



LANGUAGES CANADA QUALITY ASSURANCE STANDARD

LCS110: Quality Assurance — Requirements

Approved by Languages
Canada

February 25, 2023

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A: INTRODUCTION

1. Standard

The purpose of the Languages Canada (LC) Standard is to ensure that the best interests of students studying or planning to study English and/or French in Canada or via remote learning are respected. This standard specifies requirements with which LC Members must comply to ensure they have competent instructors, well-equipped learning facilities, and programs which provide an effective learning experience for students. The standard is one element of the greater Languages Canada Quality Assurance Framework and Accreditation Scheme.

The standard was developed in consultation with experts in the language learning industry including representation from the public and private sectors.

2. Languages Canada

Established in 2008, Languages Canada is a member-driven association with the primary purpose to be the voice of the Canadian language education sector. With a mission to promote high quality, accredited English and French language education in Canada, Languages Canada is known both nationally and internationally as a symbol of excellence, representing Canada as the number one destination for quality English and French language education.

3. Accreditation to this Standard

Adherence to the LC Quality Assurance Standard is a requirement of LC Membership in Languages Canada.

Explanation of Procedure:

- Languages Canada reviews and updates the standard as necessary.
- Full audits are conducted of LC Members once every four years. Maintenance reviews will be conducted two years after each full accreditation review.
- To ensure an arm's length review of the LC Member, compliance monitoring will be done by an independent firm. Currently, Orion Assessment Services of Canada Inc. is contracted to manage the process. Refer to www.orioncan.com.

Scope of Accreditation:

The scope of accreditation is defined by three criteria: the legal name of the LC member, the address of the LC member, and the LC member's scope statement. All LC members must include every language program which they deliver within their scope statement.

Exclusions to the Standard:

LC Members must comply with all requirements of the standard unless they fall under one of the following allowable exclusions:

- D.3 Activities – If the LC member is remote, this clause may be an exclusion.
- D.4 Accommodation – If the LC member does not offer accommodation services, this clause may be an exclusion. If the LC member is remote, this clause may be an exclusion. If the LC member recommends a third-party provider and has any type of referral services, they may not exclude D.4.
- D.5 Care of Junior Students – If the LC Member does not cater to junior students, this may be an exclusion.
- H.7 Facilities – If the LC member is entirely remote, this clause may be an exclusion.

All exclusions must be documented, and any marketing material may not reference activities listed as exclusions. For example, an LC Member cannot market homestay services if they do not provide the service.

4. Issue Resolution with LC Members

- The first line of communication for students with concerns is within the LC Member's internal structure.
- The role of Languages Canada is to act as an advocate on behalf of the student and to ensure that full information is available to review the matter with both the student and the LC Member.
- Should a resolution not be possible, the matter is referred to the Board of Directors of Languages Canada for resolution in accordance with the terms and conditions of the Dispute Resolution Policy for Languages Canada. If the accredited LC Member is a public sector institution, the matter may be referred to an established internal resolution policy if available. This dispute resolution policy shall be documented and displayed and/or made available to all students.

B: TERMS & DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this standard, the following specific terms and definitions will be adopted.

Academic Leader: The individual(s) employed by an LC Member who oversees the teaching staff, possesses extensive teaching experience, and is trained in language teaching, methodology, and curriculum development. This role may be carried out by multiple people or individuals with alternative titles, for instance Academic Director, Program Coordinator, or Director of Studies.

Alternative Accommodation: Accommodation offered to students by an LC Member exclusive of the LC Member's residences/dormitories and of homestay.

Languages Canada Member (or "LC Member"): A private or public school, institution, department, branch, or program which has been fully accredited by Languages Canada and has demonstrated compliance with all conditions of LC Membership set forth in the by-laws and Quality Assurance Framework.

Remote Learning: Any formal teaching and learning offered by an LC Member which does not require the student to be physically present in a classroom environment.

C: STUDENT ADMISSIONS

C.1 Registration:

Accurate and current information on program offerings, services, and costs is readily accessible in print-based format and on the LC Member's website.

Requests for information from prospective students are processed promptly.

Before registration, students receive a documented statement of the appropriate LC Member's fee and refund policy as well as any other contract required by the LC Member.

Additional Specifications:

- **C.1a** The program information is comprehensive and covers all program options.
- **C.1b** A documented procedure is in place for handling responses. LC Members may refer to Best Practice Guidelines for Handling Student Requests, as set forth by Languages Canada.
- **C.1c** Documented statement of fees includes:
 1. tuition, including applicable dates
 2. description of what services tuition includes
 3. enrolment and cancellation terms, including financial penalties
 4. details on additional charges, clearly stating whether mandatory or optional.

C.2 Records:

Student records are kept confidential in accordance with applicable federal and provincial legislation. Documented policies regarding confidentiality are clearly stated and followed.

Additional Specifications:

- **C.2a** Student records are kept in a secure location. Access is controlled whether the records are stored in electronic or hardcopy format.
- **C.2b** The policy for handling student records is documented and followed.
- **C.2c** Student records shall be maintained for a minimum of five years, in electronic or hardcopy format.
- **C.2d** A process is in place to keep records, and contact information is documented and followed.

C.3 Immigration and Insurance:

The LC Member provides international students with general information on immigration requirements in writing and refers students to government sources and contacts as required.

The LC Member operates in accordance with the policy and regulations with respect to international students as set forth by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada or equivalent.

The LC Member ensures that students are informed that they are responsible to have and maintain medical insurance for the duration of their enrolment.

D: STUDENT SERVICES

D.1 Orientation

Upon students' arrival, the LC Member provides orientation to introduce students to their institution, programs and services as well as studying and living in Canada.

Additional Specifications:

- **D.1a** A general orientation to studying and living in Canada is provided including information on: accommodation, weather, clothing, food, immigration regulations, dental and medical information, travel, local transit, etc. shall be provided.
- **D.1b** Academic Orientation includes:
 - 1) Testing and placement procedures
 - 2) Course structure and levels
 - 3) Requirements for progression to a higher level
 - 4) Course descriptions and objectives
 - 5) Course assessment criteria
 - 6) Requirements for certificates and/or diplomas
 - 7) Course and program schedules
 - 8) Policy and procedure on attendance and participation
- **D.1c** Orientation to institution and/or services is included.

D.2.1 Support Services:

In addition to orientation services, the LC Member provides a range of support services to help students function within the programs and to adjust to living in Canada.

Additional Specifications:

- **D.2.1a** A clearly identified person or department is available to students for academic advising and general advice on life in Canada.
- **D.2.1b** In addition to in-house advising, referral services are available for:
 - general banking information
 - legal service providers
 - tutoring
 - childcare
 - medical services (see orientation)
 - housing
 - local facilities, services, and amenities
 - personal safety and care of valuables
 - local places of worship
 - compliance with the law
 - academic advising and further training
 - technological resources needed for either a remote or in-person learning environment
- **D.2.1c** Age, background, special circumstances and/or special needs are taken into consideration.
- **D.2.1d** For programs with significant remote learning environments, appropriate and timely technical support and resources for students and staff are in place.

D.2.2 Problem Resolution:

A written statement that explains the LC Member's procedures for problem resolution is provided to students in the Student Handbook, on course outlines or via another avenue.

Additional Specifications:

- **D.2.2a** Copies of the problem resolution policies are readily accessible.
- **D.2.2b** A documented procedure or policy is in place for responding to students' feedback, suggestions, and complaints. Records shall be maintained as evidence of feedback received, responses given, and actions taken as necessary.

D.3 Activities:

The LC Member presents opportunities for students to experience the diversity of Canadian culture within the target language by participating in local cultural, social and recreational events.

Additional Specifications:

- **D.3a** A regular schedule of possible events shall be documented and communicated.
- **D.3b** Any additional costs for activities are clearly documented.
- **D.3c** Activities sponsored by the program/institution are carefully planned and supervised.
- **D.3d** The LC Member maintains liability coverage for program activities including on-site activities and excursions, both academic and extra-curricular, or ensures that students sign an informed waiver of liability.
- **D.3e** The LC Member's policies and procedures for supervision and liability terms for minors, if appropriate, is documented.

D.4 Accommodation:

If the LC Member offers accommodation services, the following will be available:

1. A listing of all housing options, which may include dormitories, residences, apartments, homestays, or any other alternative accommodation service provided by the LC Member.
2. Clear information outlining features, terms, conditions and rules of the accommodation service. This information will be made available to those who may use the services or who are involved in the provision of those services.

When confirming accommodation services for students, the LC Member will provide in writing to the student prior to the start of the accommodation services:

1. detailed information about the type of accommodation
2. detailed description of services to be included and provided
3. location of the accommodation with relevant transportation information
4. fees for the accommodation and payment terms and requirements
5. cancellation terms, including any penalties, and refund policies
6. policies regarding service complaints and dispute resolution
7. in the case of homestay, background information about the homestay household

Additional Specifications:

- **D.4a** The LC Member will inspect all housing options which have not been previously inspected by a regulatory body, offered to its students on a yearly basis.

In the case of homestay accommodation, for all ages of students, the LC Member will inspect the housing option, prior to placing a student in homestay accommodation.

For new homestay hosts, the LC Member will:

1. Require hosts to complete and submit an application form
2. Conduct an on-site inspection of the homestay dwelling and interview the head of household. See D4b.
3. Ensure that Criminal Record Checks (CRCs) have been submitted. In a new family, the head of household and all other persons 18 years of age and older who usually reside in the homestay, are required to complete and submit the "Homestay Resident Suitability Declaration" and apply for a Criminal Record Check within seven days.

As part of its on-going inspection of homestay accommodation, the LC Member will:

1. Make available to students placed in homestay, adequate tools to provide feedback to the LC Member
2. Require homestays to provide an annual updated form.
3. Re-inspect homestays every three years and provide documented information of results of the inspection.
4. Ensure that CRCs are updated at least every five years for all LC Members 18 and older.
5. Have a process in place for tracking and ensuring homestay inspection and CRCs are completed.

LC Members will provide both the students and homestay family with a procedure for immediate response to urgent concerns such as a 24-hour contact number or other suitable procedure.

- **D4b** The LC Member will maintain Homestay records containing, at a minimum, for each Homestay Family:
 1. Records of inspections including date, inspector, inspection checklist, and outcome, along with the criteria for accepting or rejecting the housing option.
 2. Up-to-date Criminal Record Checks for every resident in the Homestay aged 18 years or older
 3. Homestay Resident Suitability Declaration forms to cover any lag period between inspection/approval of

- homestay residence and receipt of Criminal Record Checks.
4. Student evaluations/feedback forms or summary thereof.
 5. Records of any student complaints or issues and how these were addressed by the LC Member.

- **D.5 Care of Junior Students:**

If the LC Member offers programs to participants who are 15 years of age or younger, it has a comprehensive set of policies and procedures to supervise them and to ensure their safety and well-being at all times during the program.

LC Members placing students under the legal age of majority in homestay will:

1. Provide evidence of having policies and practices in place to minimize risks for these students.
2. Provide resources to these students explaining what they must do if they ever feel uncomfortable about the intention or behaviour of any resident in their homestay.
3. Agree to re-assign any student under the legal age of majority to another homestay within 24 hours if the student requests a change in the homestay due to feeling uncomfortable about the intentions or behaviour of any resident in the homestay.

Additional Specifications:

- **D.5a** The LC Member clearly identifies a person/department responsible for junior students.
- **D.5b** The LC Member clearly identifies the duties and responsibilities of above person(s) in writing.
- **D.5c** The LC Member ensures that employees working with juniors have signed a declaration that they are fit to be working with such students and have undergone a police security check. A record of the security check will be maintained in the employee's file.
- **D.5d** The LC Member ensures the following rules and management strategies are implemented:
 - An employee cannot take junior students to a place/destination outside the usual venue of the program without written prior approval of the program supervisor.
 - An employee cannot be alone in a private setting with a junior student without the knowledge and written approval of the program supervisor.
 - Junior students are given clear instructions on how to seek help if they feel uncomfortable with any staff person working in the program.
- **D.5e** Supervision of junior students is maintained at the level of 1:15 minimum.
- **D.5f** Junior students are issued an ID Card that includes contact information for the student and is to be carried at all times. Contact information for responsible guardian(s) is included.
- **D.5g** The LC Member's policy on bullying or perceived bullying or abuse is clearly documented and communicated to students.

E: ACADEMIC STAFF

E.1 Education and Training:

All academic staff must have university degrees and specialist training and experience in English and/or French language teaching appropriate to the courses they are teaching.

For detailed specification and classifications of TESOL specialist training, please refer to the document *Languages Canada Classification of TESOL Qualifications*. For detailed parameters of professional development requirements, please refer to the document *Languages Canada Professional Development Specifications*.

Additional Specifications:

- **E.1a**
 - For LC Members teaching English, a minimum of TESOL-I level qualification is required for all academic staff.
 - For LC members teaching English, a minimum of TESOL-Q or an equivalent combination of TESOL-I with documented relevant and ongoing professional development as prescribed in the *Languages Canada Professional Development Specifications* is required for academic leaders.
 - For LC Members teaching French, a degree in Education or a degree with experience in teaching French as a Second Language is required.
 - For ESL junior LC Members, programs must employ language instructors who possess one of the following minimum qualifications: Bachelor's degree in Education, preferably with 2nd language teaching experience or TESOL-I preferably with experience teaching juniors.
 - There will be a valid rationale provided for the employment of any teachers or academic leader without the ELT/TESOL FSL qualifications specified above and in the Languages Canada Classification of Specialist Qualifications.
- **E.1b** Verified true copies of original diplomas / certificates for all academic staff will be required for the on-site visit.
- **E.1c** Process for orientation and monitoring new teachers in place to ensure consistency and standards in delivery of program.

E.2 Linguistic Competency:

Teachers are able to demonstrate proficiency in the language being taught.

E.3 Cross Cultural Awareness:

Teachers demonstrate intercultural knowledge, sensitivity, and awareness in their interactions with students.

E.4 Performance Appraisals:

The LC Member conducts performance appraisals for each teacher. The purpose of the evaluation is to act as a career enhancing tool to help the teachers identify opportunities to enhance their capability to deliver effective programs.

Students are offered the opportunity to evaluate each course in each session and provide input to enhance the course or program offering.

Additional Specifications:

- **E.4a** Teachers are evaluated by students at end of each term of study and records are maintained of the results of the evaluation.

- **E.4b** A process is in place for evaluating new and/or casual teachers and may include:
 1. student evaluations
 2. review of lesson plans
 3. classroom observations
 4. peer observations
- **E.4c** The criteria for evaluation are measurable and available in writing. The results of the evaluation should identify professional development opportunities. See section E.5
- **E.4d** Performance appraisals may be subject to terms and conditions of applicable collective agreements within institutions.

E.5 Professional Development:

The LC Member provides a range of professional development options for teachers.

Additional Specifications:

- **E.5a** In-service training and development opportunities provided on on-going basis.
- **E.5b** Professional development activities are documented and consistent with the *Languages Canada Professional Development Specifications* and may include but are not limited to:
 - 1) in-house workshops
 - 2) access to/review of current publications
 - 3) conference attendance
 - 4) conference presentations
 - 5) participation in professional organizations

F: CURRICULUM

F.1 Definition of Programs:

The language programs offered by LC Members provide a succession of proficiency levels designed to achieve program completion. For on-site programs, individual courses (levels) provide a minimum of 15 instructional hours per week not including any additional laboratory hours for a period of at least 4 weeks.

Specialized courses, programs, and remote modules provide varying delivery options sufficient to meet the stated course objectives.

F.2 Skills:

The language programs offered by LC Members cover all language skills so that students have the opportunity to develop balanced communicative competency.

Other specialized courses and program offerings may focus on specific skills and objectives. The outcomes of these courses are clearly stated.

F.3 Curriculum:

The LC Member has a documented curriculum, which specifies goals and objectives.

Additional Specifications:

- **F.3a** Curriculum is in writing and includes:
 1. detailed description of program options and course offerings
 2. measurable performance objectives
 3. criteria for completion of levels and program
 4. methodology and content taking into consideration target audience and variety of learning styles
 5. list of required texts and reference materials, including rationale
 6. other learning resources available to teachers

- **F.3b** Curriculum reflects up-to-date research into second language acquisition and encourages innovation. For example, as appropriate for the goals of the students and the objectives of the curriculum:
 - providing for, and encouraging, the use of current educational technology and media in the classroom, including but not limited to computer-assisted language learning (CALL), SmartBoards, mobile devices, and social media
 - promoting critical thinking in classroom activities and projects, with possible application to learning outside the classroom, for instance supporting local volunteer associations
 - blending the teaching of language and content
 - maximizing classroom time for student interaction and collaboration, and using media creatively for transmission of information, for instance utilizing a “flipped classroom” approach
 - demonstrating how it has incorporated up-to-date research and approaches to language teaching into its program.

F.4 Curriculum Review:

The LC Member has a process in place for curriculum review at least every five years, and for modification as required.

Additional Specifications:

- **F.4a** Curriculum review and development considers:
 1. student feedback
 2. evaluation of courses
 3. needs of current student population
 4. student success rates
 5. feedback from teachers and program administration
 6. feedback from marketing/recruiting staff
 7. student enrolment patterns
 8. findings from professional development options of teachers
 9. recent trends in second language acquisition

F.5 Testing and Placement:

Diagnostic and test placement procedures are employed to ensure that each student is placed in an effective teaching-learning environment.

F.6 Levels:

Several proficiency levels are available and running so that appropriate placement is possible.

F.7 Academic Records & Reports:

The students’ progress is measured and recorded. Such records are kept current and accurate.

Students are provided with a final achievement report at the end of each term of study.

Additional Specifications:

- refer to specifications stated in C.2

F.8 Academic Resources:

The LC Member ensures that a range of learning material and academic resources for all program offerings are current (up to date), readily available and in sufficient supply for the student enrolment.

Additional Specifications:

- refer to specifications stated in F.3a

F.9 Academic Excursions:

The curriculum includes activities that provide opportunities for students to develop language skills beyond the classroom. This may include excursions or assignments requiring extra-curricular activities using language skills in a non-academic environment.

Additional Specifications:

- refer to specifications stated in D.3

G: MARKETING and RECRUITING**G.1 Recruiting:**

In all recruiting transactions, LC Members are required to represent and maintain the standard of programs and services of Languages Canada.

LC Members must not engage in conduct which is unethical or unprofessional and may be prejudicial to the reputation of Languages Canada or its LC Members.

G.2 Agents:

LC Members are required to adhere to the Best Practice Guidelines for Dealing with Agents as set forth by Languages Canada.

G.3 Publicity Materials:

All promotional materials and supplementary information present a clear, accurate and current description of the options and services offered by the LC Member.

Additional Specifications:

- **G.3a** Publicity materials reflect actual programs options, services, facilities and location at time of publishing.
- **G.3b** Process in place to update materials as changes occur.

H: ADMINISTRATION

H.1 Overview:

The LC Member ensures that all program options and services stated in their publicity materials are delivered effectively. The provision of these deliverables and the best interests of students studying English and/or French direct the administration of the program.

Additional Specifications:

- **H.1a** Full LC Members must have operated and delivered their program for a documented minimum period of three years. Those applying for Novice LC Membership may apply with documented minimum period of one year of program delivery and operation.

H.2 Institutional Support:

If the LC Member is affiliated with a university, college or larger institution, provision is made for a degree of support from the parent institution.

Additional Specifications:

- **H.2a** Support may vary depending on relationship and reporting structure to the parent institution.

H.3 Leadership:

There is a clear and effective management structure for the LC Member.

Additional Specifications:

- **H.3a** An organizational chart with reporting structure is available to all levels of staff.
- **H.3b** Key responsibilities of the Academic Leader are **to ensure** the effective operation of the language program.
- **H.3c** The Academic Leader has formal training in language teaching, methodology and curriculum development to provide guidance and support to program.
 - Refer to specification in E. 1 a
- **H.3d** Program administration includes but is not limited to:
 1. teaching assignments
 2. timetabling
 3. student placement and records
 4. supply teacher arrangements
 5. student/teacher ratio
 6. attendance policies
 7. student services and non-academic support
 8. curriculum design and review
 9. marketing and recruiting
 10. physical resources
 11. fiscal management

H.4 Policies:

Relevant program policies and procedures as set out in this standard are readily accessible to levels of staff and students. Note that some internal policies and procedures may not be relevant to students.

H.5 Orientation / Evaluation:

The LC Member has in place a system for monitoring and observing the performance of all levels of staff. Guidance is offered by the program administration.

Additional Specifications:

- **H.5a** Orientation, guidance and in-service training provided to all new staff LC Members.
- **H.5b** Procedure in place to monitor staff performance.
- **H.5c** Documented criteria for dealing with unsatisfactory performance.
- **H.5d** Guidance and support provided to improve performance.
- **H.5e** Policies may be subject to the terms and conditions of collective agreements within institutions.

H.6 Terms of Employment:

The terms and conditions of employment must comply with all applicable federal or provincial regulations.

All levels of staff have appropriate working conditions to enable them to perform their required duties.

Additional Specifications:

- **H.6a** Written position descriptions, including duties and responsibilities, are available for all levels of staff.
- **H.6b** Personnel policies for recruiting/appointing all levels of staff in writing are followed.
- **H.6c** Federal and provincial regulations for Labour Standards are adhered to.
- **H.6d** Policies may be subject to terms and conditions of collective agreements within institutions.

H.7 Facilities:

The physical resources of the LC Member are conducive to meeting and delivering the objectives of the program as well as to accommodating the needs of staff and students.

Additional Specifications:

- **H.7a** Physical resources used by all levels of staff:
 1. meet all applicable fire and safety regulations (and all levels of staff are aware of these)
 2. have regularly scheduled cleaning and maintenance
 3. are adequately lit, heated, and ventilated
 4. accommodate space and meet requirements for the number of students and staff
 5. accommodate any special needs of staff and students
 6. have clearly posted signage

- **H.7b Resources for Remote Learning**

1. Minimum hardware, software, and/or other requirements shall be determined, documented, and communicated to students and remote teaching providers to minimize technological issues.
2. LC Members who offer remote learning will have in place an appropriate Learning Management System or similar digital learning environment that is fit for purpose.
3. Guidelines on how to interact within the remote learning environment must be communicated at the outset of the course or program and readily accessible to all students.
4. Support and training for the effective operation and management of remote teaching and learning should be in place.

H.8 Internal Reviews and Improvement:

The LC Member will have in place procedures to review internal processes.

Additional Specifications

- **H.8a. Internal Audit:** The LC Member shall conduct an internal audit at least once within each calendar year to ensure the program is effectively implemented, maintained, and conforms with:
 - The requirements of this Standard;
 - The program's own requirements.

The criteria for conducting the audit shall be planned and carried out by competent auditors independent of the activities being reviewed. Records of the audit shall be maintained including:

- Date of the audit
- Auditors
- Areas Reviewed
- Results of the audits (positive aspects / deficiencies and areas for improvement)

The results of the audit shall be communicated to the person responsible for the program and serve as an input to the Operational review.

Actions taken to correct any deficiencies shall be recorded.

- **H.8b. Operational Review:** The LC Member has a process in place for the periodic review of programs and services and for modification, as required. As a minimum, this review shall be done at least every five years.

Input to this review shall include:

- Results of any curriculum review
- Results of the internal audits

The Operational Review shall be documented including any outputs and actions required.

The focus of the review may vary depending on the intent: financial, staff utilization, facilities, marketing plans, curriculum review, etc.

Guidance may be sought from external organizations, the parent institution or Languages Canada.

H.9 Selection and Monitoring of External Providers:

A LC Member may choose to contract portions of their service offerings (e.g., homestay / excursions). In these cases, the LC Member retains the full responsibility to ensure the requirements of the standard have been maintained.

The LC Member shall determine and document the criteria for the:

1. Selection;
2. Monitoring and evaluation of performance;
3. Re-evaluation of external providers, based on their ability operate in accordance with standard requirements.

Records of selection, monitoring, and evaluations shall be documented. Monitoring efforts may include an audit of the provider, reviews of records to confirm the requirements have been met, or other forms of feedback.

Contractual Requirements

The LC Member will ensure a documented contract is in place clearly describing at a minimum:

- the service(s) or product(s) purchased
- a description of the requirements of the standard, and,
- the verification, or other activities necessary to ensure the standard requirements are met.

I: AMENDMENTS

The board of directors of Languages Canada may, from time to time, amend the Quality Assurance Scheme at its sole discretion and without prior notice. All LC Members will be notified of changes.