

SECTION 8

EMPLOYEE SUPPORT AND DEVELOPMENT

8.04 FRENCH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY EVALUATIONS

AUTHORITY: CIVIL SERVICE ACT/REGULATIONS

ADMINISTRATION: PEI PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

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1. PURPOSE

1.01 The purpose of this policy is to provide information on the evaluation of French language competencies required by the province to fill a bilingual designated position or to be listed as a bilingual employee capable of providing some service in French through a unilingual position. Both circumstances relate to delivery of services in French, supporting the provincial French Language Services Act.

2. APPLICATION

2.01 This policy applies to employees in designated bilingual positions and employees with a reasonable capacity to provide services to the public in French.

3. POLICY (Bilingual Positions)

3.01 The incumbent of a bilingual designated position is required to maintain an **Advanced** level of speaking proficiency or higher, based on the French Language Oral Proficiency Scale (see attached).

3.02 Employees coming into a bilingual designated position through competition are referred by Staffing for an oral proficiency evaluation to confirm the **Advanced** level, which is the minimum requirement for a bilingual position. This level must be confirmed prior to the position offer.

3.03 Employees achieving the **Advanced Plus** level or higher are granted an exemption, excluding them from the future oral proficiency testing.

An **Advanced** level employee in a bilingual designated position is required to validate his/her level every two years until the **Advanced Plus** level is obtained. Contact will be made by the Public Service Commission.

On rare occasions where an employee is granted a Provisional Appointment at the **Intermediate Plus** level, a French Language Proficiency Attainment Agreement must be signed by the employee and manager, outlining what the employee will do to reach the desired advanced level within one year (see attached).

Refer to *Recruitment and Staffing*, Section 3.08 for more information about recruitment, selection and appointment to bilingual designated positions.

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- 3.04 To be considered able to provide backup function to a bilingual designated position and listed as a bilingual resource for the province, an employee must maintain the **Intermediate Plus** level of oral French.

The Public Service Commission will invite bilingual employees to do an Oral Proficiency Interview every two years to validate their level and to remain on the provincial list of bilingual employees. This process is completely voluntary for the employee in a non-designated position.

- 3.05 Bilingual employees are rated using the same Oral Proficiency Scale as for bilingual designated positions. See <https://psc.qpei.ca/french-language-proficiency-evaluation-policy> for more detail on the French second language oral proficiency evaluation process.
- 3.06 The French oral proficiency level of employees in non-designated positions is maintained under the category Workforce Development, Licenses and Certifications in the HRMS system, PeopleSoft.

Individual departments may see a full listing of bilingual positions and bilingual employees at any time, by running the French Language Complement Report in PeopleSoft.

4. GENERAL INFORMATION

- 4.01 Any employee may request a French oral proficiency interview at any time by contacting the Public Service Commission. Interviews can be conducted in person or over the telephone, and generally last about twenty minutes.

An audio recording of the interview is made and kept on file at the PSC for the two year period that an oral proficiency rating is valid.

A certificate and rating summary are sent to employee. The supervisor is sent a copy of the rating summary and the information is entered under Workplace Development in the category Licenses and Certifications in the HRMS system, PeopleSoft

In the case of disagreement over the rating, an independent evaluator may be consulted.

An employee may request re-evaluation after a period of six months.

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5. ATTACHMENTS

Level of Oral Proficiency

French Language Proficiency Attainment Agreement

LEVEL OF ORAL PROFICIENCY RATING SCALE *
FRENCH, SECOND LANGUAGE

UNRATEABLE Level

No communicative capacity. The candidate may be able on occasion to utter an isolated word that bears little relation to the question asked.

NOVICE Level

Able to satisfy immediate needs using learned utterances. No real autonomy of expression, flexibility or spontaneity. Can answer simple questions with reasonable accuracy with memorized phrases. Repetition and rephrasing of questions is often necessary. Vocabulary is insufficient for conversation.

BASIC Level

Able to satisfy basic survival needs and minimum courtesy requirements. Can ask and answer questions on simple, familiar topics. Within the scope of very limited language experience, can understand simple questions and statements, often requiring slowed speech, repetition or paraphrasing. Speaking vocabulary is adequate to express most elementary needs; errors in pronunciation and grammar are frequent. While elementary needs vary considerably from individual to individual, a person at the Basic level should be able to provide simple autobiographical information on such topics as family, leisure activities, education and employment (where appropriate). Can provide a simple description of a person, place, or thing.

BASIC PLUS Level

Able to satisfy survival needs and participate in informal conversations in areas of personal experience. May experience difficulty in participating fully in an informal conversation. Is able to offer a sequence of comprehensible sentences on a particular topic, but errors in basic structures are frequent. At times, the speaker at this level will demonstrate some functions at the Intermediate level, but will not be able to sustain the conversation at that level.

INTERMEDIATE Level

Able to satisfy routine social demands and limited work requirements. Can participate fully in informal conversation on personal topics and topics of general societal interest. Can provide detailed autobiographical information and give explanations with some degree of accuracy, but language is awkward. Can express facts, provide narration, describe, report on and speak about current, past or future activities. Can give directions from one place to another. Able to provide accurate instructions in a field of personal expertise. Can handle limited, routine work requirements, but would need help in handling any complications or difficulties. Able to use paraphrasing when vocabulary is inadequate. Pronunciation, though quite often faulty, is intelligible and grammatical errors may be distracting. Uses high frequency language structures accurately, but does not have a thorough or confident control of grammar.

INTERMEDIATE PLUS Level

Able to participate fully in most social and work-related discussions. Able to participate fully in informal conversations in social and work-related contexts. Control of language structures may vary, but communication of facts and ideas is usually clear. At times, a speaker at this level will demonstrate some functions at the Advanced level, but will not be able to sustain the conversation at that level.

ADVANCED Level

Able to speak the language with sufficient structural accuracy and vocabulary to participate effectively in most formal and informal conversations in practical and social contexts. Control of grammar is generally good; can discuss work-related interests, educational pursuits and special fields of competence with reasonable ease. Can describe and narrate with precision. Can discuss abstract topics and ideas, in addition to concrete subjects. Can discuss issues unrelated to personal experience, such as current events and general societal concerns. Can justify an opinion and develop a hypothesis. Comprehension is quite complete if rate of speech is normal; vocabulary is adequate to deal with a variety of topics. Pronunciation does not hinder intelligibility; grammatical errors occur but do not usually affect communication.

ADVANCED PLUS Level

Can speak the language with sufficient ease to participate in formal and informal exchanges in a variety of contexts. Although there may be occasional errors in grammar and lapses in vocabulary, overall communication is not affected. At times, the speaker at this level will demonstrate the ability to function at the Superior level, but will not be able to sustain the conversation at that level.

SUPERIOR Level

Able to use the language fluently and accurately in all of contexts requiring complex language structures. Can converse with ease and precision in social and professional discussions. Organizes discourse well; able to vary his/her register depending on context. Demonstrates mastery of grammar and employs precise and nuanced **vocabulary**. **Can serve as an informal interpreter in a variety of circumstances.**

Source: New-Brunswick Second Language Oral Proficiency scale adapted from Judith Liskin-Gasparro. Testing and Teaching for Oral Proficiency. Boston: Heinle and Heinle Publications. 1987.

NOTE:

The New Brunswick Second Language Oral Proficiency Scale assesses oral communication proficiency based on a scale that describes nine levels of linguistic competence. Except for the Unrateable level, the functions associated with each level are included in the higher levels. Thus, a speaker at the Intermediate level controls all the functions at the Novice and Basic levels as well as those at the Intermediate level.

The "plus" notation to a level indicates that the candidate has met nearly all the criteria of the next level of proficiency.

FRENCH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY ATTAINMENT AGREEMENT
Bilingual Position Provisional Appointment

Department: _____

Division: _____

Incumbent: _____ Supervisor: _____

Position Title: _____ Position Number: _____

Work Location: _____

Current Level _____ Assessed _____ (Date)

Required Level _____ Achieved _____ (Date)

The period between the initial assessment for French Language proficiency and the subsequent assessment must not exceed one year.

Commitments

I understand that this is a provisional appointment to a bilingual designated position for the period of one year, based on my being able to achieve the _____ level of French by _____ (Date).

Employee Signature _____ Date _____

As the employing authority, I am committed to the following measures to support this employee in the attainment of the pre-determined French Language proficiency levels of this Position.

Signature Supervisor/Manager _____ Date _____

PSC Signing Authority _____ Date _____

A copy of this form is to be provided to the employee, supervisor, Human Resources Manager and the Language Training Centre of the Public Service Commission.