href="#">Second Official Language Training Framework</a> or the Council of the Network of Official Languages Champions.				
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 (for example, I freely address any perceived breaches of obligations or lack of awareness of rights with my colleagues or manager).				
<b>Total – Awareness</b>	<b>/15</b>			

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 someone 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 emails, I respect the rules regarding the order of both official languages based on the location of my workplace.				



10. When using GCwiki, GCxchange or other collaborative tools, I use both official languages so that as many colleagues as possible can understand my posts.				
<b>Total – Communication and Client Services</b>	<b>/15</b>			

<b>Bilingual Meetings and Events</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>
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**Complete either section A or B, depending on your role.**

**A. Facilitation** 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 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 two 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.				
<b>Total – Bilingual Meetings and Events – Facilitators</b>	<b>/15</b>			

**B. Participation** in 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 two official languages, even though it is not my responsibility to do so (for example, by speaking in the underrepresented language).				
15. After participating in a bilingual meeting or event, I request follow-up documents in the language of my choice if they have not already been provided to me.				
<b>Total – Bilingual Meetings and Events – Participants</b>	<b>/15</b>			

<b>Maintenance of Language Skills</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>
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 use their second official language.				
19. I participate in activities and initiatives to maintain my second official language skills (for example, language exchanges or days dedicated to using one's second official language).				
20. I regularly re-evaluate my commitment to equal status and use of French and English, (for example, by completing the <b>Self-Assessment Tool for Official Languages Best Practices</b> every year).				
<b>Total – Maintenance of Language Skills</b>	<b>/15</b>			

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

*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.

<b>51-60</b>	<p>Congratulations! You contribute to the promotion of official languages. Your exemplary behaviour demonstrates that you are committed to respecting official languages requirements and that you value equal status and use of French and English. 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 <a href="#">Community of Official Languages</a>.</p>
<b>36-50</b>	<p>You're treating official languages equitably at work. You put effort into respecting the requirements of the <b>Official Languages Act</b> (OLA). Continue to integrate best practices into your everyday work and promote them equal status and use of French and English at work.</p> <p>Stay informed by consulting your federal institution's official languages page on the intranet.</p>
<b>21-35</b>	<p>You might be aware of the importance of using both official languages at work but you need to improve your knowledge and skills in this area. Learn more about the requirements of the OLA, 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 federal institution's Official Languages page on the intranet.</p>
<b>0-20</b>	<p>Now that you are aware of the importance of equal status and use of French and English at work, it is time to take action. Review your answers and identify some requirements and/or best practices. Challenge yourself to integrate at least one of them into your everyday work.</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 a culture of bilingualism within the public service.

The School offers many [online language maintenance tools](#) 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.

## 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 use 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 the federal public service.

### **Bilingualism is everyone's business!**

Improving and maintaining your second-language skills is part of your professional development. Feel free to ask your manager about in-person or virtual 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, lunchtime seminars, and designated English or French days. Talk to your manager and your team about what you can do.



## Online References and Resources

- [Active offer of service](#)
- [Active Offer, a culture of respect, a culture of excellence](#)
- [Bilingual offices and facilities](#)
- [Burolis](#)
- [Conference and sign language interpretation services](#) (GCintranet, Public Services and Procurement Canada)
- [Community of Official Languages](#) – GCwiki
- [Directive on Official Languages for Communications and Services](#)
- [Directive on Official Languages for People Management](#)
- [General Second Official Languages Qualifications](#)
- [Information on complaints](#)
- [Language maintenance tools](#)
- [Language of Work: Knowing One's Rights and Responsibilities and Maintaining One's Skills](#)
- [Language Training Hub](#) – GCwiki
- [List of Bilingual Regions of Canada for Language-of-Work Purposes](#)
- [Office of the Chief Human Resources Officer](#)
- [Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages](#)
- [Official Languages Act](#)
- [Official languages and bilingualism](#) (Canadian Heritage)
- [Official Languages Hub](#)
- [Official Languages \(Communications with and Services to the Public\) Regulations](#)
- [Official languages training services](#) (Public Services and Procurement Canada)
- [Osez! Dare!](#) (Council of the Network of Official Languages Champions)
- [Policy on Official Languages](#)
- [Policies, directives, standards and guidelines](#) (Treasury Board of Canada)
- [Public Service Commission of Canada](#)
- [Public Service Employment Act](#)
- [Public Service Official Languages Exclusion Approval Order](#)
- [Translation Bureau's language services and tools](#) (Public Services and Procurement Canada)
- [Qualification Standards in Relation to Official Languages](#)
- [Request translation, revision or editing services](#) (Public Services and Procurement Canada)
- [Role and responsibilities of official languages champions](#)
- [Second language evaluation tests](#)
  - [Oral language assessment](#)
  - [Test of reading comprehension](#)
  - [Test of written expression](#)
- [Termium Plus](#)
- [Values and Ethics Code for the Public Sector](#)