**Frequently Asked Questions**

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**Access to Training and Categories**

1. **What priorities are found in the** [**ESDC Second Official Language Learning Guidelines**](http://dialogue/grp/learning-apprentissage/Shared%20Documents/CLG-ESDC%20Second%20Language%20Learning%20Guidelines-REVISED-FINAL-Novembre2016.pdf)**?**

Category 1: “Must Do”: Mandatory Management-Directed Training

1.1 An employee obtains a non-imperative position;

1.2 Re-identification of the position’s language profile;

Category 2: “Should Do”: Optional Management-Directed Training

2.1 An employee has been identified through his/her branch or region’s talent management and succession plan;

2.2 Regaining his/her second official language profile;

Category 3: Employee-Initiated Training:

An employee would like to develop his/her second language skills for professional development purposes or an employee would like to maintain his/her existing level of proficiency.

1. **What are the different steps for accessing second language training?**

**Category 1: Mandatory Management-Directed Training**

**1.1 An employee obtains a non-imperative position;**

**1.2 Re-identification of the position’s language profile;**

1. For these two priorities, the Learning Centre receives the notice of appointment to a position on a non-imperative basis as well as the letter of offer or notification of a change in position level from the Corporate Workforce Strategies (CWS) team or a transition plan from the appropriate branch or business line
2. At the College, a learning consultant coordinates the assessment of the learner and develops a training plan incollaboration with the Language Learning Specialist;
3. A Learning Plan is proposed to the employee and his/her manager;
4. The *Learning Agreement*, located in Annex 1, is signed by all parties;
5. The learning consultant confirms the training details;
6. Training begins;
7. Regular follow-ups are conducted;
8. Adjustments are made as needed.

This is an example of a process to demonstrate that there are different steps and responsibilities shared by the employee, the manager, the Branch coordinator, and the College@ESDC. Each region has its own process in place that may differ from this example.

**Category 2**

**Priority 2.1**  An employee has been identified through his/her branch or region’s talent management and succession plan

1. An employee expresses his/her interest to his/her manager during the performance agreement or the manager anticipates future business needs and discusses this with the employee – in the context of talent management or the branch/region’s succession plan;
2. An evaluation can be conduted by the manager using Annex 3, the evaluation guide for employees in the guidelines who have a talent management plan or are identified as part of succession planning;
3. The manager compiles the requests and submits them to his/her business line or to his/her branch’s Learning Coordinator;
4. Based on the number of requests, priorities are identified by the business line or branch and are then sent to the College@ESDC;
5. At the College, a learning consultant coordinates the assessment of the learner and develops a training plan incollaboration with the Language Learning Specialist;
6. A Learning Plan is proposed to the employee and his/her manager;
7. The *Learning Agreement*, located in Annex 1, is signed by all parties;
8. The learning consultant confirms the training details;
9. Training begins;
10. Regular follow-ups are conducted;
11. Adjustments are made as needed.

This is an example of a process to demonstrate that there are different steps and responsibilities shared by the employee, the manager, the Branch coordinator, and the College@ESDC. Each region has its own process in place that may differ from this example.

**Priority 2.2**

To regain second official language proficiency, the employee must discuss this matter with his/her manager.

**Category 3**

For personal development or retention of level, options are available from the Canada School of Public Service ([CSPS](http://www.csps-efpc.gc.ca/lt/index-eng.aspx)) website and on the [College@ESDC](http://iservice.prv/eng/college/second_language.shtml) website.

1. **Does an employee need to have a formal talent management plan in his/her performance assessment for consideration under Category 2.1 *Talent or succession planning Management and formal Branch or Regional identification*?**

Having a talent management plan in your performance assessment is one way of meeting Priority 2.1 criteria. An employee may also have been identified through his/her branch or division’s succession plan in order to meet short, medium or long-term organizational needs. These operational requirements also include representation of equity groups. To fulfill the requirements of Category 2.1, the manager could attest that the employee, who is placed under a talent management plan or succession planning, has a strong potential for holding a full-time position requiring a bilingual or higher language profile by using the Evaluation Guide in Annex 3 of the [ESDC Second Official Language Learning Guidelines](http://dialogue/grp/learning-apprentissage/Shared%20Documents/CLG-ESDC%20Second%20Language%20Learning%20Guidelines-REVISED-FINAL-Novembre2016.pdf).

**Recommended Second Official Language Learning Strategies and Solutions**

1. **Many people believe that individual training is the best way to learn a second language. Do the facts support this belief?**

Although we recognize that everyone learns differently, the main approach to language learning of the department and the College@ESDC is, in the majority of cases, to support group second language learning first and foremost. As mentioned in the *Paper on Second Language Learning and Training at ESDC*, all research from the last forty years stresses the benefits of group learning (Long and Porter 1985). A working group environment enables learners to discuss the meaning of certain words (Long 1983), work together to accomplish a task (Storch 2002) and to resolve communication problems. Working in pairs or teams creates a more dynamic and creative working environment, which is often more motivating for learners.

1. **How can an employee maintain their level of proficiency?**

There are different ways of maintaining one’s proficiency levels. The most effective is to make regular use of the second language in professional and personal situations. An employee who is part of a bilingual team should take advantage of all opportunities he/she has to practise their second official language at work. Employees can also use a wide range of online learning tools to maintain their reading comprehension, written expression and oral proficiency skills. For more information, please refer to the [Maintenance Toolkit](http://dialogue/grp/learning-apprentissage/Shared%20Documents/Maintenance%20Toolkit%20French%20Second%20Language-EN%20March%202017.pdf).

1. **What if the manager prefers a solution that differs from the one offered by the College?**

The College@ESDC is always open to discussion and consultations with managers. The College@ESDC is the Department’s second official language training expert. Our consultants and language learning specialists analyze and evaluate the needs of each learner, propose learning solutions, and conduct follow-ups to ensure that employees receive high-quality services.

According to the [ESDC Second Official Language Learning Guidelines](http://dialogue/grp/learning-apprentissage/Shared%20Documents/CLG-ESDC%20Second%20Language%20Learning%20Guidelines-REVISED-FINAL-Novembre2016.pdf), the College@ESDC will respect the [*Official Languages Act*](http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/O-3.01/index.html), human resources obligations, and stewardship of public funds, while meeting the strategic needs of the organization. It will meet those needs with efficiency and effectiveness.

The guidelines specify that the College@ESDC has the delegated authority to recommend and approve fees related to second official language learning and, to do so, all branches and regions grant the College a budget allocation to cover collective second language needs.

However, if the manager deems that a learning solution other than the one recommended by the College is better for supporting his/her employee, the manager will have to cover the costs from his/her own budget envelope. Regular reports are made to the Department’s senior management to show the commitments made in regards to language training.

1. **Why is it important to report all factors that could have an impact on the pace at which the second official language is learned, as well as any accommodation needs?**

In order to improve his/her chances of success, an employee who can provide a professional assessment of his/her physical and/or learning disability may be able to benefit from accommodation measures (e.g., pedagogical approaches, adapted classrooms and materials, adjusted durations and schedules, appropriate assessment methods). Furthermore, this professional assessment could be used to request accommodation(s) for second language testing at the Public Service Commission by the employee’s manager.

1. **Why do personal language training initiatives increase an employee’s chances of having access to language training?**

From the College@ESDC perspective, an employee who has taken advanced language training in his/her second official language of their own accord over the course of the previous year or more shows initiative and, most importantly, a high level of motivation for learning their second official language. Commitment and motivation are the most important predictors of success in second official language learning.

For learners in category 2 priority 2.1 this translates into points in the employee assessment for employees subject to a talent or succession management plan (Annex 3).

**Roles and Responsibilities**

**Refusal of a Request**

1. **Do employees sometimes not have access to language training? What are the options for these employees?**

Although second-language training is a priority for ESDC, the Department also has specific obligations related to compliance with the *Official Languages Act* regarding the delivery of services to the public and language of work rights. The Department must prioritize requests according to these obligations. This applies when employees cannot receive formal training.

The [Canada School of Public Service](http://www.csps-efpc.gc.ca/lt/index-eng.aspx) online learning tools are available to all employees as well as the College@ESDC [For the Love of English](http://iservice.prv/fra/college/auto_apprentissage_en_ligne.shtml) / [Pour l’amour du français](http://iservice.prv/eng/college/self_study_eLearning.shtml) modular online program and the [maintenance tool kit](http://dialogue/grp/learning-apprentissage/Shared%20Documents/Maintenance%20Toolkit%20French%20Second%20Language-EN%20March%202017.pdf) for employees who have reached their second language level. For more information, employees can contact their [regional/branch learning consultant](http://dialogue/grp/learning-apprentissage/Shared%20Documents/ESDC_Branch_Business_Line_Coordinators_List_for_Intranet.xlsx).

**Language Training Cost Control Measures**

1. **If the initial Learning Plan recommended by College@ESDC exceeds 2,400 hours, will the manager have to pay the additional hours?**

In this situation, the additional hours will be paid by College@ESDC and the manager thus will not have to incur additional costs. For example: if the initial plan is for 2,450 hours, the College will pay for the hours of the initial learning plan, i.e. 2,450 hours. If the initial plan, however, is for 1,800 hours, the College@ESDC will pay up to a maximum of 2,400 hours.

Once the number of hours of the initial plan has been reached, the branches or the regions that wish to continue supporting the employee may do so by resorting to their respective budget envelope, while the College@ESDC may assure coordination, guidance and follow-up services. Shared costs agreements and recovery measures will be applied.

1. **What happens if an employee is often absent from his/her language training?**

Repeated absences hinder the employee’s training. They delay progress and can become a source of frustration and demotivation. In a group context, a high absence rate also contributes to widening the gap between employees and slowing down the pace of learning. The College@ESDC must manage public funds responsibly; the College’s Learning Centre consultant will therefore use the Learning Agreement form (Annex 1) signed by the employee and the manager to clarify the situation and find an appropriate solution. Expenditure control measures were implemented on April 1, 2017 in accordance with Section 7 of the [Guidelines](http://dialogue/grp/learning-apprentissage/Shared%20Documents/CLG-ESDC%20Second%20Language%20Learning%20Guidelines-REVISED-FINAL-Novembre2016.pdf).

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| **Cost control measures related**  **to language training** | **Information for implementation** |
| In cases of multiple absences, the College@ESDC will establish a cost recovery mechanism for the responsibility centre with the managers of the branches or the regions.  An absence is defined as follows:   * Any absence on the employee’s part that amounts to 50 % and above of his/her daily training session, be it full or part-time, some exceptions may apply and will be reviewed case by case basis. * Any other absence from training that could inhibit the learning of the group or the employee (chronic tardiness and early departures). * Withdrawal from training. | Effective April 1, 2017 for all employees.  **Part-time training** (15 hours or less per week**)**:   * The College@ESDC will cover the cost of the first three (3) absences; * The manager of the employee in part-time training will cover the cost of any additional absence in the amount of $100. * The cost recovery will be done at the end of the training session and/or per maximum period of 12 weeks.   **Full-time training** (over 15 hours per week):   * The College@ESDC will cover the cost of the first six (6) absences per training session and/or per maximum period of 12 weeks; * The manager of the employee in full-time training will cover the cost of any additional absence in the amount of $100.   **Coaching sessions offered by the language learning specialists at the College@ESDC**  If an employee is absent for more than three sessions offered to the employee on a monthly basis, a note will be sent to the employee and his/her manager to confirm interest in participating, suspending or cancelling the participation. No fee will apply.  [**Short-term sessions offered**](http://iservice.prv/eng/college/second_language.shtml) **by the College@ESDC’s National Language Services Center (NLSC)**  If an employee is absent for 50 % or more of the sessions, the course will be considered incomplete in the employee's learning file.  However, there will be no cost recovery for these sessions. |

1. **What is the reimbursement process for costs related to the control measures?**

Costs will be reimbursed by journal voucher (JV). When control measures have been imposed, as a result of absences, your Learning Center will inform the Branch or region management service or the manager on the applicable costs to be reimbursed. Here are the generals steps that will be follow:

\* The commitment number will be kept in your employee’s file and can be used, as needed, during the current financial fiscal year.

1. **What happens if an employee decides to stop his/her language training in the middle of a session? Does this eliminate future opportunities for second language training?**

These situations will be considered on a case-by-case basis taking into account the current situation of the employee as well as the reasons for having stopped the training in the past.

Any withdrawal will be considered as an absence and fees/cost control measures may apply.

1. **Can you clarify the 200 hourscontrol measure:**

*“The College@ESDC will support up to a maximum of 200 hours of training for employees whose Public Service Commission (PSC) Second Language Evaluation (SLE) results have expired or are about to expire and those who have lost their language level and who have already received full-time training, at government expense, for a duration of more than 6 weeks for the same level.”*

This means that the College will grant up to 200 hours of training for  employees whose Public Service Commission’s (PSC’s) Second Language Evaluation (SLE) results have expired**,** are about to expire, or who have lost their language level and who have already received full-time language training paid for by the Government, for a duration of more than six weeks.

Example 1: If the employee received government-paid training to obtain the CBC levels and loses the Level C for oral communication, the College@ESDC will grant 200 hours of training during working hours to obtain Level C again.

Once the ceiling for the 200 hours is reached, branches or regions wishing to continue to support the employee may do so using their respective budget envelope, while the College@ESDC may provide coordination, orientation and follow-up services.

If the employee took paid training to obtain Level BBB and must achieve Level CBC, the concept of 200 hours does not apply.

This measure puts the emphasis on the importance of maintaining the level once it is achieved by the employee taking every opportunity to practice the second language.

Example 2: An employee has obtained his CBC level in a second language. His/her training was paid by our department via the College@ESDC. If he has used 1,900 hours. Because his result on the oral had expired, he retook the test and did not succeed in obtaining Level C. Does the 200-hours rule apply, even though he has not used the permitted 2,400 hours?

These are two distinct measures. If the employee has achieved his level and loses it after a new test result, the 200-hour rule is applied, regardless of the number of hours previously used in training. The employee thus will be granted a maximum of 200 hours paid by the College@ESDC from the time the level is lost.

1. **Can you specify the control measure for accommodation measures?**

*‘The College@ESDC supports language training including adjusted and accommodated learning. However, when major accommodation investments are required, a 50% cost-sharing and collaboration between the employee’s branch or region and the College will be implemented for the accommodations above and beyond the norm*.’

Each case is individual and requires a special analysis.

An employee who already has accommodations in his/her work environment must share this information with the Learning Centre responsible for the second official language training in order to see whether additional actions are required.

In the case of accommodations responding to major physical or sensory functional limitations or invisible functional disabilities, such as incapacities attributable to mental functioning, concentration or memory, including learning disorders, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder or psychiatric deficiencies, a complete evaluation of the employee’s disability may be necessary.

Following this evaluation, if the second official language training plan necessitates greater investments than those required for the deployment of a standard learning solution, the manager will be called on to pay 50% of this training.

1. **An employee with accommodation measures is frequently absent from his/her training. What costs related to the control measures in the Guidelines will apply?**

The control measures on accommodation measures and absenteeism are distinct measures. Thus, if an employee with accommodation measures related to his/her learning is absent more than three times for part-time training and 6 six times for full-time training, per training session and/or per maximum 12-week period, these additional absences will have to be defrayed, in addition to 50% of the investments required for the accommodation measures.

**Annex 1 Second Official Language Learning Agreement**

1. **Why have we established a Second Official Language Learning Agreement between the manager, the employee and the College?**

The Learning Agreement provides the manager, the employee and the College with a proper understanding of the importance of their roles and responsibilities, and enables them to seriously commit to the success of the language training. Learning a language is a process that requires time and a great deal of commitment.

1. **Where do I send Annex 1, the Learning Agreement, once it is signed?**

Annex 1 should be completed once the second official language learning plan has been presented and accepted by the employee and his/her manager. The signatures will confirm the mutual agreement of the parties. A copy will be kept in the employee’s file at the College@ESDC.

1. **The Manager section of the Second Official Language Learning Agreement states “I agree to release the Employee for scheduled training as stipulated in his/her Learning Plan and to realign his/her workload.” How can managers reconcile their employee’s language training as well as their business needs?**

It remains the managers responsibility to reorganize their employee’s duties during the language training period. They can do it by delegating part of the work to other employees, pushing back certain deadlines, etc. When managers send an employee for language training, they must consider the impact this decision will have on their team and make sure that the organizational and operational objectives can be met despite the employee’s absence. Managers must have a comprehensive view of the short- and long-term needs in order to properly manage the situation.

**Annex 2 Control Measures and Cost Recovery related to Absences**

1. **Why have you set the amount to be reimbursed for each absence at $100 after the employee exceeds the allocated amount of absences (three absences part-time and six absences full-time)?**

The amount of $100 is symbolic. It was chosen to emphasize the importance of the employee's commitment and thus ensure his/her success. Introducing a reimbursement reiterates that there are training costs and impacts on everyone's budget. ESDC want to encourage a change in culture while supporting the sound use of public funds.

**Annex 3 Assessment Guide for Talent or Succession Employees**

1. **Should the Evaluation Guide located in** [**Annex 3**](http://dialogue/grp/learning-apprentissage/Shared%20Documents/CLG-ESDC%20Second%20Language%20Learning%20Guidelines-REVISED-FINAL-Novembre2016.pdf) **of the Guidelines be sent?**

The Evaluation Guide is a tool designed to help managers and their Branch or region assess the relevance of language training for targeted employees. The Guide stays with the manager.

1. **Is it possible to obtain language training if an employee joins the public service after the talent management and succession plan cycle?**

Yes. Regardless of when a new employee joins the public service, the manager can identify the employee’s training and development needs.

1. **If the employee has never been assessed, how is the manager able to assess the employee’s second official language level if he/she does not have Public Service Commission results?**

The College@ESDC’s Learning Consultant will direct the manager and the employee to the appropriate assessment services.

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