

## Frequently Asked Questions: French Language Services

### **1. Why are French language skills considered as part of the hiring policy and recruitment at Cornwall Community Hospital?**

French language skills are part of the hiring policy at Cornwall Community Hospital for two reasons: (i) the hospital is required under law to provide services to the community in both official languages, and (ii) we are committed to providing high quality health services to our community, in order to do that we strive to meet communication needs.

### **2. What is the French Language Services Act (FLSA)? And how does it impact Cornwall Community Hospital?**

The FLSA is a statute that was adopted by the Ontario government in 1986. The legislation guarantees an individual's right to receive services in French from the Government of Ontario ministries and agencies in 25 designated areas. All the services that are provided to the public by a ministry or agency of the Government of Ontario are available in French in the government offices located in or serving a designated area.

While agencies that are partially funded by the province, such as hospitals, are not automatically subject to the FLSA, they may ask to be designated. Notwithstanding the latter, in the case of Cornwall Community Hospital, the designation under the FLSA was a requirement under the Directions of the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, as part of the amalgamation of the Hotel Dieu Hospital and the Cornwall General Hospital which led to the creation of the Cornwall Community Hospital. Hence, Cornwall Community Hospital was required to become designated under the FLSA.

Cornwall Community Hospital is therefore required by the FLSA to provide services to our community in both official languages (English/French).

Link to the FLSA: [http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/statutes/english/elaws\\_statutes\\_90f32\\_e.htm](http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/statutes/english/elaws_statutes_90f32_e.htm)

### **3. With this requirement under the legislation does that mean that all job postings at the hospital require French language skills?**

No, not all positions require candidates to have French language skills.

Departments that have sufficient numbers of bilingual staff to fulfill the communication requirement are not required to hire candidates that have French language skills. In addition, French language skills are not a requirement for positions that do not have direct contact with the patients/community.

4. **How many vacancies were there at Cornwall Community Hospital in 2011 and how many of these vacant positions required French language skills? How many of these positions were filled by candidates with French language skills?**

In 2011 there were 217 positions to be filled. 132 of these positions were advertised as requiring French language skills and 57 were filled with candidates with the required French language skills.

5. **Why is there a discrepancy between the number of vacancies requiring French language skills and the number hired?**

This discrepancy exists because the hospital is often not successful in finding candidates that meet the clinical or professional requirements as well as the French language requirements. These positions are then filled with unilingual candidates.

6. **How many vacancies were there in the nursing departments in 2011 and how many of these vacant positions were filled internally?**

In 2011 there were 13 vacant (full-time) Registered Nurse vacancies. 12 of these vacancies were filled by internal staff (formerly part-time).

In 2011 there were 33 vacant (part-time) Registered Nurse vacancies. 20 of these vacancies were filled by internal staff.

In 2011 there was 1 vacant (full-time) Registered Practical Nurse (RPN) vacancy. This vacancy was filled with an internal candidate.

In 2011 there were 4 vacant (part-time) Registered Practical Nurse (RPN) vacancies. All of these vacancies were filled with internal candidates.

7. **How many nursing vacancies required French language skills? How many of these positions were filled by candidates with French language skills?**

All full-time nursing vacancies were posted for French language skills.

5 of the 13 full-time Registered Nurse positions were filled with candidates with the required French language skills. 6 of the 33 part-time positions were filled with candidates with the required French language skills.

The 1 full-time Registered Practical Nurse position was filled with a candidate with the required French language skill.

**8. Is it possible for unilingual (English) staff to move from part-time to full-time under hospital policy?**

Yes. In 2009 the Board of Directors amended the hospital hiring policy to ensure that unilingual part-time staff were recognized for their experience, education and training. This was meant to prevent senior experienced staff from being by-passed in the selection process due to the French language requirement.

ONA has agreed through a letter of understanding which provides a manager the means to override the French Language Human Resources Plan in cases where other skills are critical to the unit's proper functioning at that time. Some of the Registered Nurse positions have been filled with internal candidates, and not all candidates met the French language requirement.

It is important to note that, because the hospital allows internal unilingual nurses into designated positions, our current external requirements for French is high in an attempt to maintain our inventory of nurses who speak French.

This practice has not been accepted by the OPSEU and CUPE unions. Registered Practical Nurses are covered under the CUPE contract.

In April 2012, as a result of more discussions, the Hospital has renewed an amended version of the Letter of Understanding with the Ontario Nurses Association, and has reached an agreement with CUPE to provide greater opportunities for their unilingual members while remaining cognizant of requirements to serve the community. Discussions are ongoing with the local OPSEU union.

**9. How is French language proficiency determined? Are both oral and written proficiency required?**

Proficiency levels are determined through an independent agency providing language proficiency assessment.

Only oral proficiency is expected and assessed at Cornwall Community Hospital.

**10. Are there levels of language proficiency?**

Yes. There are three levels: Limited , Functional and Superior.

*Limited (Intermediate):* At this level one has limited ability to work in French. Vocabulary is limited to that used in simple, non-technical, daily conversational usage. One can give simple instructions and discuss simple needs.

*Functional (Advanced):* At this level one has functional ability to satisfy many work requirements. One is able to take part in a variety of verbal exchanges sometimes needing some help finding the right words. One is generally good in either grammar or vocabulary but not in both.

*Superior:* One is highly skilled and able to give verbal presentations in both formal and informal settings. One masters specific vocabulary relevant to a variety of contexts.

**11. What requirements, other than a French Language Human Resources Plan, must the hospital address in order to be in compliance with the legislation?**

Other requirements include: bilingual signage and public communications (e.g. Web site, Annual Report, press releases), French language representation on the Board of Directors (to be provided in the By-law).

**12. What does the statement “the language of administration is English” mean?**

While the hospital is directed to meet the provisions of the French Language Services Act in terms of communicating with the public it is not required to carry on its business in French.

Cornwall Community Hospital operates its business, including all administrative and patient records, in English.

**13. How can I get more information on French language services at the hospital?**

Staff are encouraged to contact the Human Resources Department for more information on French languages services and skills.

Community members are welcome to contact us through the website at [www.cornwallhospital.ca](http://www.cornwallhospital.ca) or by contacting the Executive Offices at 613-938-4240 ext. 2262.