



French-language Support for Québec's English-speaking Professionals





Prepared by:

Catherine-Laure Juste, Policy Researcher

With the contributions of:

Morgan Gagnon, Policy Researcher

Joshua Loo, Policy Research Intern

Under the direction of:

Sithandazile Kuzviwanza, Director of Policy & Research



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Executive Summary

In Québec, there are more than 411,000 professionals who work in professions regulated by professional orders, all of whom play an essential role in meeting the needs of the general public and the labour market. These professionals belong to 55 professions regulated by 46 orders, including nurses, accountants, engineers, midwives, architects and physicians.

However, French-language barriers can be a challenge for professionals who are English speakers and must practice their profession in accordance with French-language policies. Despite high levels of English-French bilingualism among Québec's English speakers, French remains a challenge for some who require additional profession-specific French-language training. Not only is French-language proficiency a requirement for membership in Québec's professional orders, but professionals who do not meet language criteria must also pass a French-language competency exam administered by the Office québécois de la langue française (OQLF). Additionally, professional orders can mandate all their members to take French-language professional competency exams throughout their careers.

For professionals who face challenges meeting French-language requirements, language learning support can be essential to their ability to pass competency exams and practice their profession.

This report aims to examine the role of French language policies in professional orders and the language support measures available to prospective and current members of professional orders in Québec. Language learning support is a broad concept, but it generally refers to actions taken to

support professionals who face French-language barriers, whether it is supporting their ability to take French-language competency exams, or improving their ability to use French in the practice of their profession. Support measures can include programs, institutional policies, initiatives and educational tools specifically designed to help French-language learners. The report also describes the current French-language policies in Québec's professional orders system and identifies challenges for English speakers and other linguistic minorities who require French-language training.

Our research findings are as follows:

- Professional orders play an essential role in regulating the use of French by their organization and their membership. French-language use is regulated in accordance with the *Charter of the French Language*.
- French-language courses, online learning resources and translations are among the French-language supports available to language-learning professionals in Québec.
- French-language supports are provided by a range of stakeholders, including the Québec government, educational institutions, private program providers and professional orders.
- In total, we found at least 13 French-language training programs in Québec that aim to improve profession-specific vocabulary and language skills for professionals.
- We found at least 14 preparation courses that aim to prepare professionals to write the French-language exam administered by the OQLF.

- No specific institution is mandated to provide French-language support to professionals in regulated professions, resulting in significant gaps in the support available.

We conclude that there is currently no comprehensive framework for supporting individuals who are professionally qualified to practice their respective professions but need French-language support to improve their French. Institutional stakeholders such as professional orders are not mandated, nor do they currently have the capacity, to provide French-language training to their members.

More efforts are needed to invest in the French-language training of Québec's future and current regulated professionals. These efforts should leverage the existing stakeholders such as the government, educational institutions and professional orders to provide French-language training at all stages of the journey to becoming a practicing professional in Québec. To support these efforts, we offer the following ten (10) recommendations:

1 Free French-language training

Provide free multilevel French-language training for all Quebecers who seek to enter a regulated profession and require profession-specific French-language training.

2 Financial assistance for language learners

Expand existing financial assistance programs to include all Quebecers who enroll in profession-specific French-language training. Financial assistance should cover training time, transportation and childcare costs for participants.

3 Linguistic data collection

The Québec government should collect and publish data on the number of linguistic minorities in regulated professions and industries.

4 Integrated language training

Integrate French-language training at different stages of the professional career journey, including training programs, transitional programs for recent graduates, language training by professional orders and workplace programs.

5 Increase the visibility of programs

Centralize and increase the visibility of profession-specific language-learning programs and tools so that they are more findable for language learners.

6 Expand eligibility for programs

Expand eligibility criteria for the Québec government's French-language courses for professionals so that individuals born in Canada are eligible.

7 Targeted programs

Develop more targeted language training programs for individuals in strategic and priority sectors such as nursing, respiratory therapy and social work.

8 Expand online language-learning resources

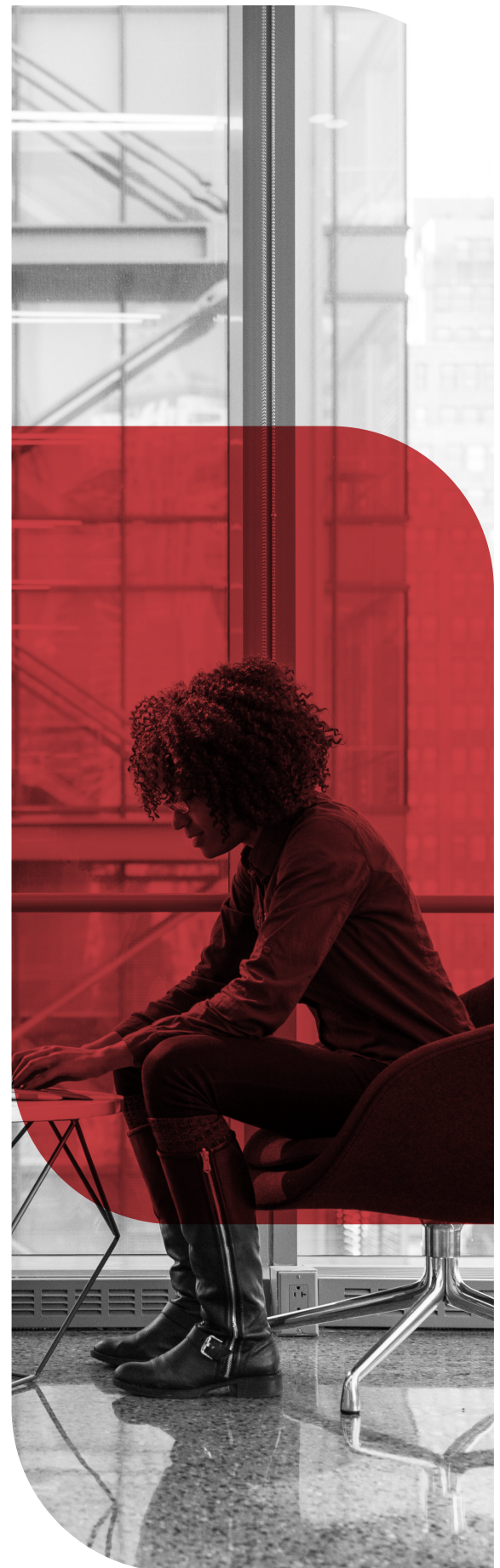
Expand the Québec government's existing offer of profession-specific online language-learning tools and resources to include all 55 regulated professions.

9 Enhance stakeholder collaboration

Enhance collaboration between stakeholders including the Québec government, educational institutions and professional orders with the goal of developing a better understanding of the French-language learning needs of professionals and establishing continuing education approaches for language learning.

10 Empower and fund professional orders to provide French-language training support

Provide professional orders with resources to offer more French-language training support to candidates and members of orders.



Introduction

There are over 411,000 professionals in Québec's professional orders. These professionals, who include nurses, accountants, engineers, midwives, architects and physicians, play an essential role in the delivery of services to the general public and are subject to training and certification to ensure their practice meets the standards set by professional orders.

This report examines the status of French-language support for English speakers and other linguistic minorities in professions regulated by professional orders. Although English speakers represent 14.3% of Québec's labour force, there is currently no data available on the presence of English speakers in professional orders. Current research indicates that while English speakers are active in all sectors of the labour market, they face considerable challenges in pursuing the full range of career opportunities in Québec. French-language proficiency has been identified as a leading barrier for English speakers' labour market integration (Provincial Employment Roundtable, forthcoming). Additionally, French-language proficiency is mandatory in order to practice a profession regulated by a professional order in Québec.

By surveying the available French-language support measures for professionals, we hope to contribute to the ongoing discussion on the role of French-language training and language support in helping to integrate linguistic minorities in Québec's labour market.



Research Design & Methodology

Internet research was conducted to identify programs designed to help learners improve their language skills.

Searches were conducted in English and French. Search terms included:

OQLF exam preparation courses

- OQLF
- Exam
- Preparation
- Montréal
- Course

Profession-specific French-language courses

- Course
- French
- Francization
- Training
- Language
- Linguistic
- Specialized
- Health
- Medical
- Science
- Nursing
- Nursing assistant
- Psychology
- Medical
- Social Work
- Therapy
- Respiratory therapist
- Psychoeducator
- Engineering
- Québec

Research Objectives	Research method(s) used
<p>1. Inventory of French-language training programs in Québec</p> <p>Identify programs that aim to improve the French-language proficiency of language learners in specific professions, particularly programs that provide vocabulary acquisition and/or preparation for competency exams.</p> <p>Exclusions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One-on-one peer mentoring that is not offered by official providers such as public institutions and language schools. • Non-Québec-based providers. • French-language business services for employers to provide French-language training to their employees. 	<p>Internet research, desk research</p>
<p>2. Language policies and other support measures</p> <p>Identify the French language policies and language requirements in professional orders. Additionally, identify the support measures and practices in place to support language-learning professionals.</p>	<p>Internet research, desk research</p> <p>Semi-structured interviews with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 11 representatives from 11 professional orders • 9 representatives from 5 educational institutions • 2 representatives from 2 government organizations and agencies

Professional Orders in Québec

The mission of professional orders is to protect the public by overseeing and regulating the professional practice of activities that may present risks to the public (Office des professions du

Québec, 2021). Québec's professional orders are constituted in accordance with the Professional Code and are mandated by the Québec government to

1 Monitor the competence and integrity of members

The order is responsible for making sure that members possess the training and the skills required to exercise their profession. This includes evaluating the competency of its members through professional competency exams. It imposes certain rules upon its members, including an ethics code and, if necessary, applies sanctions to those who fail to follow them.

2 Monitor the practice of the profession

A professional inspection committee from the order may examine and evaluate the quality of professional services. It can also recommend to the board of directors that a member take a training or refresher course, or it can restrict or suspend the member's right to practice.

3 Regulate practice

The order complies with the legislative and regulatory provisions that govern the exercise of a profession.

4 Manage the disciplinary process

The order appoints a trustee who is mandated to receive complaints from the public. The trustee can initiate a disciplinary investigation or file a complaint against a member with the disciplinary board.

5 Promote professional development

The order can mandate continued training with the goal of helping members to develop their skills and knowledge. The order can also make information available to the public, formulate positions on issues and participate in debates.

6 Control illegal practice of the profession

The order can file a criminal case against a non-member who performs an act that only members are legally permitted to perform. It can also sue a person who illegally uses a title under the order's control.

7 Produce an annual report

The order must produce an annual activity report, which becomes public once it is presented to the members' general assembly.

Professions Regulated by Professional Orders

There are 55 professions regulated by Québec's 46 professional orders:

Figure 1: Québec professional orders and regulated professions

Professional order	Profession	Number of professionals
Ordre des infirmières et infirmiers du Québec	Nurse	80,491
Ordre des ingénieurs du Québec	Engineer	62,760
Ordre des comptables professionnels agréés du Québec	Chartered professional accountant	40,444
Ordre des infirmières et infirmiers auxiliaires du Québec	Nursing assistant	29,256
Barreau du Québec	Lawyer	28,517
Collège des médecins du Québec	Physician	24,667
Ordre des travailleurs sociaux et des thérapeutes conjugaux et familiaux du Québec	Social worker Marriage and family therapist	15,264
Ordre des conseillers en ressources humaines et en relations industrielles agréés du Québec	Certified human resources professional, Certified industrial relations counsellor	11,430
Ordre des pharmaciens du Québec	Pharmacist	9,859
Ordre des psychologues du Québec	Psychologist	8,960
Ordre professionnel de la physiothérapie du Québec	Physiotherapist, Physiotherapy technologist	8,794
Ordre des hygiénistes dentaires du Québec	Dental hygienist	6,699
Ordre des technologues en imagerie médicale, en radio-oncologie et en électrophysiologie médicale du Québec	Medical Electrophysiology Technologist, Medical imaging technologist in radiodiagnostics, Medical ultrasound technologist, Medical imaging technologist in nuclear medicine, Radiation Oncology Technologist	6,674
Ordre des ergothérapeutes du Québec	Occupational therapist	6,001

Professional order	Profession	Number of professionals
Ordre des psychoéducateurs et psychoéducatrices du Québec	Psychoeducator	5,380
Ordre des dentistes du Québec	Dentist	5,365
Ordre professionnel des technologistes médicaux du Québec	Medical technologist	4,661
Ordre professionnel des inhalothérapeutes du Québec	Registered respiratory therapist	4,485
Ordre des architectes du Québec	Architect	4,211
Chambre des notaires du Québec	Notary	3,864
Ordre des orthophonistes et audiologistes du Québec	Speech-language pathologist, Audiologist	3,550
Ordre des agronomes du Québec	Agrologist	3,348
Ordre professionnel des diététistes-nutritionnistes du Québec	Dietician	3,320
Ordre des technologues professionnels du Québec	Professional technologist	3,246
Ordre des chimistes du Québec	Chemist	2,916
Ordre des médecins vétérinaires du Québec	Veterinary surgeon	2,699
Ordre des conseillers et conseillères d'orientation du Québec	Guidance counsellor	2,619
Ordre des traducteurs, terminologues et interprètes agréés du Québec	Certified translator, Certified terminologist, Certified interpreter	2,481
Ordre des opticiens d'ordonnances du Québec	Dispensing optician	2,239
Ordre des ingénieurs forestiers du Québec	Forest engineer	1,945
Ordre des administrateurs agréés du Québec	Chartered administrator	1,739
Ordre des criminologues du Québec	Criminologist	1,564

Professional order	Profession	Number of professionals
Ordre des optométristes du Québec	Optometrist	1,547
Ordre des chiropraticiens du Québec	Chiropractor	1,360
Ordre des urbanistes du Québec	Town planner	1,283
Ordre des arpenteurs-géomètres du Québec	Land surveyor	1,131
Ordre des évaluateurs agréés du Québec	Chartered appraiser	1,079
Ordre des géologues du Québec	Geologist	1,075
Ordre des acupuncteurs du Québec	Acupuncturist	952
Ordre des denturologistes du Québec	Denturologist	907
Ordre professionnel des sexologues du Québec	Sexologist	855
Ordre des audioprothésistes du Québec	Audioprothesist	503
Chambre des huissiers de justice du Québec	Bailiff	424
Ordre des technologues en prothèses et appareils dentaires du Québec	Dental prosthesis and appliance technologist	420
Ordre des podiatres du Québec	Podiatrist	287
Ordre des sages-femmes du Québec	Midwife	264

Regulated professions in the Québec economy

A 2021 report by the Conseil interprofessionnel du Québec (CIQ), the association regrouping all the professional orders in Québec, established the economic impact of professionals in regulated professions. Québec's professionals represent

close to 5% of the total population and directly contribute to an estimated 6% of Québec's gross domestic product (GDP). Their employment income accounts for 14.5% of the total employment income of Quebecers. Furthermore, professions regulated by an order have better job prospects compared to non-regulated professions (Conseil interprofessionnel du Québec, 2021a).

In 2021, the Québec government launched Opération main-d'oeuvre, a targeted government response to the labour shortages in certain priority sectors of Québec, including health and social assistance, education and engineering (Ministère du Travail, de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale, 2021). Regulated professions such as nurses, nursing assistants, registered respiratory therapists, social workers, human resources professionals and psychologists are among the priority professions that have been identified as urgently needed in Québec. The Québec government has placed a high priority on subsidizing and supporting educational programs and skills training that can increase access to these professions.

English speakers in Québec's professional orders

Linguistic data is not widely collected in Québec's professional orders, and orders are not mandated to collect data on linguistic minorities. In the few cases where professional orders *do* collect linguistic data on their members, this data is not made available to the public.

Data collected through the 2016 Census provides some insight on the labour market status of English speakers in Québec. The English-speaking community in Québec accounts for 13.8% (1,097,920 individuals) of Québec's population and 14.3% of the labour force. Current research suggests that English-speaking Quebecers experience challenges in the labour market. English speakers experience an unemployment rate of 8.9%, which is two percentage points higher than that of French speakers (6.9%) in Québec (adapted from Statistics Canada, 2016).

Although English speakers experience higher unemployment, levels of educational attainment are similar between English speakers and French speakers in Québec (adapted from Statistics Canada, 2016):

- 59.3% of English speakers and 58.8% of French speakers have a post-secondary certificate, degree, or diploma.
- 83.9% of English speakers have at least secondary school education, compared to 79.8% of French speakers.

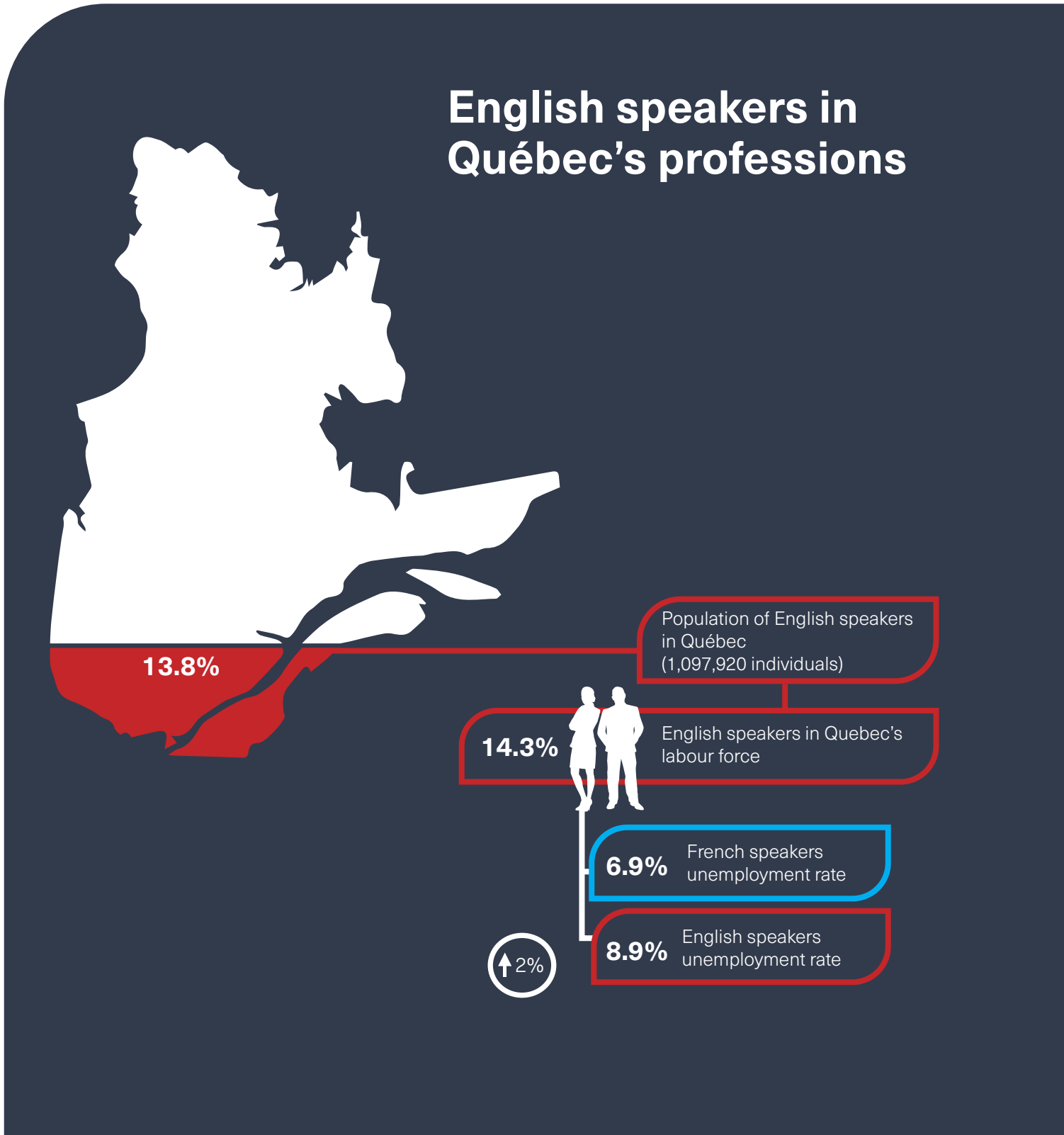
Healthcare and social assistance is the leading industry in Québec's labour market, with over 570,000 Quebecers working in this sector and representing 12.6% of all workers in Québec. However, English speakers lag in their participation in healthcare and social assistance occupations compared to the total population. Only 9.5% of English-speaking workers are employed in this industry. Retail trade is the leading industry for Québec's English speakers, with 11.3% of English speakers working in retail (adapted from Statistics Canada, 2016).

French-language barriers for Québec's English speakers

In the 2016 Census, 66% of English speakers in Québec reported that they were able to conduct a conversation in French. Although there are high levels of English-French bilingualism among English speakers in Québec (Bourhis & Sioufi, 2021), French remains a barrier for many who seek to enter or advance in the labour market. In a recent survey conducted by the Provincial Employment Roundtable on the employment issues facing English speakers, 67% of respondents indicated that

a lack of French-language proficiency was a leading barrier to employment in the last three years (Provincial Employment Roundtable, forthcoming a). Respondents described several contributing

factors, including difficulty accessing French-language training as well as the differing perceptions of bilingualism in Québec.



Healthcare and social assistance industry



12.6% of all workers in Quebec are employed in the healthcare and social assistance industry



9.5% of English-speaking workers employed in the healthcare and social assistance industry

vs

Retail industry

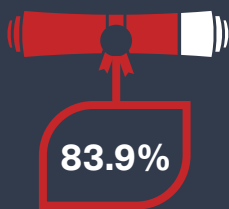


11.3%

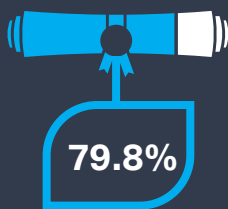
English speakers working in retail

Secondary school education (at least)

English speakers



French speakers



66%

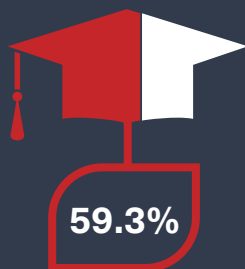
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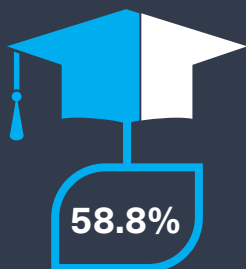
French-language barriers for Québec's English speakers

Post-secondary certificate, degree, or diploma

English speakers



French speakers



67%

of respondents indicated that a lack of French-language proficiency was a leading barrier to employment that they had experienced in the last three years

Language policy and professional orders

The *Charter of the French Language* stipulates linguistic requirements for professional orders, for their internal and external communications and for the conduct of their members:

Professional orders

- Professional orders and their membership must ensure their services are available in French and that any forms of written communication intended for the public must be made available in French.
- Professional orders are legally required to use written French when communicating with legal persons, civil administration and with their membership at large. They can, however, reply in a member's language in individual communications.
- Professional orders must be formally referred to exclusively by their French names.
- Professional orders shall not issue permits except to persons whose knowledge of French is appropriate to the practice of their profession. In cases where a person's knowledge of French does not meet the language requirements outlined in the *Charter*, they must obtain a certificate of knowledge of French issued by the Office québécois de la langue française (OQLF) or hold an equivalent certificate, subject to government approval.





Persons interacting with professions regulated by professional orders.

- Members of the public have the right to receive information in French from professional orders.
- Written information and professional services intended for the public must be available in French.
- Members of the public can request information pertaining to them in French, at any time and free of charge, from a member of a professional order.

Language within professional orders

All professional orders are subject to the *Charter* and may internally develop additional policies on language use. They can also provide the option of English-language professional competency exams to their members. Of the 46 professional orders, only 1, the *Ordre des infirmières et infirmiers du Québec*, has published policies on the use of French within the order (*Ordre des infirmières et infirmiers du Québec*, 2017).

Ordre des infirmières et infirmiers du Québec

The *Ordre des infirmières et infirmiers du Québec* is the largest professional order in Québec, with 80,491 members. Its language policy affirms the *Charter of the French Language* and explains the application of language laws and regulations within the order, with its membership and its interactions with the public.

The order's language policy also details guidelines for the exercise of discretionary power with regard to the use of language. Usage of English is permitted in certain instances including in communications with organizations and people outside Québec, in website and social media content, in documents, in resources, in continuous training and professional competency exams.

Bill 96 and proposed changes to language policies

In May 2021, Bill 96, *An Act respecting French, the official and common language of Québec*, was tabled in the National Assembly. As of the writing of this report, the bill has yet to be passed. The bill proposes new measures to reaffirm French as the only official language of Québec and to reinforce the prevalence of French in Québec society, government, businesses and workplaces.

Bill 96 proposes significant changes to the *Charter of the French Language*, including amendments to the sections on language use within professional orders. The proposed changes include:

- Members of a professional order have to maintain a knowledge of French that is appropriate for the practice of their profession.
- Members carrying out their professional activities may not refuse to perform their obligations in French.
- Professional orders may now impose refresher courses on members if the professional order considers their knowledge of French not appropriate to the practice of the profession. Refresher courses may be aimed at enabling the member to recover a knowledge of French

that allows them to appropriately practice their profession.

- Professional orders may now require that a member obtain a certificate of knowledge of French issued by the OQLF if they consider a member's knowledge of French not appropriate to the practice of the profession.

Under Bill 96, professionals who breach French-language requirements in delivering services can face disciplinary actions, including being deemed unable to appropriately practice their profession. This places greater responsibility on professionals to not only master French but master it to a level that is deemed appropriate by their professional order.

Professional order membership

To become a member of a professional order in Québec, candidates must be issued a permit by the order. A permit is only issued if the candidate demonstrates appropriate knowledge of French to practice their profession in Québec and if the candidate possesses the appropriate training (Professional Code, 2021, d 4, s 42).

There are different types of permits issued to members, including

Regular permit

Issued to a person who meets the professional order's requirements. It is a permanent license but it can be revoked.

Temporary permit

Permits valid for a maximum of one year may be issued by professional orders in Québec for qual-

ified candidates from outside Québec who do not meet the French-language requirements as specified in section 35 of the *Charter*. Section 38 of the *Charter* states that a temporary permit can only be renewed a maximum of three times with the authorization of the OQLF and if it is deemed beneficial to the interest of the public. One condition for renewing temporary permits with the OQLF is having attempted the OQLF French-language exam for candidates of professional orders at least once following the initial issue or last renewal of the candidate's temporary permit (Office québécois de la langue française, 2021c)

Temporary restrictive permit

One-year permit issued to candidates applying for admission to a professional order under special circumstances such as the need for additional training.

Restricted permit

Restricted permits are issued to:

- Individuals who reside or have resided on a First Nations reserve and practice their profession on reserves.
- Individuals who are already authorized to practice their profession outside of Québec. However, these individuals must work on behalf of a single employer and their role cannot be public-facing. Prior authorization from the OQLF is required for the professional order to issue a permit in this instance.

In both cases, individuals who receive a restricted permit are not subject to the French-language requirements for professionals outlined in section 35 of the *Charter*.



Language requirements for members

Incoming members must possess sufficient knowledge of the French language in order to practice their profession in Québec, as stipulated in the *Charter*. In order to be deemed as possessing sufficient knowledge of French, a candidate must meet one of the following:

- 1.** Received at least three years of full-time secondary or post-secondary education in French.
- 2.** Passed the fourth- or fifth-year secondary-level examinations where French was the first language.
- 3.** Obtained a secondary-school certificate in Québec from the school year 1985-86 onwards.

In most cases, candidates who do not meet one of these criteria must pass a French-language exam administered by the OQLF to obtain a certificate of knowledge of French (Office québécois de la langue française, 2021c).

OQLF French-language exam

The OQLF administers a French-language exam to candidates of professional orders to evaluate their written and verbal comprehension skills. Candidates who pass the exam receive a certificate of knowledge of French. Exam content is tailored to each of the 46 professional orders and consists of a profession-specific case study (Office québécois de la langue française, 2021c). The exam is offered free of charge in Montréal, but the cost of travel and accommodation are at the expense of the test taker. Support materials such as dictionaries, books or translators are not allowed during the 3-hour exam.

In order to pass the OQLF French-language exam, exam takers must demonstrate intermediate (or second stage) proficiency, as determined by the *Échelle québécoise des niveaux de compétence en français des personnes immigrantes adultes*, the Québec scale of French proficiency levels of adult immigrants.



French-language Support for Québec's Professionals

This section outlines the French-language support measures available to candidates and members of professional orders. Support measures are defined as actions taken to support professionals who face French-language barriers, whether it is supporting their ability to take French-language competency exams, or improving their ability to use French in the practice of their profession. Support measures can include programs, institutional policies and educational tools specifically designed to help and accommodate French-language learners.

In our review, we identified 8 professional orders which govern professions with significant labour shortages. We evaluated the French-language support available to candidates and members of these orders:

- Ordre des infirmières et infirmiers du Québec (nurses)
- Ordre des infirmières et infirmiers auxiliaires du Québec (nursing assistants)
- Ordre des ingénieurs du Québec (engineers)
- Collège des médecins du Québec (physicians)
- Ordre des travailleurs sociaux et des thérapeutes conjugaux et familiaux du Québec (social workers, marriage and family therapists)

- Ordre des psychologues du Québec (psychologists)
- Ordre des psychoéducateurs et psychoéducatrices du Québec (psychoeducators)
- Ordre professionnel des inhalothérapeutes du Québec (registered respiratory therapists)

The key stakeholders offering French-language support to professionals are educational institutions, private organizations, community organizations, government and professional orders.

Support from educational institutions

Educational institutions provide candidates of professional orders with the necessary training to enter the profession. Some institutions offer French-language support for their students to prepare them to take French-language professional exams and to practice their profession in Québec. Language support ranges from French-language courses to internships and one-on-one language support. The language support provided by educational institutions is usually based on available resources and student needs and is offered at the discretion of the school's departments. In our review of the French-language supports provided by educational institutions, we identified several approaches used:

French-language learning in the classroom

Schools integrate French vocabulary and terminology into class instruction and, more generally, into the curriculum.

Internships in French-language work environments

Most programs offer students the opportunity to gain practical experience under the supervision of a professional. These work experiences can be offered in a predominantly French-language setting, providing students with the opportunity to gain language and practical skills.

French-language courses in school

Some programs of study offer profession-specific French-language courses which aim to provide students with the relevant vocabulary and French-language skills needed to practice their profession. Additionally, schools can refer students to school language centres, which offer additional language-learning resources.

Online platforms

La Piqûre du français is an online platform funded by the Ministre de l'Éducation et de l'Enseignement Supérieur (MEES) which offers French-language support to help students enrolled in nursing programs in English-language CÉGEPs. The platform offers

pedagogical materials to help students prepare to provide care in French and take the OQLF French-language exam. Exercises on the platform are designed to improve listening, reading, writing and speaking skills for future nurses. The platform is managed by the Collège de Maisonneuve (Centre Collégial de Développement de Matériel Didactique, 2022).

French-language courses for professionals

In our review of the French-language courses available for professionals in the 8 priority professional orders, we identified two types of language courses:

Profession-specific programs

Profession-specific courses are designed to help candidates and members of professional orders acquire vocabulary and language skills to better prepare them to perform their professional activities in French.

OQLF French-language exam preparation programs

Courses that specifically aim to prepare French-language learners to take the OQLF's French-language exam for candidates of professional orders.

Figure 2 - Number of French-language courses for professionals found by administrative region

Administrative Region	OQLF exam preparation courses	Profession-specific French-language courses
Montréal	11	11
Capitale-Nationale	1	0
Laval	1	0
Montréal	1	2
Total	14	13

Of the profession-specific courses found, 10 were targeted generally to professionals in the healthcare sector with 4 programs specifically targeting nurses. Three profession-specific courses were intended for engineers.

Of the OQLF exam preparation courses found, no courses were specifically intended for psychoeducators and respiratory therapists. One non-profit provider offered group workshops for 25 regulated professions, including accountants, nurses, engineers, and social workers.

Regional coverage

Of the 14 OQLF exam preparation courses found, eleven were offered by providers located in the Montréal region and the other 3 were in the regions of Capitale-Nationale, Montérégie and Laval. One course located in Montréal was only offered in person and required participants to register in person. However, at least 8 of these courses provided distance learning options (phone or online).

Of the 13 profession-specific language courses identified, eleven were offered by providers located in Montréal and the other 2 were located in Montérégie.

Program Format

OQLF exam preparation courses were delivered in multiple formats. Courses were delivered to individuals, small groups and large classes. Courses could also be offered on a flexible schedule,

including part-time, full-time, evenings and weekends. Program duration ranged from 1 to 12 weeks. Individual or personalized courses usually offered more flexibility in terms of frequency and duration. One program offered an option for small groups of 2 to 3 people, but the learner is in charge of finding other participants

Profession-specific courses were also offered on a flexible schedule. In most cases, courses were offered part-time. They could also take place in the evenings and on the weekends. Program delivery included in-person, online and hybrid. Program duration varied, from 1 to 14 weeks.

Program status

The programs identified provided little to no details regarding current program status. Registration dates and program schedules were not always available online, and it was not clear if programs were active. In some cases, finding information about registration and program schedule would require additional steps such as subscribing to notifications to receive program updates or reaching out to providers by email or phone. One provider of two profession-specific courses offered real-time information about the course capacity.

Providers

Providers of programs included post-secondary institutions, adult education centres, non-profit organizations and private providers.

Figure 3 - Providers of French-language programs for professionals

Provider	OQLF exam preparation courses	Profession-specific French-language courses
CÉGEP	4	7
University	2	4
Non-profit organization	2	2
Private	4	0
Adult education centre	2	0
Total	14	13

Eligibility criteria

Immigration status

Immigration status is an eligibility criterion that was identified in 6 of the programs found (5 profession-specific and 1 OQLF-specific). Although some courses are targeted at newcomers, the majority of the courses identified had open eligibility requirements that allowed individuals to enroll regardless of immigration status. One OQLF exam preparation course required registrants to provide proof of Québec residence and proof of citizenship to enroll.

Language requirements

Some courses also had minimum language requirements for participants seeking to enroll. Two courses specifically stated that an intermediate to advanced knowledge of French was required to register, while other courses required a beginner to intermediate level. Some courses had no language requirements, and instead tailored course content to the learner's proficiency in French. One profession-specific French course for nursing in Montérégie, which was only open to immigrant language learners, required an intermediate knowledge of French for registration.

Some courses conducted French-language assessment tests for participants. One OQLF exam

preparation course was open to participants provided they met the minimum required level of French-language proficiency while another preparation course included a language assessment test after registration. One profession-specific course offered at multiple learning levels included a \$42 placement test in its fees.

Cost

Costs for courses depended on program format, program length, number of participants and type of provider. Overall, the costs of programs ranged from free to \$4,000 for OQLF exam preparation courses. One 25-hour private OQLF exam preparation course offered at a post-secondary institution cost \$3,375. Another OQLF exam preparation course provided by a private organization cost up to \$1,440 for 24 hours of training. Aside from 2 free courses that were identified, the least expensive course was offered for \$50 by an adult education centre

One profession-specific French-language course for nurses was intended for immigrant participants and was offered free-of-charge, with the option of applying for financial assistance to cover training time, transportation and childcare expenses. Six of the courses identified did not provide any information on cost.

Support from government

OQLF language support measures

In order to prepare individuals to take the OQLF's French-language exam, the OQLF provides resources to language learners. These include an information guide detailing the examination process, an example of a case study in the exam, as well as self-assessment tools to help learners improve their written and verbal skills (Office québécois de la langue française, 2022a).

The OQLF also encourages exam takers to enroll in French-language courses. The OQLF has developed partnership agreements with 3 universities, 2 CEGEPs and 1 adult education centre that deliver language courses for individuals who are preparing to take the OQLF French-language exam (Office québécois de la langue française, 2018).

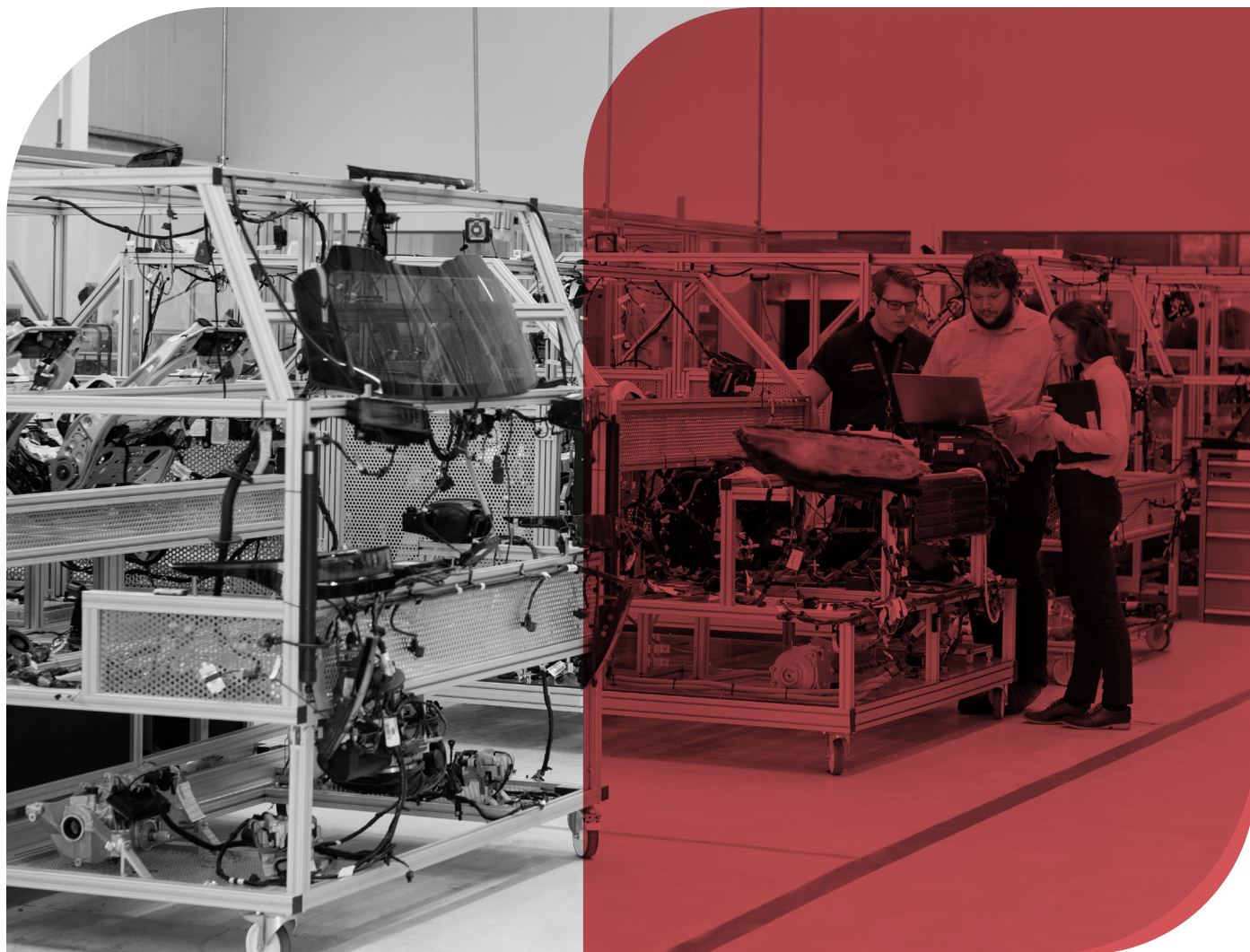


Figure 4 - OQLF Partner Schools Offering French-as-a-Second-Language Courses and OQLF French Exam Preparation Courses

Institution	Course Name	Field / Profession
Cégep du Vieux-Montréal (Formation continue et services aux entreprises)	OQLF Preparatory Course (Nursing) - <i>Cours préparatoire à l'examen de l'Office – profil infirmier</i>	Nursing
Cégep du Vieux-Montréal (Formation continue et services aux entreprises)	OQLF Preparatory Course (Engineer) - <i>Cours préparatoire à l'examen de l'Office – profil ingénieur</i>	Engineering
Université de Montréal	Preparation for the OQLF exam - <i>Préparation aux examens de l'OQLF</i>	All professions
Dawson College	Online Tutorial for the OQLF French Exam – All Professionals	All fields
Centre Pauline-Julien	OQLF French Exam Preparatory Course - <i>Cours de préparation aux examens de français de l'OQLF</i>	All professions

Of the 5 courses identified, 4 were delivered online. However, these courses are not always offered and availability is subject to the provider.

Other OQLF online resources

The OQLF also hosts a virtual library that includes profession-specific language learning tools such as French vocabulary for engineering and health professions (Office québécois de la langue française, 2022b). The OQLF additionally refers language learners to *Le grand dictionnaire terminologique* (GDT), a terminology database with definitions and translations in English and other languages of technical and scientific terms, and its complementary *Banque de dépannage linguistique* (BDL), that provides information on grammar and correction for spoken and written French in Québec. The BDL website is visited by

more than four million visitors annually (Office québécois de la langue française, personal communication, January 31, 2022).

It is important to note that all the information for language learners on the OQLF website is provided exclusively in French, which poses a considerable barrier for French-language learners seeking resources on the website.

Specialized French-language learning for professionals

The Québec government funds the *Programme d'intégration linguistique pour les immigrants* (PILI) also known as the "Francisation program", which offers full-time, part-time and online general courses for immigrants and people born in Canada age 16 and over.

Under this program, the Ministère de l'Immigration, de la Francisation et de l'Intégration (MIFI) offers specialized French-language learning courses for immigrant professionals which are targeted towards the fields of law, business, administration, engineering, health and nursing. Eligible participants can receive financial assistance in the form of \$25 a day for every 3-hour course taken. Eligible participants can also receive \$9 per child for childcare or for the care of a disabled dependent, provided they take at least 4 hours of French lessons per week in a French-speaking institution. (Government of Québec, 2022d).

In addition to these programs, the Québec government also offers free online French-language educational resources for individuals in the fields of accounting, information and communications technology and patient attendants (Government of Québec, 2022a).

Support within professional orders

Professional orders' provision of French-language support to candidates and members varies according to the order. Of the 8 priority professional orders selected for review, the language support measures identified were:

- The translation of information on the order's website into English
- Information on French-language courses
- Recommendations for profession-specific French-language dictionaries

The Ordre des infirmières et infirmiers du Québec and Collège des médecins du Québec had the most comprehensive language support measures for candidates and current members of the order. The orders' websites were available in English and included explanations of the French-language requirements of the profession and links to French classes offered through the Québec government. The Ordre des infirmières et infirmiers du Québec additionally included a link to a profession-specific French-language vocabulary website and was the only order to do so.

Notably, no language support measures for French-language learners were identified from the Ordre des psychoéducateurs et psychoéducatrices du Québec. Four of the orders surveyed referred their members and prospective members to external French-language learning resources. It is also worth noting that while English-language resources were provided by some orders, information was not provided in other languages.

None of the 8 professional orders examined had internally-developed French-language resources for their members.

Figure 5 - French-language support provided by 8 professional orders

	English version of website available	Webpage explaining language requirements of profession	Professional competency exam administered by order?	Language-learning resources for French-language learners	Information on external French-language courses	Other
Nurses (Ordre des infirmières et infirmiers du Québec)	Yes, but not all pages are translated	Yes	Yes, can be written in French or English	No/not findable	Yes	Provides link to a French-language vocabulary website for nursing
Practical nurses (Ordre des infirmières et infirmiers auxiliaires du Québec)	No	Yes	Yes, language options unspecified	No/not findable	Indirect (provides link to MIFI announcement about French courses.)	
Engineer (Ordre des ingénieurs du Québec)	Yes, but not all pages are translated	Yes	Yes (multiple exams) can be written in French or English	No/not findable	No/not findable	
Physicians (Collège des médecins du Québec)	Yes	Yes	Yes (multiple exams) can be written in French or English	No/not findable	Yes	Link to OQLF resources including profession-specific vocabulary
Social workers (Ordre des travailleurs sociaux et des thérapeutes conjugaux et familiaux du Québec)	No, but several pages are available in English and findable through manual search	Yes	No/unspecified	No/not findable	No/not findable	Webpage explaining exemptions to French language requirements for Indigenous practitioners/communities

	English version of website available	Webpage explaining language requirements of profession	Professional competency exam administered by order?	Language-learning resources for French-language learners	Information on external French-language courses	Other
Psychologists (Ordre des psychologues du Québec)	Yes, but not all sections of the website are accessible in English (including sections for prospective and current members of the order)	Yes	No/unspecified	No/not findable	No/not findable	
Psycho-educators (Ordre des psychoéducateurs et psychoéducatrices du Québec)	No	No	No/unspecified	No/not findable	No/not findable	
Respiratory therapists (Ordre professionnel des inhalothérapeutes du Québec)	No	Briefly lists mastery of French as a requirement on a page explaining admission to the order for those who earned their diploma elsewhere in Canada	No/unspecified	No/not findable	Yes	

Challenges

Data collection

It is challenging to determine the extent of language support needed for French-language learners in Québec because data on linguistic minorities is not widely available. In our interviews with various stakeholders in the professional orders ecosystem, we identified actors in the education sector who are working to address data gaps. Educational institutions shared their small-scale efforts to identify students who experience French-language barriers and provide support:

- One vocational training centre offering a nursing program has been able to track the French-language learning needs of students entering its program. Upon registration, students fill out a form stating their place of origin, educational trajectory and level of proficiency in French and English. The student profiles are reviewed by administrators and recommendations are developed. Teachers are also encouraged to observe and recommend students in need of additional French-language training.
- One post-secondary institution conducted a student survey to help identify and understand the level of French-language learning needs of its students.

More aggregate data collection is needed to understand the level of French-language support needed for linguistic minorities seeking to enter professional orders. A better understanding of their French-language learning needs can aid in the development of support measures by various stakeholders, including professional orders and government.

Government agencies such as the Institut de la statistique du Québec can also support these efforts by collecting language-related employment data on the number of linguistic minorities in regulated professions and industries.

Journey towards language proficiency

Full language proficiency can be a life-long journey for most individuals, with multiple internal and external factors impacting adult language learners' progress and learning experience. Factors include learners' primary language, the time they have to dedicate to studying a language, their age and the emotions experienced while practicing the second language (Wang, 1999; Deng & Zou, 2016; Boudreau et al., 2018).

For individuals who have undergone the necessary professional training to practice a regulated profession in Québec, French-language proficiency can pose a barrier to their ability to enter an order. Given the challenges of learning French, institutional support for French-language learning professionals at all stages of their careers is needed.

In the current system, the responsibility for seeking and undertaking French-language training falls primarily on individual professionals. More government support is needed to encourage professionals' linguistic skills development, and the limited availability of government-funded specialized French courses for professionals poses a considerable barrier.

For individuals who are required to take an OQLF French-language exam before entering an order, there is a lack of transitional programs that allow professionals to work in their profession while they simultaneously receive French-language training. Transitional programs can help recent graduates who seek both professional and language training through work-integrated learning. Due to the lack of innovation in French-language support for professionals, some professionals leave the province to practice in other provinces despite having received their professional training in Québec. This is a particular concern for professions facing significant labour shortages such as nursing, physicians and mental healthcare professionals.

Availability of French-language programs for professionals

More French-language training programs are needed to better prepare professionals to meet the linguistic requirements set by French-language policies in Québec. Aside from increasing the number of programs, barriers to participating in programs must also be addressed. Some programs are only available in specific regions and have eligibility requirements such as minimum language level and immigration status.

Cost is also a key barrier in programs. The most affordable programs are typically funded by the Québec government. In our review, we identified specialized French-language courses for professionals that are offered free of charge by MIFI to immigrant language learners in fields such as nursing and engineering. These courses also provide financial support to eligible participants to cover program participation, child care and care for dependents.

These types of government-funded profession-specific language courses should be expanded to include non-immigrant professionals in recognition that French-language training is needed by a diverse range of professionals in Québec.

Regional disparities in the availability of programs also pose a barrier. Several programs address the issue of geographic distance by offering remote learning options. While remote learning is growing in popularity, local French-language training programs are needed in order to provide professionals with the French-language support they need without having to travel long distances.

Under current language policies, professionals in regulated professions are expected to be able to serve the public in French in order to maintain their practice. This legal requirement must be supported with the increased funding of French-language training programs that enable trained professionals who wish to practice and serve the Québec public the opportunity to improve their French skills.

Language and the role of professional orders

Professional orders in Québec operate on the assumption that future and current members possess an appropriate level of French to communicate and work in their profession.

Currently, the French-language proficiency of professionals in Québec is assessed through the OQLF-administered French exam for professionals seeking to enter an order. Although study materials and preparation courses are available

for some professions, they are not widely available for all 55 professions regulated by professional orders. For professionals who pass the OQLF-administered French exam and join a professional order, they may still need additional French-language support when it comes to writing French-language professional competency exams or improving their profession-specific vocabulary to practice their profession. The Ordre des infirmières et infirmiers du Québec provided links to profession-specific vocabulary to aid nursing professionals in acquiring the necessary French vocabulary to practice. However, language support among the orders we examined is limited and is provided at their discretion.

While some professional order administrators we interviewed indicated that they were in a position to provide more French-language training to their members, they also emphasized the need for more organizational capacity and funding for orders to improve their training programs and provide French-language support. Under the proposed Bill 96, the role of professional orders in monitoring the French-language use of their members may increase, further highlighting the need for more French-language training programs and learning resources by orders to support linguistic minorities in their membership. Professional orders are in an ideal situation to provide French-language training due to their proximity to future and current members as well as their institutional knowledge of the French-language skills required to practice in a regulated profession. Increased government funding and resources could help support the logistical and organizational capacity of profes-

sional orders to provide this type of training. In addition to this, the government should collaborate with professional orders to develop more profession-specific French-language resources such as vocabulary guides and self-guided courses for independent learners.

Conclusion and Recommendations

There is currently no comprehensive approach in place to support Quebecers who are professionally qualified to practice their respective professions but need to improve their French-language proficiency. Institutional stakeholders such as professional orders are not mandated to provide French-language support to their members. Additionally, efforts to identify and support individuals experiencing language-related difficulties can be a significant burden for educational institutions that do not typically receive additional funding to provide profession-specific French-language training.

More efforts are needed to invest in the French-language training of Québec's future and current professionals. These efforts should leverage the existing stakeholders in the system to provide French-language training at all stages of the journey to becoming a practicing professional in Québec. Schools and professional orders have perhaps the most important role to play in the delivery of profession-specific French-language training, but policymakers must also develop policies that enable and fund these kinds of language support initiatives outside of the education system.

The following recommendations are provided in support of the development of French-language support measures to retain and integrate highly-trained and qualified talent into the Québec workforce:

1 Free language training

Provide free multilevel French-language training for all Quebecers who seek to enter a regulated profession and require profession-specific French-language training.

2 Financial assistance for language learners

Expand existing financial assistance programs to include all Quebecers who enroll in profession-specific French-language training. Financial assistance should cover training time, transportation and childcare costs for participants.

3 Linguistic data collection

The Québec government should collect and publish data on the number of linguistic minorities in regulated professions and industries.

4 Integrated language training

Integrate French-language training at different stages of the professional career journey, including training programs, transitional programs for recent graduates, language training by professional orders and workplace programs.



5 Increase visibility of programs

Centralize and increase the visibility of profession-specific language-learning programs and tools so that they are more findable for language learners.

6 Expand eligibility for programs

Expand eligibility criteria for the Québec government's French-language courses for professionals so that individuals born in Canada are eligible.

7 Targeted programs

Develop more targeted language training programs for individuals in strategic and priority sectors such as nursing, respiratory therapy and social work.

8 Expand online language-learning resources

Expand the Québec government's existing offer of profession-specific online language-learning tools and resources to include all 55 regulated professions.

9 Enhance stakeholder collaboration

Enhance collaboration between stakeholders including the Québec government, educational institutions and professional orders with the goal of developing a better understanding of the French-language learning needs of professionals and establishing continuing education approaches for language learning.

10 Empower and fund French-language training support measures in professional order organizations

Provide professional orders with resources and funding to offer more French-language training support to candidates and members of orders.

The development of a framework to address the French-language challenges faced by professionals in Québec's professional orders is fundamental in ensuring that Québec can meet the demands of the labour market and the general public. We hope this report will be informative to the various stakeholders, including the Québec government, professional orders and educational institutions, who share an interest in the promotion of and investment in French-language training for Québec's linguistic minorities.

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Appendix



1.1 Inventory of French-language programs for professionals

Program type by administrative region	Program name	Name of course	Web Link to Program	Organization name, Department (if needed)	Organization type
Montréal					
OQLF-specific	Preparation for the OQLF exams	OQLF exam preparation workshops	https://ecoledelanguages.umontreal.ca/en/programs/oqlf-exams/	École de langues Université de Montréal	University
OQLF-specific	OQLF French Exam Preparation Course		https://centre-pauline-julien.cssdm.gouv.qc.ca/cours-offerts/cours-de-preparation-aux-examens-de-francais-oqlf/	Éducation des adultes Centre Pauline-Julien	School service centre
OQLF-specific (Nursing)	Cours préparatoire à l'examen de l'OQLF	Profil infirmier	https://www.cvm.qc.ca/formation/cours-preparatoire-examen-oqlf-profil-infirmier/	Le Centre linguistique de la formation continue et aux entreprises du cégep du Vieux Montréal	Cégep
OQLF-specific (Engineering)	Cours préparatoire à l'examen de l'OQLF	Profil ingénieur	https://www.cvm.qc.ca/formation/cours-preparatoire-examen-oqlf-profil-ingenieur/	Le Centre linguistique de la formation continue et aux entreprises du cégep du Vieux Montréal	Cégep
OQLF-specific	OQLF Exam Preparation		https://www.point3.com/en/exam-preparation	POINT3 Language Center	Private organization
OQLF-specific	OQLF à Montréal – Préparation à l'examen de l'office québécois de la langue française à ALC		https://www.alcmontreal.com/tests-officiels/office-de-la-langue-francaise/cours-de-preparation/	ALC Montréal – Académie Linguistique Charlemagne	Private organization
OQLF-specific	Preparatory Workshop for OQLF Exam		https://www.mcgill.ca/dialoguemcgill/files/dialoguemcgill/french_courses_brochure_18-23_en.pdf	McGill University, Dialogue McGill	University
OQLF-specific	Language Test Preparation		https://hitthebooks.ca/page/oqlf	Hit the Books	Private organization

Program type by administrative region	Program name	Name of course	Web Link to Program	Organization name, Department (if needed)	Organization type
OQLF-specific	OQLF Exam Preparation Course Relevant professions covered Nurse Nursing assistant Doctor Engineer Psychologist Social worker	OQLF Exam Preparation Course	https://www.lefepcoop.ca/en/our-services/oqlf-exam-preparation-course/	Lefep coop	Non-profit organization
OQLF-specific		Oral Improvement Course	https://www.lefepcoop.ca/en/our-services/oqlf-exam-preparation-course/	Lefep coop	Non-profit organization
OQLF-specific	Online Tutorial OQLF French Exam - All Sectors (Online		https://www.dawsoncollege.qc.ca/ctd/courses/online-tutorial-oqlf-french-exam-all-sectors-online/	Dawson College	CÉGEP
Profession-specific (Engineering)	Specialized Francization Courses	French for Engineering	https://www.lefepcoop.ca/en/our-services/oqlf-exam-preparation-course-1/	Lefep coop	Non-profit organization
Profession-specific (Nurses, nursing assistants and other health care professions)	Specialized Francization Courses	French for Health	https://www.lefepcoop.ca/en/our-services/oqlf-exam-preparation-course-1/	Lefep coop	Non-profit organization
Profession-specific (Health)	Cours de français spécialisés - financés par le MIFI	Santé	https://www.cvm.qc.ca/formation/cours-francais-specialises-finances-mifi/	Cégep du Vieux-Montréal	Cégep
Profession-specific (Nursing)	Cours de français spécialisés - financés par le MIFI	Soins infirmiers	https://www.cvm.qc.ca/formation/cours-francais-specialises-finances-mifi/	Cégep du Vieux-Montréal	Cégep
Profession-specific (Engineering and applied sciences)	Cours de français spécialisés - financés par le MIFI	Génie et sciences appliqués	https://www.cvm.qc.ca/formation/cours-francais-specialises-finances-mifi/	Cégep du Vieux-Montréal	Cégep

Program type by administrative region	Program name	Name of course	Web Link to Program	Organization name, Department (if needed)	Organization type
Profession-specific (Engineering)	Certificat en français langue seconde: culture, études et travail	Français scientifique	https://admission.umontreal.ca/cours-et-horaires/cours/frs-3802x/	Université de Montréal Faculté de l'éducation permanente	University
Profession-specific (Health)	French for Special Purposes	French for Medical Purposes	https://www.mcgill.ca/continuingstudies/french-medical-purposes-program-0	McGill University Continuing Education	University
Profession-specific (Health)	French for Special Purposes	French for the Health Sector	https://www.mcgill.ca/continuingstudies/program/french-health-sector	McGill University Continuing Education	University
Profession-specific (Health)	Certificat en français langue seconde : culture, études et travail	Français de la santé	https://fep.umontreal.ca/programmes/certificats/francais-langue-seconde/	Université de Montréal Faculté de l'éducation permanente	University
Profession-specific (Health)	Formation sur mesure	Terminologie médicale	https://www.collegeahuntsic.qc.ca/entreprises/formation-sur-mesure/terminologie-medecale	Collège Ahuntsic Services aux entreprises	CÉGEP

Capitale-Nationale

OQLF-specific (Nursing Engineering, other professional orders)	Centre d'auto-apprentissage (CAFI)		https://dfc.csfoyc.ca/francisation/centre-dauto-apprentissage-cafi/	Direction de la formation continue et des services aux entreprises, Cégep de Sainte-Foy	Cégep - Post-secondary institution
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Montérégie

OQLF-specific	French courses	OQLF French Exam Preparation Courses	https://www.globallinguage.ca/en/french-courses/oqlf-french-exam	Global Lingua	Private organization
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Program type by administrative region	Program name	Name of course	Web Link to Program	Organization name, Department (if needed)	Organization type
Profession-specific (Nursing)	Francisation spécialisée en soins infirmiers	Cours de perfectionnement	https://fc.cegep-montpetit.ca/cegep/formation-continue/cours-de-perfectionnement/francisation-specialisee-en-soins-infirmiers/	Cégep Édouard-Montpetit Formation continue	CÉGEP
Profession-specific (Health)	Domaines de formation - santé	Terminologie médicales (15 h) Analyses sanguines et maladies chroniques	https://www.colval.qc.ca/index.php/sae-accueil/formations-disponibles/tous-les-domaines-de-formation/sante	Cégep de Valleyfield	CÉGEP

Laval

OQLF-specific	Francisation - Niveaux 1 à 9	Préparation pour l'examen de l'OQLF	https://laformationbilingue.ca/formation-generale-aux-adultes/services-offerts/	Centre de développement des compétences / Competency Development Centre Sir Wilfrid Laurier School Board	School service centre
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Provincial Employment Roundtable
1001 Lenoir Street, suite B338
Montreal, QC H4Z 2Z6

Telephone (toll-free): 1-855-773-7885
Email: info@pertquebec.ca
pertquebec.ca