

SSHRC Policy on Section 41 of the Official Languages Act

CONTEXT, DRAFT POLICY STATEMENT AND PROPOSED DEFINITIONS

1.0 Context

The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the Official Languages Act (OLA) and the Official Languages Regulations are the three authorities that form the basis for official languages programs and policies in federal organizations. Every organization, including SSHRC, must ensure, within given parameters, respect for the rights of individual Canadians to receive services from, and to work in, federal organizations in the official language of their choice.

In addition, Section 41 of the Official Languages Act requires all federal organizations to adopt positive measures to enhance the vitality of the English and French linguistic minority communities in Canada, support and assist their development, and foster the full recognition and use of both English and French in Canadian society.

SSHRC's policy statement on Section 41 describes how these obligations will be met in the context of SSHRC's mandate, programs and other activities.

<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Official Languages Act</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>PART VII</u> <u>ADVANCEMENT OF ENGLISH AND FRENCH</u></p> <p>Government policy</p> <p>41. (1) The Government of Canada is committed to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">(a) enhancing the vitality of the English and French linguistic minority communities in Canada and supporting and assisting their development; and(b) fostering the full recognition and use of both English and French in Canadian society. <p>Duty of federal institutions</p> <p>(2) Every federal institution has the duty to ensure that positive measures are taken for the implementation of the commitments under subsection (1). For greater certainty, this implementation shall be carried out while respecting the jurisdiction and powers of the provinces.</p>

2.0 SSHRC's Mandate and Role

SSHRC is the federal agency that promotes and supports postsecondary-based research and training in the humanities and social sciences. Through its programs and policies, SSHRC enables the highest levels of research excellence in Canada, and facilitates knowledge-sharing and collaboration across research disciplines, postsecondary institutions, and all sectors of society.

SSHRC implements its mandate by awarding scholarships and research funding on the basis of open, transparent competitions that assess excellence and merit. In accordance with its mandate and its rigorous adjudication process, SSHRC funding is accessible to all humanities and social sciences scholars affiliated with eligible institutions. Adjudication committee

members are selected in a manner that ensures equitable representation of expertise, official languages, gender, regions, and institution size.

3.0 SSHRC Policy Statement (DRAFT)

“SSHRC, within the context of its activities and decisions, recognizes the value of Canada’s linguistic duality and the realities specific to official language minority communities (francophone communities outside of Quebec and anglophone communities in Quebec) and facilitates equitable access to its programs and services for these communities.”

4.0 Definitions

4.1 Official Language Minority Community (OLMC)

Given its mandate to support postsecondary research excellence, SSHRC’s policy refers to OLMC institutions and to researchers and students working in OLMC institutions, which include:

- Francophone or bilingual institutions outside of Québec; and
- Anglophone or bilingual institutions within Québec.

In cases where the OLMC institution exists within a larger majority-language institution, the OLMC component of the institution is considered to fall within this definition.

4.2 Positive Measure

SSHRC considers a positive measure to be an action taken, in accordance with its mandate, to produce positive results related to:

- Enhancing the vitality of the English and French linguistic minority communities in Canada and supporting and assisting their development; and
- Fostering the full recognition and use of both English and French in Canadian society.

4.3 Equitable Access

SSHRC defines equitable access as ensuring that both official language communities have access to its programs and its staff in the official language of their choice and that applications submitted in either official language are treated equitably.

4.4 Linguistic Duality

SSHRC defines linguistic duality as the full recognition and use of both official languages in Canadian society.

4.5 - Vitality and development of OLMCs

SSHRC defines enhancing the vitality and development of OLMCs as fostering research capacity in OLMC institutions and supporting the generation and mobilization of knowledge on social, cultural, and economic issues related to OLMCs.

5.0 Actions and Positive Measures to Support the Implementation of Section 41

5.1 General measures

SSHRC supports the implementation of Section 41 by:

- 5.1.1 Training all SSHRC staff on Section 41 commitments and obligations;
- 5.1.2 Providing briefings and orientation material on SSHRC's Section 41 commitments and obligations to adjudication committee members; and
- 5.1.3 Designating a senior management champion to provide advice and support on the implementation of the policy.

5.2 Equitable Access

In accordance with internationally recognized practices in the support of advanced research, SSHRC delivers its programs through a rigorous adjudication process designed to ensure the highest standards of excellence and impartiality.

Recognizing that external factors may affect the level of participation and outcomes of some researchers in its programs, SSHRC will make particular efforts to promote equitable access, to monitor outcomes of OLMCs and to continue identifying ways to better support this objective.

SSHRC promotes equitable access by:

- 5.2.1 Ensuring that its funding opportunities enable the participation of both official language communities;
- 5.2.2 Providing applicants with equitable access to the information and resources in the official language of their choice
- 5.2.3 Monitoring the participation OLMC institutions, researchers and students in its programs.

SSHRC will further:

Identify ways, in conjunction with key stakeholders, to better support the participation of OLMC institutions, researchers and students as a means for these communities to improve their outcomes.

5.3 Linguistic Duality

SSHRC recognizes the value of linguistic duality by:

- 5.3.1 Fostering full recognition and use of both official languages in its programs, adjudication committees, and in all of SSHRC's public activities;
- 5.3.2 Ensuring fair and equitable treatment of all applications in all disciplines and areas of SSH submitted in either official language, in particular through representation of both official language communities on its adjudication committees;
- 5.3.3 Supporting the best research, to generate insight and assist policy and decision-making on linguistic duality; and,
- 5.3.4 Specifically promoting research on issues related to linguistic duality in its communications activities conducted by researchers anywhere in Canada.

SSHRC will further:

- 5.3.5 Promote more broadly and more systematically SSHRC-funded research on linguistic duality on its website, in its newsletters, in its annual report, and in other communications and outreach activities;
- 5.3.6 Encourage award holders to disseminate research knowledge in both official languages; and,

5.3.7 Broadly disseminate an annual compendium of SSHRC-funded research on linguistic duality.

5.4 Vitality and development of OLMCs

SSHRC enhances the vitality and supports the development of OLMCs by:

- 5.4.1 Supporting the best research, to generate insight and assist policy and decision-making on OLMCs; and,
- 5.4.2 Ensuring that SSHRC's communication activities promote research on issues related to linguistic duality and OLMCs.

SSHRC will further:

- 5.4.3 Ensure that SSHRC communications material on its programming, initiatives, and activities specifically target OLMCs;
- 5.4.4 Develop and deliver information sessions to OLMCs on a rotating basis;
- 5.4.5 Highlight OLMC institutions and researchers in SSHRC public communications (research stories, newsletters, annual reports, media stories, and other materials); and
- 5.4.6 Strive for representation of researchers from OLMCs on its adjudication committees.

6.0 Application

This policy applies to the governing council, the staff, the peer review committees and institutions and organisations that provide services on behalf of SSHRC.

SSHRC ensures that in implementing organizational strategies and programs, the information available to the governing council, the staff, and the peer review committees allows them to factor in the needs and challenges of official language minority communities on the one hand, and Canada's goals with regard to linguistic duality on the other.

7.0 Monitoring the Policy

SSHRC reports on its activities and provides an update on the progress in implementing this policy in the achievement report it submits each year to Canadian Heritage.

SSHRC will review its policy statement on a three year cycle.