

LANGUAGE POLICY

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PREAMBLE

Concordia University is an English language university-level educational institution born from the merger, in 1974, of Sir George Williams University and Loyola College, following which it became Concordia University (the “University”). The University’s teaching and research activities principally take place in English. Concordia is an open, diverse and engaged university that encourages its students to become active and concerned citizens. It nurtures close ties with the city of Montréal and with the province of Québec, enriching their social, economic and cultural fabric, which allows it to play a key role in Québec society. Committed to taking an active part in shaping community life, it recognizes the official character of the French language in Québec and offers its students courses that allow them to acquire the linguistic skills they need to pursue a career and live in Québec.

SCOPE

This Policy applies to:

- the University’s written communications addressed to its employees when such communications pertain to working conditions;
- the University’s written communications of an administrative nature (pertaining to health and safety, building closures, etc.) addressed to its employees or community;
- the University’s written communications with the Civil Administration (as defined below);
- the University’s written communications with legal persons and enterprises established in Québec;
- the teaching of French as a second language at the University; and
- the services provided in French at the University.

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Nothing in this Policy or its related [Guidelines](#) shall invalidate, supersede or replace any complaint, grievance or appeal procedure set out in any collective or employment agreement to which the University is a party.

PURPOSE

The University adopted this Policy in compliance with sections 88.1 to 88.3 of the [Charter of the French Language, CQLR, chapter C-11](#), as amended by *An Act respecting French, the official and common language of Québec, RLRQ 2022, chapter 14* (the “Charter”), which stipulates that universities, including English universities, must adopt a language policy. The Charter has several objectives, among which are to assure the quality and influence of the French language, to make French the language of the Civil Administration, and to promote the use of French in Québec. These objectives must be pursued in a spirit of fairness and open-mindedness, respectful of the institutions of the English-speaking community of Québec, and respectful of Indigenous communities, racialized communities and other cultural communities, including, but not limited, to ethnic minorities, whose valuable contribution to the development of Québec is readily acknowledged¹.

According to the Charter, the language policy of institutions that provide university instruction in English to the majority of their students must pertain to the following:

- the implementation and related follow-up, specifying, in particular, the procedures for processing complaints about its application;
- the functions of the institution’s most senior officer as the person responsible for the application of the policy;
- the procedures for the consultation and participation of the University’s students, faculty and staff;
- the command of the French language required of students domiciled in Québec at the end of their studies, including command of the appropriate French terminology according to the programs of studies;
- the language used in written communications with the Civil Administration, legal persons and enterprises established in Québec;

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- the teaching of French as a second language; and
- the services provided in French.

DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this Policy, the following definitions shall apply:

“Civil Administration” means the government of Québec and its departments and bodies, the municipal and school bodies as well as all other agencies listed under schedule I of the Charter.

The “Decision Maker” is the person named by the President and Vice-Chancellor, from time to time, to oversee the complaints process.

POLICY

Written communications about working conditions

1. When the University sends its employees written communications pertaining to or having an impact on working conditions, they shall be provided in both French and English. When such communications are sent on an individual basis, the University takes into account the language of choice of the employee.

Written communications on administrative matters

2. As an English language university institution that provides instruction in English and within which a large proportion of students are more comfortable communicating in English than in French, the University generally requires that its employees be able to communicate in English.
3. The University encourages the dissemination in both French and English of administrative messages from the University to all its employees.
4. The University encourages the dissemination in both French and English of communications on administrative matters from the Office of the President, the offices of

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vice-presidents and the units to the entire University community (students, faculty and staff) or to an important part thereof.

Communications with the Civil Administration

5. When the University communicates in writing with the Civil Administration, it shall do so in French. Any agreement between the University and the Civil Administration shall be negotiated and written in French. In addition, allowing for exceptions, written documents sent to the Civil Administration to obtain a permit or an authorization, or a subsidy or any other form of financial assistance shall be drawn up in French.

Communications with legal persons and enterprises established in Québec

6. When the University communicates in writing with legal persons and enterprises established in Québec, it does so in French, except with those who expressly request that the University communicate with them in English.

Teaching of French as a second language and command of the French language required at the end of studies

7. Since its establishment in 1974, the University has provided university-level instruction in English to the majority of its students. However, certain courses whose content requires a different approach are given in French.
8. The University also offers instruction in French as a second language.
9. The University also offers French courses to its employees, as indicated in greater detail in the [Guidelines](#).
10. Each department determines the level of command of the French language required of students domiciled in Québec at the end of their studies, including command of the appropriate French terminology according to the programs of studies, as set out in greater detail in the [Guidelines](#).

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Mechanisms for the consultation and participation of the University's students, faculty and staff

11. The University implemented the following mechanisms for the consultation and participation of its students, faculty and staff in the development of this Policy:
 - The issuance of a public call to participate in the development of the present Policy sent to all faculty, staff and students inviting them to submit comments on this Policy and its related Guidelines; and
 - The organisation of two virtual sessions open to all University faculty, staff and students to collect their comments.

12. The University establishes the following mechanisms for the consultation and participation of its students, faculty and staff so they can be involved in the preparation of the report and the review of this Policy, in accordance with the periods required in the Charter:
 - the issuance of a public call for participation in the preparation of the report on the application of this Policy: as set out in section 11 above, as required from time to time, the University issues a call to all faculty, staff and students to invite them to submit their comments related to the report on the application of this Policy and to involve them in the preparation of that report, which, pursuant to the Charter, must be submitted to the Minister of the French Language every three years;
 - the issuance of a public call for participation in the review of the Policy: as set out in section 11 above, as required from time to time, the University issues a call to all faculty, staff and students to invite them to submit their comments and to involve them in the decennial review of the Policy, in compliance with the Charter; and
 - the organisation, at appropriate times during the drafting of the report or the review of the Policy, of sessions open to all faculty, staff and students to collect their comments.

Services offered in French

13. Although the University is an English language academic institution where most teaching and research activities take place in English, it provides services in French. These services are specified in the [Guidelines](#).

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Complaints process

Filing a complaint

14. Any faculty, staff member or student who believes that a provision of this Policy has not been respected can file a written complaint under the University's Language Policy by filling out the [Complaint Form](#). The complainant must:
 - a) provide their name and contact information;
 - b) state the facts justifying the complaint as well as the time and place of occurrence of the action or omission it is based on; and
 - c) refer to the provision of the University's Language Policy upon which the complaint is based.
15. A complaint must be sufficiently detailed to allow its review and processing and must be accompanied by the relevant documentation. The University's ability to adequately review and process complaints depends, among other things, on the quality of the information provided under the said circumstances.
16. The [Complaint Form](#) may be sent to the Decision Maker by email at the address indicated in the [Complaint Form](#), or by mail in a sealed envelope marked "Strictly confidential; must only be opened by the addressee".
17. A complaint may be filed anonymously. A complainant wishing to remain anonymous is hereby notified that this choice may significantly compromise the University's ability to adequately process and analyse their complaint. If a complaint is filed anonymously or without supporting evidence, the University may, at its discretion, decide not to pursue it.
18. A complaint may be filed up to 90 calendar days following the event alleged to constitute a violation of this Policy.

Review and admissibility of complaints

19. Upon receipt and initial review of a complaint, the Decision Maker determines whether it is admissible pursuant to this Policy and decides on how it should be processed.

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20. For the purposes of determining the admissibility of a complaint and how it should be processed, the Decision Maker may request additional documents or information regarding the alleged violation of this Policy. If the Decision Maker deems it necessary considering the circumstances, they may meet any person that may be able to provide necessary information.
21. The Decision Maker may or shall, as required, put an end to the review of a complaint if:
 - a) the subject-matter of the complaint falls outside the scope of this Policy;
 - b) the complaint questions the validity of any policy, program or objective of the University;
 - c) the complaint is frivolous or vexatious;
 - d) the complaint is filed without supporting evidence;
 - e) the complainant is not a member of the University's faculty, staff or student body;
 - f) the complaint can be or has been received and treated in accordance with another University policy, procedure, guideline, or in accordance with the relevant collective or employee agreement to which the University is a party, or any other agreement to which the University is a party, or in compliance with a law or regulation;
 - g) the facts justifying the complaint are under review by a mediator or the subject of an appeal before an arbitrator or a court;
 - h) the facts justifying the complaint are already or have already been the subject of a complaint submitted to a government authority; or
 - i) section 17 of this Policy is applicable.
22. If the Decision Maker deems a complaint inadmissible and decides to close the complaint file at this stage, they shall notify the complainant accordingly.
23. If the Decision Maker deems a complaint admissible, they shall analyse the complaint, taking into account the associated facts. This analysis is also conducted subject to and taking into account any other University policy, procedure and guideline; any relevant collective or employee agreement to which the University is a party; and any other agreement to which the University is a party; as well as in compliance with any relevant law or regulation.

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Complaints process

24. The complaint review shall consider the sensitive nature of the information, if applicable.
25. Faculty, staff members or students who, acting in good faith, file a complaint under this Policy may not be threatened or subjected to reprisals or discrimination by the University. This protection also extends to anyone who provides information regarding a complaint.
26. The Decision Maker shall notify the complainant when they close a complaint file made by the complainant.
27. Upon completion of the process, the Decision Maker shall notify the complainant of the result of their complaint.
28. The Decision Maker shall respond to any complaint in writing, in accordance with the terms of this Policy.

Policy responsibility, implementation and review

29. As the most senior officer of the University, the President and Vice-Chancellor shall be responsible for the application of this Policy.
30. A permanent committee shall assist the President and Vice-Chancellor in the follow-up and application of this Policy. The committee is chaired by a representative from the Office of the Secretary-General, and includes the Director of Translation Services, a representative from University Communications Services as well as a representative from Human Resources.
31. The permanent committee shall convene at least once a year to analyse the observations received about the application of this Policy. In accordance with the procedures related to the consultation and participation of faculty, staff members and students set out in this Policy, the committee shall review the Policy periodically, recommend amendments as needed, suggest corrective measures, report to the President and Vice-Chancellor regarding the application of this Policy, and submit its proposed amendments and corrective measures to the President and Vice-Chancellor for their approval.

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32. The responsibility for implementing and approving amendments to this Policy shall rest with the President and Vice-Chancellor.
33. The University shall disseminate the Language Policy among its faculty, staff members and students, and publish it on its website.
34. The University shall send its Language Policy to the Minister of Higher Education. The same applies to any amendment to this Policy, except any editorial revisions, in compliance with the terms of the *Policy on University Policies* ([SG-6](#)).
35. Every three years, the University shall send a report to the Minister of the French Language on the application of this Policy.
36. The University shall, on request, send the Minister of the French Language any information that they require on the application of this Policy.
37. In accordance with the timeline prescribed by the Charter, this Policy must be reviewed at least once every 10 years, and the revised Policy shall be sent to the Minister of the French Language. If no amendment is made to the policy after its review, the University shall notify the Minister of the French Language accordingly.