

ACTIVE OFFER OF SERVICE IN BOTH OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

The University of Ottawa has a unique mandate among Ontarian universities: to ensure the continuity of education in French and to train the qualified professionals who are essential to the vitality of Francophone communities.

Proud of its Francophone heritage, the University offers hundreds of programs in French and English to over 15,000 Francophone students on campus.

Given that the University of Ottawa operates in an official language minority setting, it is vital that all services on campus be available in French and that French take precedence over English.

Indeed, in 2022 the University updated its Regulation on Bilingualism to reaffirm its commitment to its Francophone mission. For these reasons, and to meet the obligations imposed on designated institutions specified in the *French Language Services Act* of Ontario, the University of Ottawa is keen to implement the new provincial regulation on active offer.

What is active offer of service?

Providing an active offer of service means showing your customers, before they even ask for it, that your services are available in both official languages and that they can feel comfortable asking for these services in either official language.

Why the active offer of service at the University of Ottawa?

Given the University's (1) Regulation on Bilingualism, (2) its designation as an organization offering public services under the *French Language Services Act* of Ontario, and (3) the Ontario government regulation on active service that took effect on April 1, 2023, the University of Ottawa and any third parties representing the University of Ottawa **are required** to anticipate all requests for services by providing an active offer in both official languages.

What's different about the active offer of service at the University of Ottawa?

At the University of Ottawa, French takes precedence over English in the active offer of service.

Two mandatory prerequisites for the active offer of service

- The **recruitment** of bilingual staff members: the University's [Employers and partners](#) website features a pool of several thousand bilingual students.
- **Training** employees on the active offer of service in both official languages, and what their obligations are in this matter.

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Three important features of an active offer of service

- **Signage** that clearly indicates that services are offered in both official languages
- Bilingual **greetings** with French having precedence
- **Continued** provision of service in the person's preferred language

When some of employees have poorer second-language skills

- As managers: **pair** staff members with poorer language skills with those whose language skills are better
- Employees: **identify**, if necessary, colleagues who speak both languages.

Examples of messages that convey an active offer of service

- “Français • English”
- “Bonjour • Hello”
- “Je parle français • I speak English”
- “Puis-je vous aider • May I help you”
- “Un instant s'il vous plaît • One moment please”
- Etc.

Risks related to failing to provide an active offer of service

Clients at the University of Ottawa have the right to be proactively greeted and served in their preferred language, and they have the right to lodge a complaint if this right is not respected.