

# International School of Ouagadougou

## Language Policy

### ISO Mission Statement

The International School of Ouagadougou strives to cultivate a student's intellect and character, in an English-speaking environment, by offering strong academic programs while promoting cultural understanding and community involvement.

### A. Philosophy, Purpose, and Definitions

At the International School of Ouagadougou it is recognized that language is the key and the foundation to all learning. It is transdisciplinary across the curriculum and is the medium of inquiry and communication. Language learning involves learning language, learning about language, and learning through language. It is a core belief that every teacher is a teacher of language and that all students are language learners.

Language does much more than promote cognitive growth; it is crucial for maintaining cultural identity and emotional stability. Therefore, ISO aims to foster in students the ability to think and express themselves with precision, clarity, confidence and imagination in at least bilingualism. Language development in more than one language enriches personal growth and is essential to the development of international mindedness.

As such, at ISO, it is understood that:

- Language is a primary means of communicating and learning in all subject areas
- The acquisition of language is a life-long process and a central component of intellectual and personal growth
- Language development is a shared responsibility
- Language must be taught in an integrated way
- Proficiency in one language is transferable to other languages, and language proficiency aids students in acquiring competencies in other curricular areas
- Language is an expression of culture and valued as an integral aspect of a student's identity
- Students improve the knowledge of their mother tongue through comparison and contrast with the target language
- Provide a wide range of digital multilingual resources to support the learning of multiple languages, including mother tongue languages (online resources)
- Parents are viewed as essential partners in the success of language learners including mother tongue
- Language learning promotes international mindedness and multicultural awareness
- Support is provided for students to be successful in language acquisition
- Students are encouraged to take action and extend their language learning in ways that help their community.

### Purpose of the language policy

This policy is intended to provide an overview of language learning at ISO. It is written in line with the principles and practices of the International Baccalaureate (IB). The policy outlines our school's linguistic and academic goals, and defines a language program, which is designed to help our students attain these goals through authentic contexts in a culturally rich and diverse environment.

Our policy is a statement of agreement, one to which the staff and the ISO community are asked to commit to so our school can achieve its mission.

## Definitions

**Language of Instruction:** is the language in which most of the curriculum is taught, which in this case is English.

**Additional Language Study:** refers to the language that the school offers in addition to the language of instruction, which in this case is French.

**Mother Tongue:** refers to the native language of an individual. Whilst this generally describes the language most frequently spoken at home, there may be occasions where more than one language is used comfortably and interchangeably within home and community settings.

## B. Language Profile

Students have a shared total of 30 countries of birth; the statistically largest groups being USA 26% followed by Burkina 18.7%, Canada 9.3%, France 6%, Lebanon 4.2% and Denmark 2.8%. This shows that over one third of our student population has English as their mother tongue and the majority of our students speak English as an additional language.

All of our administrative and teaching staff speak English and the majority can communicate in at least one other language. English is the school's primary language of instruction.

English is the school's language of instruction and the primary language of communication. It is also the school's working language, and is used for governance, administration and management, collaborative planning, instruction, enrichment, and on its website.

French is used to scaffold student's understanding towards the target language is also a language of communication outside the classroom. All students are required to study French from Grades K to 12, with the provision that in the Primary School, the student has reached a competent level of English first.

English and French are used in school newsletters, magazine, on signage, in communication between school and parents, and between members of staff.

## C. ISO language overview

	<b>English</b>	<b>French</b>
<b>Elementary school K-5</b>	Language A  Language B (ESOL) <i>Starting from G2</i>	Language A (Francophone class)  Language B (A1 to A2 class <sup>3</sup> )
<b>Middle school 6-8</b>	Language A (ELA class)  Language B (Immersion class <sup>1</sup> + ESOL class <sup>2</sup> )	Language A (Francophone class)  Language B (A1 to A2 class)

<b>High school 9-10</b>	Language A (ELA class)	Language A (Francophone class)
	Language B (ESOL class)	Language B (A1 to B1 class)
<b>High school 11-12</b>	English A Language and Literature HL - SL	French A Language and Literature HL /SL
		French B HL - SL **
		French ab initio (online through Pamoja)

**Immersion class<sup>1</sup>:** it is a partial-immersion class for students who come to ISO with little or no knowledge of Basic English. This program is designed to help them develop enough confidence to communicate and express their basic needs in English at school. The main goal is to improve language proficiency in everyday situations, or those aspects of language proficiency that emerge and become distinctive with formal schooling. Students use the English language to comprehend oral and written text and to learn new vocabulary and concepts.

This class runs for two consecutive quarters even though the students have the possibility to test-out at the end of the first one. After two quarters, students will automatically join mainstream grade-level classes and concurrently attend ESOL class which will inherently support achievement in the regular curriculum.

**ESOL class<sup>2</sup>:** it's a course for students whose native language is other than English, who have already acquired Basic English skills but still need to improve their proficiency in English. This course is focusing on the topics and concepts that will enable students to participate successfully in their content area classes. It is designed to help students to improve their listening, speaking, pronunciation and writing skills and to learn correct English grammar. It will also help students to improve their vocabulary knowledge and literacy skills.

The ESOL classes are scheduled at the same time as the French classes. Push-in or pull-out ESOL support is not provided for mainstream classes. ESOL students' progress will be monitored through formative and summative assessments and at the end of the semester, the ones who are ready to test out of ESOL will take the the WIDA Model summative test (online for Grades 6-10 and hard copies for Grades 2-5). The result of this test will determine if the student needs to continue the ESOL class or not.

**French class<sup>3</sup>:** Students are not grouped by Grade level but by section and level of competences in order to have a reasonable number of students in each class and more homogeneity. At ISO, there are 4 sections: Grade K-2, Grade 3-5, MS and HS. The level of competences are based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, often referred to as CEFR or CEFRL. It is an international standard for working out people's ability within a language. It was established by the Council of Europe and aims to validate language ability. The six levels within the CEFR are A1, A2, B1, B2, C1 and C2.

\*\* In 2017, in partnership with the French Institute of Ouagadougou, the school has introduced the DELF examinations. The DELF is a diploma awarded by the French Ministry of Education to prove the French-language skills of non-French candidates. There are six independent diplomas, which correspond, respectively, to the six levels of the CEFRL.

In 2019, almost all the students from Grade 3 to 12 will take the DELF Prim (A1.1 to A2) or the DELF Junior (A1 to B2).

The score of the Grade 10 students will determine their possible language pathway\*\*\* for French in the IB Diploma program. The final placement will be decided in consultation with the student, parents, French teachers involved, the Head of MFL, the IB Coordinator and the US Principal.

<b>Grade 10 score</b>	<b>Less than 60</b>	<b>Between 60 and 80</b>	<b>More than 80</b>
<b>DELFL Junior B2</b>	French A SL French B HL	French A SL or HL French B HL	French A SL or HL
<b>DELFL Junior B1</b>	French B SL	French B SL or HL	French B HL
<b>DELFL Junior A2</b>	Ab initio	French B SL	French B SL
<b>DELFL Junior A1</b>	Ab initio	Ab initio	Ab initio

\*\*\* Based on the following document: Benchmarking selected International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme language courses to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (December 2016)

## Admission Policies

### For English courses:

Applicants complete a student background survey that indicates their proficiency in their mother tongue, English and other languages. Any application for students will be reviewed by the ES Principal or the US Principal as part of the admissions policy. Once a student is admitted to the school, Admissions\* will notify the Head of the MFL Department of all new applicants who have indicated that English is not their mother tongue.

The ESOL teachers will have the opportunity to assess those students on the four skills (Listening, Reading, Speaking and Writing) using the WIDA Model screener test (online for Grades 6-10 and hard copies for Grades 2-5), before placement in the ESOL or the mainstream program. In Grades 6-8, students may be offered a place in the Immersion program if their level of English is extremely low. In Grades 11-12, admission will be denied to students with an extremely low level of English.

\*Admissions letters for new students will indicate ESOL testing will commence and be complete by September. The Head of the MFL Department will inform parents in writing that ESOL testing has been completed and particular students have been placed in ESOL for the current school year and that this requires an additional fee. Business office will send an invoice for the additional ESOL fee to families.

<b>Overall score at the WIDA Model screener test</b>	<b>Class or Program suggested for Grades 2-5</b>	<b>Class or Program suggested for Grades 6-8</b>	<b>Class or Program suggested for Grades 9-10</b>
<b>Proficiency score under 2.5 out of 6</b>	ESOL	Immersion	Application rejected or postponed <sup>4</sup>
<b>Proficiency score between 2.5 and 5 out of 6</b>	ESOL	ESOL	ESOL
<b>Proficiency score above 5 out of 6</b>	Mainstream	Mainstream	Mainstream

Application rejected or postponed <sup>4</sup>: ISO strongly encourages HS applicants with very limited English to take a language course and reach proficiency of Basic English before applying again.

## **For French courses:**

### **I. Placing students at the beginning of a new academic year:**

#### ***For returning students:***

The student will naturally move up to the next level unless his/her previous teacher thinks that it would be in his/her best interest to repeat the level\* (based on assessments, work samples, final grade at the end of the year).

\* The decision must be made at the end of the previous year with teachers involved and Head of Department as a team, the ES or US principal should be informed and then the parents.

#### ***For new students:***

During the first lesson the new student will take a placement test\* conducted by the Head of Department. The results will be archived in the student's file; the relevant principal and the parents will be informed and then he/she will join the recommended class/level. After a one week observation, the teacher will decide if the student will stay in his/her class or needs to be moved to a higher or lower level\*\*.

\* On a hard copy + a short interview for Elementary students and online + a short interview for Upper school students.

\*\* The decision must be made with teachers involved and the Head of Department as a team, the ES or US principal should be informed and then the parents.

### **II. Placing new students after the beginning of the year:**

The new student will take a placement test\* conducted by the Head of Department. The results will be archived in the student's file; the relevant principal and the parents will be informed and then he/she will join the recommended class/level. After a one week observation, the teacher will decide if the student will stay in his/her class or needs to be moved to a higher or lower level\*\*.

\* On a hard copy + a short interview for Elementary students and online + a short interview for Upper school students.

\*\* The decision must be made with teachers involved and the Head of Department as a team, the ES or US principal should be informed and then the parents.

### **III. Moving a student to a new level in French during the year:**

If a teacher observes outstanding performance from a student and strongly believes that the student should be moved to a higher level, the student will then take a level test\*\* (ideally at the end of the quarter).

However moving students at the end of quarter 3 should not be encouraged. Indeed, towards the end of the year, the benefits of moving a student for only one quarter might be minimal and could cause unnecessary stress for the student or disrupt the dynamic of the class.

\*\*Each French class will have a set of level tests ready to use at the beginning of the year for quarter 1, 2 and 3. The level tests cannot be used as a summative or formative assessment and a student cannot take a level test twice in the same quarter.

In case students, parents or teachers are questioning the results of this level test, then class assessments and work samples could be added to further refine the following decision process:

1. Class teacher will share the assessments and work samples collected over the term / quarter with the Head of Foreign Languages Department.
2. The decision to move the student must be made with teachers involved and Head of Department as a team, based on the assessments provided by the class teacher.
3. The ES or US principal should be informed.
4. Contact should be made with the parents only after the decision has been made involving the teachers, Head of Department and Principal.
5. The child will be moved only after parents are informed.

If a teacher observes poor performance from a student and strongly believes that the student would benefit from being moved to a lower level, the decision will be based on class assessments and work samples.

1. Class teacher will share the assessments and work samples collected over the term / quarter with the Head of Foreign Languages Department.
2. The decision to move the student must be made with teachers involved and Head of Department as a team, based on the assessments provided by the class teacher.
3. The ES or US principal should be informed.
4. Contact should be made with the parents only after the decision has been made involving the teachers, Head of Department and Principal.
5. The child will be moved only after parents are informed.

## D. Curriculum

### English Language and Literature

Promoting an in-depth study of language and literature, the International School of Ouagadougou offers a comprehensive upper school curriculum. Throughout the seven-year sequence in upper school, the study of language and literature is integrative and includes 21st-century learning standards (AERO ELA Standards). These standards include but are not limited to using, technology, building relationships with others, and sharing information, and synthesizing multiple streams of information simultaneously. The aim of the upper school is to develop sensitive readers, competent writers, persuasive speakers, and independent thinkers. The foundation for these literacy skills leads each student to a greater sense of how literature and language work in a global context.

The English department offers one core course per grade level. Instruction emphasizes essential skills such as reading, writing, speaking, listening, and critical thinking. Teachers differentiate to accommodate diverse learners. Assessment data is used to influence instruction and pinpoint selected areas for improvement. Students may choose elective courses if they wish to devote additional effort in enhancing oral and written communication skills.

### French Language and Literature and French Language Acquisition

#### **For Language B students:**

The French curriculum for Non-Francophone students is following a program based on the CEFR (Common European Framework for languages) and aligned with the AERO World Language standards.

For each level, a textbook has been chosen and the progression of the year is built around the linguistic and cultural contents of the textbook. Activities will be designed to develop students' proficiency in the 4 communicative skills (reading, listening, writing and speaking) through an action-oriented approach. Students will be viewed as 'social agents', i.e. members of society who have tasks (not exclusively language-related) to accomplish in a given set of circumstances, in a specific environment and within a particular field of action.

This approach will ensure that students learn the socio-linguistic contents and know how to use them rather than just memorizing them.

### **For Language A students:**

The French curriculum for Francophone students is following a program based on the CEFR (Common European Framework for languages) and aligned with the AERO standards for ELA (English Language and Arts).

In a Francophone class, we do not follow a textbook but the curriculum documentation includes textbook extracts, novels, authentic documents, etc.; the progression of the year is built around the socio-cultural contents that a student in a specific age-group needs to get familiar with. Activities will be designed to encourage students to understand and appreciate language, to use it confidently and competently for a variety of purposes, with diverse audiences and in a range of situations for communication, personal satisfaction and learning while developing an appreciation for literature.

The action-oriented approach will also prevail in the Francophone class to ensure that students learn the socio-linguistic contents and know how to use them rather than just memorizing them.

## **E. Assessment**

Definition of assessment can include events, tools, processes and decisions[1]. These 4 aspects are very important and fundamental to language classroom assessment. Therefore, assessment at ISO comprises a range of tools and strategies used to determine students' knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes towards language that align with the requirements of the program(s).

[1] Taylor and Nolen 2008

**Assessment events** support students when the events occur with enough frequency that the teacher knows whether instruction is successful and which student or group of students may need additional support.

**Assessment tools** support student learning when the tools give students clear ideas about what is important to learn and the criteria or expectations for good work, and when assessment matches with instruction

**Assessment processes** support students, in that students see teachers as allies to their education; feedback can help students focus and better understand requirements.

**Assessment decisions** support students when grades accurately reflect what students learn.

At ISO, assessment is integral to teaching and learning and teachers use pre-assessment to determine what students already know, can do and understand. Formative assessment is used to check in and to give constructive feedback or praise on learning. Summative assessments are used to gather evidence about student's learning at the end of a unit. It is also an opportunity for students to discuss the unit question(s) using what they have learned.

Various forms of both formative and summative assessment may be used. Along with teacher assessment, students are often asked to peer or self-assess as well.

Assessments are reported to parents in different ways. Students receive written report cards about their language learning. Parents are also invited to attend parent-teacher, and student-led conferences. Achievement of different learning outcomes are recorded and passed on throughout their schooling at ISO to facilitate each student's learning.

At the beginning of tasks, specific rubrics and criteria are shared with the students so that learning goals are clear.

Students may be referred for further assessment within the school to enable teachers to gain as much information as possible about a student's strengths, interests and areas in need of developing and to monitor their progress.

In some circumstances, Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) are developed for individual students depending on their individual learning needs. In the Upper School, this may include modified assessment criteria for the student. Any such cases will be discussed with the student, parents, teachers, the Head of the MFL Department and the US Principal.

## F. Assessment Specification in French Courses

The action-oriented approach will also be guiding the philosophy of the evaluation in the French class to ensure that students learn the socio-linguistic contents and know how to use them rather than just memorizing them.

### Formative evaluation

Formative assessment takes place during learning and is aimed to help learning and teaching by giving appropriate feedback.

Formative assessment can help teachers to provide meaningful learning opportunities to every student by establishing specific and differentiated learning activities, giving attention to the students who need more help and challenging the students who are more advanced.

Informal assessment (also called classroom assessment) is an ongoing multi-phase process that is carried out on a daily basis through teacher-student interaction, it provides feedback for immediate action, and it aims at modifying teaching activities in order to improve learning processes and results.

Formal assessment (quiz, test, homework, activity book) are systematically planned and designed to get information about students' achievement in predetermined times. Teachers should precisely define the abilities to be assessed and students should be assessed based on a criteria.

All assessments grades/results will be recorded in such a way that they can be produced at any time for discussions with students, parents, department members and principals.

### Summative evaluation:

Summative assessment summarizes what the students learnt during a course and it is usually done at the end of the quarter. This kind of assessment shows what objectives have been accomplished. It can take the form of a standard test, an individual presentation or an individual project. At the end of the year, students should have been exposed to all these forms of summative assessment.

In each quarter, even though students have been working on the 4 communicative skills, the summative assessment should focus on a minimum of 2 skills so that at the end of the year, each skill has been assessed twice.

In order to prepare the students to pass the DELF examinations (Diplôme d'Etudes en Langue Française) in May, the summative assessment at the end of semester 1 will take the form of a DELF mock examination.

Policy Development Team: X. Souvandy, K. Sambou, A. Yameogo, A. Sawadogo, J. Campaore (2018-19)

Contributors: V. Congo, C. Slattery, N. Frey, N. Weis-Sanfo (2018-19)

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