



QUALITY ASSURANCE SCHEME STANDARDS and SPECIFICATIONS

A: PURPOSE

The purpose of the LC Standards is to support quality enhancement in Canada's language education sector, and as part of Languages Canada's Quality Assurance Scheme to ensure that the best interests of students studying or planning to study English and/or French in Canada is respected.

B: QUALITY ASSURANCE

Adherence to the LC Standards and Quality Assurance Scheme is a requirement of membership of Languages Canada.

If students have concerns with respect to a Member Program and are unable to clarify them at the program level, they may refer the matter to Languages Canada

Explanation of Procedure:

- **B.1a** Languages Canada relies on an independent body appointed by the Board to accredit and ensure compliance with Languages Canada Standards within member Language Programs.
- **B.1b** Accreditation compliance audits are periodically conducted at the Member Programs without prior notice as provided in the Membership Compliance Policy.
- **B.1c** Comprehensive site visits are conducted at Member Programs once every four years as provided in the Membership Compliance Policy. Maintenance reviews will be conducted two years after each full accreditation review as provided in the Membership Compliance Policy.
- **B.1d** The first line of communication for students with respect to concerns is with the Member Program.
- **B.1e** 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 Member Program.
- **B.1f** 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. This policy is to be displayed and/or made available to all students.

C: STUDENT ADMISSIONS

C.1 Registration:

Accurate and current information on program offerings, services and costs is readily accessible in print-based and web-based formats.

Requests for information from prospective students are processed promptly.

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

Additional Specifications:

- **C.1a** Program information is comprehensive covering all program options.
- **C.1b** Procedure in place for handling responses. Programs may refer to Best Practice Guidelines for Handling Student Requests as set forth by Languages Canada.
- **C.1c** 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. Policies regarding confidentiality are clearly stated and followed.

Additional Specifications:

- **C.2a** Student records kept in a secure location. Access controlled.
- **C.2b** Policy for handling student records in writing.
- **C.2c** Process in place to keep records and contact information current.

C.3 Immigration and Insurance:

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

The Member Program operates in accordance with the policy and regulations with respect to international students as set forth by Citizenship and Immigration Canada.

The Language Program ensures that students are informed that they are responsible to have and maintain medical insurance.

D: STUDENT SERVICES

D.1 Orientation

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

Additional Specifications:

- **D.1a** *General orientation to studying and living in Canada includes information on: accommodation, weather, clothing, food, immigration regulations, dental and medical information, travel, local transit, etc.*
- **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 included.*

D.2.1 Support Services:

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

Additional Specifications:

- **D.2.1a** *Clearly identified person or department available to students for advice and counselling.*
- **D.2.1b** *In addition to in-house counselling, referral services available for:*
 1. *financial advice*
 2. *legal advice*
 3. *tutoring*
 4. *child care*
 5. *medical services*
 6. *housing*
- **D.2.1c** *Age, background, special circumstances and/or special needs taken into consideration.*
- **D.2.1d** *Also, advice and assistance may be provided on:*
 1. *Local facilities, services and amenities*
 2. *General banking information*
 3. *Personal safety and care of valuables*
 4. *Who to contact with any problem or complaint*
 5. *Medical and personal insurance*
 6. *Local places of worship*
 7. *Compliance with the law, e.g. in relation to the use of alcohol, tobacco and drugs*
 8. *Academic counselling and further training*
 9. *Generic immigration advice and contact information*

D.2.2 Problem Resolution:

A written statement that explains the procedures for problem resolution within the Member Program is available to students.

Additional Specifications:

- **D.2.2a** *Copies of the problem resolution policies readily accessible.*

- **D.2.2b** Procedure for responding to students' feedback, suggestions and complaints.

D.3 Activities:

The Language Program 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** Regular schedule of possible events communicated.
- **D.3b** Any additional costs for activities clearly stated.
- **D.3c** Activities sponsored by the program/institution carefully planned and supervised.
- **D.3d** Provision made for liability coverage for program activities. Supervision and liability terms for minors covered.

D.4 Accommodation:

If the Member Program offers accommodation services, the Member Program will make available:

1. a listing of all housing options
2. clear information outlining features, terms, conditions and rules of the accommodation service
3. such information will be made available to those who may consume the services or who are involved in the provision of those services

When confirming accommodation services for students, the Member Program 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 Member Program will inspect all housing options offered to its students on a regular basis.

In the case of homestay accommodation, for all ages of students, the Member Program will, prior to placing a student in homestay accommodation:

1. Require homestays to complete and submit an application form
2. Conduct an on-site inspection of the homestay dwelling and interview the head of household
3. Require the head of household and all other persons usually resident in the homestay to complete and submit the "Homestay Resident Suitability Declaration"

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

1. Make available to students placed in homestay adequate tools to provide feedback to the Member Program

2. Require homestays to provide an annual up-date form
3. Re-inspect homestays every three years

D.4b *In order to ensure greater security for students in homestay, Member Programs will require a Criminal Record Check (CRC) of each adult aged 18 or older usually resident in the homestay.*

1. Member Programs will verify that applications for CRCs for each adult in a homestay are submitted to the appropriate authority in the specific region within 7 days after submission of the Homestay Resident Suitability Declaration and that the completed CRCs are submitted to the member program within a reasonable period of time. If a Member Program determines that one or more adults in a homestay have not complied with the requirement to submit the CRC, the Member Program will suspend use of that homestay.
2. Upon review of the annual update form received from homestays, Member Programs will require a CRC from any new adults usually resident in the homestay.
3. Member Programs will obtain updated CRCs for each adult in a homestay every five years.
4. Member Programs 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.

D.4c Member Programs 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 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 of any resident in the homestay.

D.5 Care of Junior Students:

If the Language Program 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.

Additional Specifications:

- **D.5a** *Clearly identified person/department responsible for junior students.*
- **D.5b** *Duties and responsibilities of above person(s) in writing.*
- **D.5c** *The Member Program employs item 1 or 2 as outlined below plus item 3:*
 1. *Employees working with juniors have signed a declaration that they are fit to be working with such students.*
 2. *Employees working with juniors have undergone a police security check.*
 3. *The following rules and management strategies:*
 - *An employee cannot take junior students to a place/destination outside the usual venue of the program without prior approval of the program supervisor.*
 - *An employee cannot be alone in a private setting with a junior student without the knowledge and 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.5d** *Supervision at the level of 1:15 minimum.*
- **D.5e** *Junior students issued with ID Card to be carried at all times. Contact information for responsible guardian(s) included.*
- **D.5f** *Policy in place to deal with any perceived bullying or abuse.*

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*.

Additional Specifications:

E.1a

- For English Programs, a minimum of TESOL- I level qualification is required for all academic staff.
- For French programs, a degree in Education or a degree with experience in teaching French as a Second Language is required.
- For ESL junior programs, 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 will be required for the on-site visit for all academic staff.

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 either native speakers of the language to be taught or are able to demonstrate native level competency.

E.3 Cross Cultural Awareness:

Teachers demonstrate cross-cultural knowledge and sensitivity in their interactions with students.

E.4 Performance Appraisals:

The Member Program conducts performance reviews for each teacher.

Students are offered the opportunity to evaluate each course in each session.

Additional Specifications:

- **E.4a** Teachers evaluated by students at end of each term of study.
- **E.4b** Process in place for evaluating new and/or casual teachers may include:
 1. student evaluations
 2. review of lesson plans
 3. classroom observations
 4. peer observations
- **E.4c** Criteria for evaluation is measurable and available in writing.
- **E.4d** Performance appraisals may be subject to terms and conditions of applicable collective agreements within institutions.

E.5 Professional Development:

The Language Program provides a range of professional development options for teachers

Additional Specifications:

- **E.5a** In-service training provided on on-going basis.
- **E.5b** Professional development activities may include:
 - 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:

Full time intensive language programs provide a succession of proficiency levels designed to achieve program completion. 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 and programs provide varying delivery options sufficient to meet the stated course objectives.

F.2 Skills:

An intensive program covers 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 Member Program has a written curriculum, which specifies goals and objectives.

Curriculum reflects up to date research into second language acquisition and encourages innovation.

Additional Specifications:

- **F.3a** Curriculum 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.

F.4 Curriculum Review:

The Member Program 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 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 Language Program 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.

Additional Specifications:

- *refer to specifications stated in D.3*

G: MARKETING and RECRUITING

G.1 Recruiting:

In all recruiting transactions, Member Programs are required to represent and maintain the standards of programs and services of Languages Canada.

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

G.2 Agents:

Member Programs 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 program options and services offered by the institution.

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 Member Program 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** *Documented minimum period of three years program delivery and operation required for Full Members. Those applying for Novice Membership may apply with documented minimum period of one year of program delivery and operation.*

H.2 Institutional Support:

If the Member Program 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 parent institution.*

H.3 Leadership:

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

Additional Specifications:

- **H.3a** *Organizational Chart with reporting structure available to all levels of staff.*
- **H.3b** *Key responsibilities of academic leader are to language program.*
- **H.3c** *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*
 8. *curriculum design and review*
 9. *marketing and recruiting*
 10. *physical resources*
 11. *fiscal management*

H.4 Policies:

Program policies and procedures are in writing and readily accessible to students as well as all levels of staff.

H.5 Orientation / Evaluation:

The Member Program 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 members.*
- *H.5b Procedure in place to monitor staff performance.*
- *H.5c Published 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 be in compliance 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, for all levels of staff available.*
- *H.6b Personnel policies for recruiting/appointing all levels of staff in writing and followed.*
- *H.6c Federal and provincial regulations for Labour Standards 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 Member Program 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 that 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 requirements for number of student and staff*
 5. *accommodate any special needs of staff and students*
 6. *have clearly posted signage*

H.8 Operational Review:

The Member Program has a process in place for the periodic review of programs and services and for modification as required.

Additional Specifications:

- **H.8a** Refer to process described in F.4a
- **H.8b** The focus of the review may vary depending on the intent: financial, staff utilization, facilities, marketing plans, curriculum review, etc.
- **H.8c** Guidance may be sought from external organizations, the parent institution or Languages Canada.

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;