

## Official Languages/Services in French

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### I. OFFICIAL LANGUAGES POLICY

#### 1. DEFINITIONS

**Official Languages:** Official Languages refer to French and English in this policy.

**French Language Services Office:** Under the Heart Institute's Department of Communications, the Office is responsible for translation services, French language training, designation management as well as the promotion of active offer of French services to patients.

**Clients:** Clients of the Heart Institute include the patients, their family members and the general public.

**Bilingual:** For the purposes of this policy, "bilingual" will mean the ability to provide service in both official languages.

#### 2. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

2.1 The University of Ottawa Heart Institute (the Institute) is a unique academic health care institution dedicated to understanding, treating, and preventing heart disease. The Institute provides a patient care environment which strives to minimize stress due to language barriers and is therefore dedicated to providing services in English and French.

2.2 The Institute recognizes clients of either official language as having the same rights, status and privileges. As such, they are entitled to receive administrative, nursing, professional, medical and support services in the official language of their choice.

2.3 To accomplish its mission, the Institute will provide the staff resources necessary to provide comprehensive, high quality patient care to its clients in the official language of their choice.

2.4 Clients are encouraged to communicate in the official language of their choice with the Institute staff.

2.5 The Institute will endeavour to offer public education programs in both languages whenever possible.

#### 3. SERVICES IN THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGE OF THEIR CHOICE FOR PATIENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES

3.1 A mechanism is in place to capture and record the linguistic identity of the client from the very first point of contact.

3.2 It is the responsibility of the manager and/or the health care worker to ensure that clients receive

services in the official language of their choice.

3.3 Employees who speak French are clearly identified using an identification badge, bilingual signage in offices, bilingual business cards, and a bilingual email signature, indicating to clients and families their ability to communicate in French.

3.4 In the event a staff member cannot offer the required service in French, the staff member will request the assistance of another staff member of equivalent status to offer the required service in French.

3.5 As a last resort, interpretation service will be provided.

## **4. COMPLAINTS**

4.1 Clients who have expressed a preference and who have not been served in the official language of their choice may lodge a complaint in the official language of their choice through the Patient Relations Office, which will then relay the complaint to the French Language Services Office, and/or to the Vice-President, of the Department of Communications. An appropriate response in the said language will be ensured by following the Institute's policy entitled "*Patient, Family and Visitors Concerns Management*".

4.2 The Institute is responsible for making this process known, and to ensure that the French Languages Services Office is easily accessible to patients and their families.

## **5. COMMUNICATIONS**

5.1 The Institute will ensure that all signs are bilingual.

5.2 The Institute will ensure that its written and verbal communications with the public are available in both official languages.

- Staff of the Institute actively offer services in French when answering the telephone.
- Interactive telephone response systems and voice mail are available in French.
- Reception, intake services and the entire continuum of care provided by designated services are actively offered in French.
- Voicemail message scripts are made available to employees.

5.3 Press releases, letterhead, Website navigation, pamphlets, brochures, all advertising, educational and promotional materials and other written and electronic communications related to designated programs shall be available simultaneously in both official languages.

5.4 Furthermore, all fund-raising activities and other activities organized with the public must be in the official language of the targeted community.

5.5 Clients who provide written communication to the Institute shall receive a reply in the same official language.

## **6. TRANSLATION SERVICES**

6.1 The Institute shall have access to an adequate Translation and Revision Service. To do so, it will establish a policy with respect to:

- General access to services
- General revision and revision of previously translated documents
- Standardization of terminology

6.2 The translation and revision of French documents is carried out by the Institute's translator. To ensure fast, quality service at a reasonable cost, the use of freelance translators, revisers or interpreters are also

considered. A directory of such resources has been compiled and will be managed by the French Language Services Office and all staff must go through this office for any translation needs.

6.3 All documents intended for patients are eligible for free translation through the Translation Network of the Ministry of Health.

6.4 The use of translation services is encouraged, and staff is informed of available services and the policies governing their use.

## **7. RESPONSIBILITY OF MANAGEMENT**

7.1 Members of the Heart Institute's Senior Management Team, along with their respective management teams, are responsible to ensure the implementation of this policy throughout the Institute.

7.2 An annual Heart Institute Human Resources plan will identify the requirement to provide service in both official languages and recommend strategies to meet these objectives.

7.3 Heart Institute Vice Presidents and Chiefs will review the approved strategies to meet departmental staffing needs to provide service in both official languages and will assist managers to staff positions in accordance with the approved plan.

7.4 Department Heads and managers will make every reasonable effort to optimize the deployment of staff with the ability to provide bilingual service on all shifts to ensure access to services in French.

## **8. STAFFING OF EMPLOYEE POSITIONS**

8.1 Services to clients in the following health care areas will be available in both official languages:

- Admitting
- Cardiac Anesthesia
- Cardiac Diagnostic Centre
- Cardiac Surgery
- Cardiology
- Clinical Services
- Communication Centre
- UOHI Foundation Office Lobby Reception -(Volunteers)
- Nuclear Cardiology
- Outpatients Clinics
- Cardiac Imaging
- Pharmacy
- Pre-Admit Unit
- Prevention and Rehabilitation Centre
- Triage

8.2 To determine if the ability to provide service in both official languages is an essential or preferred requirement for a position, the Institute Senior Management must take the following factors into consideration:

- i. The needs of the clients
- ii. The general availability within the department of employees with the ability to provide service in both official languages
- iii. The nature of contact with the patients and public
- iv. The level of responsibility of the position
- v. The identification of one-of-a-kind positions

Volunteer services are actively offered in French. If a volunteer does not have the necessary language skills, he/she will seek assistance to meet clients' needs. The volunteer coordinator actively recruits volunteers who can

communicate in French.

## **9. MEDICAL STAFF RECRUITMENT**

9.1 When recruiting medical staff in areas which provide service in both official languages, all efforts will be made to staff these services with physicians with the ability to provide service in both official languages.

9.2 When granting privileges to medical staff, the Heart Institute and its affiliates will consider the philosophy and principles contained in this policy.

9.3 Existing positions, as well as all new positions, will be assigned a linguistic profile which identifies the requirements for proficiency in both French and English as it relates to comprehension and expression both orally and written.

## **10. RECRUITMENT OF BILINGUAL STAFF**

10.1 Vice Presidents and Chiefs will provide Human Resources with the number of bilingual positions required for their areas of responsibility.

10.2 When a vacancy occurs, each unit manager will review the linguistic profile of staff within the unit. This review will determine the nature of the posting required to fulfill the linguistic needs of the unit.

10.3 Where the ability to provide service in both official languages is deemed mandatory for the position, the language skills of the candidates must be verified by means of a language test during the selection process and prior to the interview. Both English and French language skills may be tested.

10.4 The position shall be posted in accordance with the applicable collective agreement or Working Conditions Manual.

10.5 If no qualified applicants with the ability to provide services in both official languages are found within the Institute, the position will be posted externally or,

10.6 If there are no qualified candidates with the ability to provide services in both official languages, for a position where this requirement is mandatory, a unilingual candidate may be appointed to the position. The candidate may be required to take language training depending on the needs and circumstances of the unit or service. The manager will evaluate the number of bilingual staff on the unit and will determine the need for the candidate to take language training or whether to post the next vacancy as requiring the ability to provide service in both official languages.

10.7 For employees in a position designated as bilingual but who do not meet the language requirements of their position, the Institute will make available to its employees the following resources:

- Access to French language training outside work hours;
- Development opportunities available in the community;
- Information on language training reimbursement opportunities, either from the agency itself or from the Ontario government.

## **11. LANGUAGE TESTING**

11.1 When it is deemed that a position requires a candidate to have the ability to provide service in both official languages, this skill must be determined prior to the interview and selection process. Human Resources will schedule all language tests for candidates.

11.2 Human Resources will test candidates' capacity to speak, comprehend and express themselves orally in the second official language. The ability to read or write in the second official language will also be tested, only if applicable to the position.

11.3 In those positions for which this requirement is essential, the functional level of oral expression and comprehension is that of the linguistic profile.

Linguistic profiles are defined as objective tools that determine the level of linguistic proficiency required in English and in French to carry out the roles and responsibilities associated with a given position. Linguistic profiles are based on job descriptions and not on individuals already providing services within a position. Linguistic profiles encompass all communication skills: oral expression, oral comprehension, reading comprehension and written expression.

11.4 The level of ability to speak, read or write in both official languages for each position must be approved by the manager and the Vice-President concerned.

11.5 The employee will be informed in writing of the results of the language test(s). A copy of the results will be placed in the employee's file.

11.6 All new staff will be tested, and their levels established.

#### 11.7 Established Levels of Ability to Speak, Read or Write in Both Official Languages

11.8 As of October 2016, the Institute recognizes the newly established levels of proficiency as determined by The Ottawa Hospital Human Resources Department.

11.9 Language testing results will be valid for a period of 5 years and kept on file unless an employee is applying for a job requiring a higher level or if an employee has taken French language training. In that case, the employee will need to be tested again.

11.10 The levels of proficiency are described according to skills. (See Appendix A for levels.)

## 12. SECOND LANGUAGE TRAINING

12.1 The Institute encourages employees to participate in second language training to maintain or upgrade their level of proficiency.

12.2 The Institute will clearly identify funds spent on language training for elected participants. The Institute will advise all its employees of available opportunities for language training.

12.3 Priorities or accepted criteria for language training include:

- a) Employees who have to communicate orally with patients and/or their families on a daily basis.
- b) Employees with more than five years left before retirement.

12.4 The Institute will assist employees registered in second language courses by reimbursing course fees for a program approved by the Institute. The employee must attend 70% of the classes and successfully complete the course to be reimbursed. Tuition fees may be paid by an outside agency such as the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care if applicable and based on the availability of funds. Priority for funding will be given to staff as defined under 13.3.

12.5 Language training will be taken on the employee's own time unless stated otherwise and approved by the appropriate manager.

12.6 The Institute will make every effort to offer language training through the French Resource Centre, the University of Ottawa, and any other recognized French language training provider

## **13. GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATION**

The Board of Directors of the Institute conducts its business in both official languages. To that end, the following shall apply:

## **14. EVALUATION AND ANNUAL REPORT TO THE BOARD**

14.1 Indicators on the recruitment and retention of staff with the ability to provide service in both official languages will be reported annually by the French Language Committee to the Board.

14.2 The French Language Committee will report annually to the Board on the effectiveness and implementation of the Official Languages Policy and of the Services in French Policy in the following areas:

- i. Patient population and satisfaction;
- ii. Designation of positions requiring the ability to provide service in both official languages;
- iii. Percentage of staff in front line areas with the ability to provide service in both official languages;
- iv. Language training sessions provided to staff;
- v. Percentage of staff with the ability to provide service in both official languages by service;
- vi. Complaints or grievances regarding matters of official language and resolution.

## **II. OFFICIAL LANGUAGES POLICY**

This section applies to areas designated under the *French Language Services Act*.

The Institute recognizes that in accordance with the *French Language Services Act* a person has the right to communicate in French with, and to receive available services in French from the Institute staff.

### **1. COMMUNICATION**

1.1 Public entrances and patient reception areas at the Institute shall indicate the availability of services in French from designated staff wearing « Je parle français » on their ID card or on a separate button.

1.2 While on duty, bilingual staff shall wear proper identification indicating their ability to provide service in either official language and shall identify the language preference of clients under their care.

1.3 After a greeting in both official languages, the staff will ask the client if they want their service in English or French.

### **2. HEALTH RECORDS**

2.1 Health record entries are made in English.

2.2 All forms generated by the Institute and placed in a health record must be bilingual or available in both languages.

2.3 The Heart Institute is not responsible for providing patients with a translation of their medical records. Other requests are dealt with on a case-by-case basis, and in accordance with the level of translation required.

### **3. TRAINING**

3.1 The Institute has established a number of French Language resources for employees through its intranet. Resources include information about the active service offer, training opportunities, and tools and tips for learning the French language. Moreover, all news related to French Language Services is shared through the Institute's weekly newsletter, which is distributed to all employees.

3.2 All managers shall encourage their staff to participate in French language training and assist them,

wherever feasible, in achieving this end.

## **4. STAFFING**

4.1 The Institute will make clear that the language requirements of various positions will be fulfilled by training of the present incumbent when the incumbent does not meet the language requirements, and that in no instance will employees be terminated or suffer reduction in salary or wages for not meeting job language requirements.

4.2 Employees hired after January 1, 2000, and other outside candidates must meet the posted language requirements.

## **5. FRANCOPHONE REPRESENTATION: BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND SENIOR MANAGEMENT LEVEL COMMITTEES**

### **5.1 Board of Directors**

To ensure the permanency and the quality of services in French within the Institute, the Board of Directors should have a minimum of two (2) French-speaking members. Before any new appointment is made, the Chair will ensure that the number of French-speaking members is maintained at all times.

### **5.2 Senior Management**

The Institute will have a minimum of two (2) French-speaking staff among its eleven (11) senior officers.

### **5.3 Senior Management Level Committees**

The Institute will also meet the needs of the local community through adequate representation of French-speaking individuals on senior management level committees. There will be at least one (1) French-speaking individual on each Committee.

## **6. ACCOUNTABILITY**

The President and CEO is accountable for the provision of permanent and high quality of French language services.

## APPENDIX A

### DESCRIPTION OF PROFICIENCY

#### Superior

Oral Comprehension: Able to understand discourse of any length in a standard dialect on a wide range of familiar and unfamiliar topics. Able to understand some non-standard dialects, although some misunderstandings may occur. Able to easily identify the main idea and supporting details in academic and professional settings. Comprehension of significant details in well-structured speech is almost always accurate. Able to understand many cultural references. Rarely has difficulty understanding speech spoken at a normal speed. Little or no repetition is necessary.

Reading Comprehension: Able to understand almost all forms of written language including abstract and structurally complex text. Can easily identify the main idea and supporting details in academic and professional texts. Understands a wide range of common and uncommon vocabulary. Able to understand most unfamiliar topics despite the lack of background knowledge. Able to comprehend many sociolinguistic and cultural references. Misinterpretations are rare. Can accurately derive meaning of unfamiliar words from the context. Re-reading may be necessary only for highly complex or colloquial texts.

Written Expression: Exhibits a high degree of control of both vocabulary and grammar. Able to write formal and informal essays, reports, and other correspondence on a wide range of abstract and concrete topics. Adjusts style of writing to the reader. Is able to accurately convey subtle nuances with some colloquialisms. Writing is organized and uses a wide variety of cohesive devices to link complex ideas. Errors are rare and do not interfere with comprehension.

Oral Expression: Exhibits a high degree of control of both vocabulary and grammar. Able to handle all familiar and some unfamiliar formal and informal situations on a wide range of concrete and abstract topics. Adjusts style of speech to the listener or audience. Is able to accurately convey subtle nuances with some colloquialisms. Errors may occur in highly complex structures, but when they occur, he/she is generally able to self-correct. Long pauses and hesitations are rare and do not distract from the speech. Pronunciation is clear throughout. Even though an accent may be present, speaker is intelligible to most native speakers of the language.

#### Advanced

Oral Comprehension: Able to understand most routine narrative and descriptive connected discourse on familiar topics. Recognizes the main idea and most supporting details in familiar or routine settings. Able to understand some key details in complex or unfamiliar situations although misunderstandings may occur. For maximum comprehension in unfamiliar situations, key details may need to be repeated and/or rephrased and the speech spoken at a slower than normal rate. Can understand some common cultural references. Occasional repetition may be necessary.

Reading Comprehension: Able to understand most factual and some abstract materials. Able to understand the main ideas and many supporting details in connected texts on familiar and some unfamiliar topics. Has a good range of common vocabulary and has some technical vocabulary in areas of specialization. Able to understand some unfamiliar topics, despite the lack of background knowledge. Can understand some common cultural references. Misinterpretations may occur when dealing with more structurally or conceptually complex topics or uncommon idioms. Re-reading of more complex texts may be required.

Written Expression: Has a high degree of vocabulary or grammar, but not both. Able to write one or more paragraphs on most concrete topics and some abstract topics. Attempts to adjust style of writing to the reader

may sometimes be effective. Accurately uses some common idioms or colloquialisms. Writing is relatively cohesive and organized. Writing exhibits a high degree of accuracy in simple structures, but errors, awkward wordings, and repetitions may occur in more complex and less frequent structures. Errors do not detract from the overall comprehension of the text but may be distracting to the reader.

Oral Expression: Has a high degree of control of vocabulary or grammar, but not both. Able to handle most familiar and concrete topics and some unfamiliar or abstract topics. Attempts to adjust style of speech to the listener or audience may sometimes be effective. Accurately uses some common idioms or colloquialisms. Speech in routine situations rarely contains vocabulary or grammatical errors. Exhibits inaccurate, incorrect, or awkward phrasing when speaking in unfamiliar situations or about a complex or unfamiliar topic. Pauses, hesitations, and reformulations are more evident when dealing with more abstract or complex topics. Inaccuracies in pronunciation occur but do not impede communication.

## **Intermediate**

Oral Comprehension: Able to understand sentence-level speech on familiar topics when spoken at a normal speed. Recognizes the main idea and some supporting details in very familiar, routine, and predictable settings. Can understand the general topic of longer connected discourse on familiar and less familiar topics but may not be able to identify the main point or supporting details. Repetitions and rewording are often necessary with unfamiliar topics.

Reading Comprehension: Able to read simple sentences. Able to understand basic, concrete, and connected text on familiar topics. Able to identify some main ideas and supporting details in more complex text. Has sufficient range of vocabulary to understand routine, highly contextualized texts. Background or contextual knowledge is required for accurate comprehension. Some misinterpretations occur due to incomplete acquisition/knowledge of vocabulary, grammar, and written conventions. Re-reading of texts may be required.

Written Expression: Has some control of basic sentence structure and writing conventions. Able to write simple sentences about familiar everyday topics. Writing often resembles spoken language. Unable to adjust writing style to different audiences. Uses a limited number of cohesive devices such as "and", and "so", but often lacks deliberate organization. Grammar, word choice, spelling, or punctuation errors are present. Errors may be distracting and may impede comprehension of the text.

Oral Expression: Has a limited control of the vocabulary and grammar of the language. Able to address simple, concrete, and familiar day-to-day topics using basic sentence structures. Accuracy in basic grammatical structures is evident but not consistent in spontaneous speech. Is able to communicate meaning in most routine situations despite errors in word choice or grammar. Insufficient vocabulary or grammatical knowledge to express ideas on abstract topics. Pauses, repairs, and reformulations are evident. Pronunciation is clear enough to be understood by interlocutors accustomed to listening to intermediate level speakers.

Beginner

Oral Comprehension: Able to understand some very common expressions when spoken at a normal speed especially when used with gestures and visual cues. Able to understand some common words in isolation without visual cues but may not be able to comprehend sentence-level speech on familiar topics. Comprehension often relies on cognates, borrowed words, and/or visual cues. Gestures and repetitions are often necessary.

Reading Comprehension: Able to understand some common, highly contextualized words and phrases. Often relies on cognates and borrowed words to decode meaning. Comprehension is highly dependent on background knowledge and context. Able to read short, simple phrases. Misinterpretations frequently occur due to incomplete acquisition/knowledge of vocabulary, grammar, and written conventions. Re-reading of texts is often required.

Written Expression: Has very limited control of basic sentence structure and writing conventions. Able to write

simple words and short sentences on familiar topics. Unable to sustain sentence-level writing over several sentences to produce an organized text. Writing lacks cohesion and organization. Grammar, word choice, spelling, or punctuation errors are frequent. Errors are distracting and impede comprehension of the text.

Oral Expression: Has very limited control of vocabulary and grammar. Able to address very simple and familiar topics using isolated words and memorized phrases. Mostly speaks in short sometimes incomplete sentences in a single verb form. Almost every sentence has phonological or grammatical inaccuracies. Is unable to sustain sentence-level discourse. Long pauses, frequent repairs, and repetitions frequently impede the communication. Is understood with difficulty.

### **Novice**

Oral Comprehension: No ability to understand the spoken language. Oral comprehension is not sufficient for communication.

Reading Comprehension: No ability to read the written language. Recognizes letters in the alphabet.

Written Expression: No functional writing ability. May only be able to write basic personal information (e.g., name).

Oral Expression: No control of the language. Pronunciation is unintelligible. Communication is impossible.