



Languages Canada
Langues Canada

Votre destination linguistique • Your language destination

Pre-Budget Document

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Executive Summary

Languages Canada is the association that represents the country's accredited language schools in French and English, in both the private and public sectors. The association currently represents 214 member programs across all provinces.

The Canadian language education sector employs more than 7000 people directly and creates an important number of indirect jobs in related industries.

In tuition income alone, students at Languages Canada member programs contributed nearly \$495 Million to the Canadian economy in 2013. Including accommodation costs, travel and transportation, food, school fees and supplies, and other expenditures, students contributed approximately \$1.4 Billion to the economy in 2013, based on an estimation of \$900 expenses per study week¹.

Canadian language programs play a vital role in their communities and contribute to reflect Canada's values and advantages to a mobile international community. It is necessary that these programs be supported and that conditions for success be assembled.

With that in mind, Languages Canada recommends the following measures be adopted in the 2015 Federal budget.

- The creation of a tax incentive for the research, development and commercialization costs of bringing language education innovations to market.
- That the language co-op program for international students, combining an in-class study component and a work practicum component, be reinstated.
- That the government of Canada continue to work in close collaboration with its national partners in education, including Languages Canada, to further establish quality standards and norms for educational institutions.

¹ 2013 Languages Canada Annual Survey Report. Published in July 2014. Available at www.languagescanada.ca

Recommendations

1. Facilitating innovation

In the language education sector, innovation is key. The development of new teaching tools and continually evolving curriculum in both official languages are instrumental in allowing accredited Canadian language programs to remain competitive in an incessantly growing worldwide offer.

Languages Canada is of the opinion that innovations being created and used in language classrooms across the country must be fostered and encouraged, and should be brought to the international marketplace with ease.

Already, some language programs have been able to develop successful tools, which are now sought after in many different international language programs. For instance, a program developed a fully integrated virtual learning platform that combines classic classroom teaching with online exercises and reading, eliminating the need for textbooks and allowing teachers, parents and the students themselves to track their progress. This solution is currently used in 116 institutions located in over 20 countries.

This tool was successfully developed and marketed over many years, and thanks to a specific set of circumstances. Our recommendation in this case aims at multiplying such success stories and speeding up the process by which these learning innovations are commercialized.

Coherent with the theme *Increasing the competitiveness of Canadian businesses through research, development, innovation and commercialization*, Languages Canada proposes the creation of a tax incentive for the research, development and commercialization costs of bringing language education innovations to market.

We must however recognize that not all language education programs have the proper know-how and experience in commercialization to make their projects a success. In order to further encourage private-public partnerships, we also propose that this tax incentive apply to the fees associated with the development of such partnerships, as long as they are in the objective of commercializing a learning innovation.

2. Reinstating Canada's international competitiveness

Canada's bilingualism, its rigorous standards and its welcoming population make it an ideal destination for international students aiming to further their knowledge of French or English. Canada must still contend with strong competition from other English- and French-speaking countries, however. When international students choose to learn a language abroad, they are faced with the multiple choices that are Canada, Australia, the United Kingdom, Malta, France or Belgium, to name a few.

Considering that the cost of international language studies, including flights, tuition, food, housing and transportation can be quite prohibitive, depending on the family means and the country of origin, the financial aspect plays a strong role in most students' decisions on their study destination. In order to offset the cost of their educational experience, many students chose to come to Canada to take part in the language co-op programs offered at 83 Languages Canada member institutions.

The language co-op programs were programs that formally integrated a student's language studies with organized work experience. These programs consisted of two components: an in-class study component and a work practicum component. The work practicum component had the objective of exposing a student to natural language in context in order to expand their productive and receptive language skills.

To maintain the integrity of the Language Coop Programs, the work practicum component could not exceed, in hours, the total number of hours of the in-class study component of the program.

The work practicum could be paid or unpaid, part-time or full-time. Work placements were done with private, public, and non-profit companies and organizations, subject to certain excluded fields. The work practicum also had to be monitored by the Languages Canada Member and comply with all applicable Canadian federal, provincial and territorial laws and regulations.

The Language Co-op Programs had the following advantages:

- They exposed students to all language skills so that they had the opportunity to develop balanced communicative competency. Other programs may focus on specific language skills and objectives.
- They allowed the student to develop key workforce skills in a controlled and supervised environment;
- Students who found paid work practicum were able to offset some or all of the cost of their language studies in Canada;
- These programs had positive economic benefits, in that they created supervised jobs and allowed the students enrolled in these programs to remain longer in Canada and spend more money in the country.

The new International Student Program regulations that came into effect on June 1st, 2014, now prohibit students in ESL and FSL programs from participating in any activity which could reasonably be considered work, whether paid or unpaid. This unfortunately means that language co-op programs are no longer an option for new students considering Canada as their language study destination.

This will undoubtedly have an important direct impact on language education programs, and an indirect impact on the businesses that hired these students and on the businesses that benefited from their presence and spending habits.

Fig. 1 – Total number of students enrolled in language co-op programs, 2013²

	Un-paid	Paid	Total
Number of students in language co-op in 2013	1,810	5,804	7,614

Considering that countries such as the United States, Australia and the United Kingdom still have their version of language co-op programs in place, this puts Canada at a serious disadvantage in its efforts to recruit international students.

Furthermore, most language institutions that offered the language co-op program will soon have to downsize their staff to reflect the new reality, leading to specialized jobs being lost.

Therefore, in the theme of *Increasing the competitiveness of Canadian businesses through research, development, innovation and commercialization*, Languages Canada recommends that the language co-op program for international students, combining an in-class study component and a work practicum component, be reinstated.

3. Continue striving for excellence

Recent measures put in place by the Harper government surrounding the designation of learning institutions eligible to issue a letter of acceptance to international students, required obtain a study permit, have been positive. Languages Canada, itself a regulatory body, encourages any measure that will contribute to higher standards in the language education sector.

These measures have allowed Canada to catch up to its international competitors in the language education sector in terms of the application process for international students. Furthermore, international students now know that any institution on the designated learning institution list is a quality establishment.

Languages Canada looks forward to further collaborating with the government on measures that ensure the quality of its education systems and bolster its international reputation for quality. In the overall objective of simplifying bureaucracy and improving access for small businesses, and in the general theme of *Improving Canada's taxation and regulatory regimes*, Languages Canada

² 2013 Languages Canada Annual Survey Report. Published in July 2014. Available at www.languagescanada.ca

recommends that the government of Canada continue to work in close collaboration with its national partners in education to further establish quality standards and norms for educational institutions.