BRITISH COUNCIL

Language Assistants in Québec

2026-27 Programme

ELA in Québec: The Guide

August 2026

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How to use this guide

Section 1 provides an overview of Québec and key Québec information

Section 2 indicates key contacts for your assistantship and their roles

Section 3 provides details regarding the assistantship role and what this involves

Section 4 and 5 help you to prepare the essentials before you arrive in Québec

Section 5 to 9 cover all core aspects and documents you will need once you arrive in Québec

Section 10 is for you to consider at the end of your placement.

Each section includes a recap at the end to highlight the key actions. These are not exhaustive but highlight the main takeaways.

You can consult this at any point in the year. Some assistants prefer to read it all in one go or you can focus on the specific section that applies to you. We encourage you to read the sections in full and do additional research on any aspects that are relevant to your assistantship.

Please ensure you have read through this document and carried out research yourself before contacting the language assistants team with any questions.

Disclaimer: Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information contained in these notes. However, the British Council cannot accept responsibility for any errors which may exist or for any subsequent changes.

Date checked: 12/08/2026

Québec Overview

1 Spotlight on Québec

Did you know that the British Council Language Assistants Programme first began back in 1905 with English masters heading over to France? And in November 2020, we celebrated 40 years of the UK-Québec programme.

You are joining the next generation of this legacy strengthening educational and cultural links between the UK and Québec through the British Council and our partners Éducation Internationale.

By this point, you should have fair knowledge about Québec. Here are our key points to consider.

1.1 Emergency Contacts

1.1.1 Emergency services in Québec

In any emergency: call **911**

The principal UK Diplomatic post in Canada is The British High Commission in Ottawa.

1.1.2 British embassy and consulate

For up-to-date British Embassy and consulate contact details in Québec please refer to the GOV.UK Website. Please take note of the address of the British Embassy in Québec below in case of emergency or loss of your passport. Assistants who do not hold British citizenship should check with their own Consulates/Embassies in Québec.

Please take note of the address of the British Consulate-General in Québec in case of emergency:

British Consulate-General, 2000 McGill College Avenue, Suite 1940, Montreal,

Québec H3A 3H3. To contact them in an emergency fill in this form.

Other UK High Commissions or Consulates are also provided in **Calgary, Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver**.

1.2 Life in Québec

If you're keen to do some more research of Québec or your region, check out these sites:

General	News	Media
Complete Guide to Québec	La Presse Canadienne	Bonjour Quebec
Public Holidays Calendar	Le Journal de Quebec	Radio Canada
Rough Guide to Québec	Canadian Government Website	Voir
Canada Travel Blog Lonely	Québec Government Website	
Planet Québec.	BBC's Québec Profile	
Parks in Canada		

1.2.1 Personal safety and Travel

Your personal safety is of paramount importance while living overseas and we strongly advise that you spend some time looking at the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) website and check it regularly as there is a lot of useful and up-to-date information provided.

As mentioned in section 3.1 of this document, ensure you regularly check the Canada travel advice page (where you can sign up for email alerts) and are aware of these key sections:

- Safety and Security Page
- Natural Disasters
- Sexual Assault Support
- FCDO advice for women travelling abroad.
- Lost Passport recovery

You can find more details on travel in section 4.4

1.2.2 Winter

The long winter season in Québec is very cold by European standards (although it is a dry cold), and you are strongly advised to consider the kind of clothes you take with you. Some items (boots, coats) are best purchased in Québec as these will be designed to withstand local conditions; others (ski wear) can often be borrowed from friends and colleagues. On the other hand, most buildings are warm and well insulated, and you will also require light clothing for summer.

1.2.3 Assistantship

Married students should note that the allowance is intended to provide for one person only. However, if an assistant's spouse remains in the UK and is unemployed, he/she may be barred from income support or be required to refund whatever was received as such since the start of the assistantship. Enquiries should be made well in advance in order to prevent financial difficulties from arising during a married assistant's period of appointment.

1.3 Local laws and customs

As well as the information on the GOV.UK site for Canadian laws and customs, make sure you are aware of the following:

LGBTQ+

Lonely Planet guide for LGBT travellers

Secularism Laws

Bill 21 was passed by the National Assembly of Québec in June 2019 and is a secularism law stating that teachers in the public sector are not allowed to wear religious symbols at work and includes a general 'face uncovered' rule.

On October 30, 2025, Québec also adopted Bill 94, which reinforces laicity in the education network by amending the public and private education statutes. It broadens the symbols ban within the public system (applying it to school service centre personnel and certain third party service providers) and imposes face uncovered obligations that also reach private school contexts. This means that Language Assistants are now subject to these new laws when undertaking their role. Please note that this is beyond the control of EI or the British Council.

Tipping

N.B. A tip of 15% is expected in most restaurants and waiters in bars expect a small tip for each drink they bring you, even at the bar. Taxi drivers also expect a tip of about 15%. It is not necessary to tip at take-away counters and in fast food restaurants.

Laws

Co-operating partners abroad have requested that the attention of British visitors be drawn to the moderate to severe penalties imposed for the following:

- drinking alcohol in public places where it is not permitted
- drug offences which may result in heavy fines and prison sentences.
- for taking part in unlawful political demonstrations which may result in heavy fines and prison sentences.

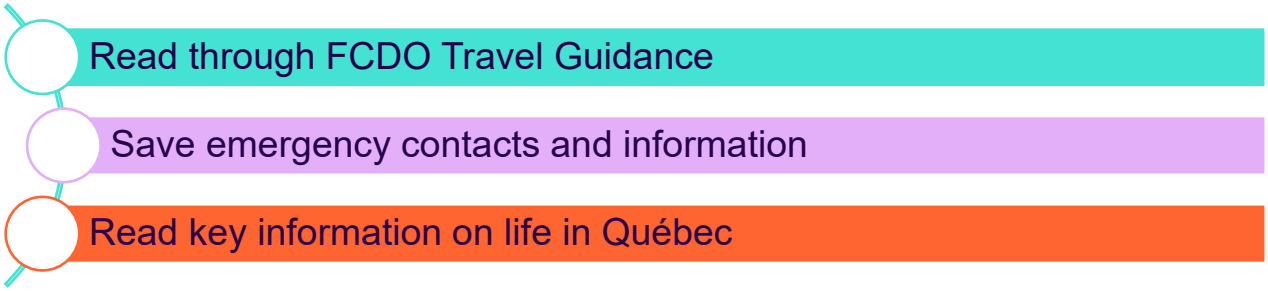
You are therefore strongly advised not to become involved in these activities.

Internet and Phone

- The country code for Canada is +1. To phone abroad from Canada to the UK the code is 011 44 followed by the UK number without the 0.
- There are many service providers in Québec and these can vary from region to region. Many of these companies often offer long-distance calling packages, so it is best to ask what local offers there are when you first sort out your phone.
- In Québec City and Montreal, you can buy a number of different phonecards – the most popular are Global and Vox – and you can make cheap calls to the UK with these. Previous assistants have also found Sprint Canada and Fizz to be worthwhile.

- With regards to mobile phones, you will only be able to use your UK mobile phone in Canada if it is a tri-band phone. Previous assistants have recommended the following pay as you go Canadian phone providers: Solo Mobile (available through Espace Bell stores) Fido, Telus and Koodo. You can order a sim online in the current climate.
- Be aware that calls to the UK from a mobile can be expensive. Previous assistants have recommended using Skype, WhatsApp and Facebook messenger as alternatives.

Section 1 Recap



Language Assistants Programme Overview

2 Key Contacts

2.1 UK British Council Language Assistants team

The Language Assistants programme has a dedicated team to provide support during the application and pre-departure process for each destination. Please note the British Council is not the employer of participants of the Language Assistants programme while abroad.

2.2 Partner Organisation: Éducation Internationale

Éducation Internationale administers the Language Assistants Programme in Québec. They liaise with the schools in Québec and allocate assistants to specific schools. They will contact you throughout the year regarding your placement and other opportunities. The programme team are active on socials and you can find them on Facebook and Youtube.

2.3 School

The school you are allocated to is your employer and any changes to your contract should be liaised with them.

2.4 Mentor Teacher

Your host school should identify a mentor teacher for you, usually in the English department. This mentor should provide pastoral care and support during your time in Québec. Your mentor teacher can become an integral part of your support network in Québec and you should invest time in building this relationship.

If a mentor teacher is not identified at the start of your placement, you should try asking for one and then contact Éducation Internationale for support as soon as you can.

Application, Allocation and Pre-Departure	**Sending Organisation: British Council** **Rachel Milne**, Consultant **Rand Abdoun-Machaal**, Assistant Consultant languageassistants.uk@britishcouncil.org Responsible for: application and pre-departure processes
Arrival and Asssistantship	**Partner Organisation: Éducation Internationale** **Renaud Brissonneau**, International Exchanges Advisor assistants@education-internationale.com Responsible for: Programme in Canada and liasing with educational authorities and schools
Assistantship in school	**Employer: School** Responsible for: Salary and HR **Support: Mentor Teacher** Responsible for: In-school support and first contact

Section 2 Recap

- Understand role of the British Council, Éducation Internationale and the School
- Establish and connect with your mentor teacher

3 The English Language Assistant role

The role of a language assistant is a very important one and one that we hope you will enjoy. Please remember that you are a paid member of staff with the responsibilities and required professionalism that this entails. Please refer to our website for more information on your role as an English Language Assistant.

As a language assistant you are also an ambassador for the UK and its culture, influencing how those around you view the UK. You should endeavour to set a positive example and avoid any potential damage to the reputation of the programme and adversely affect the experience of future assistants.

Your first-hand experience of life in the UK is a key part of the cultural exchange and an excellent resource you should draw upon during your lessons.

3.1 Posting information

The British Council is involved in indicating assistants' preferences, but our partners carry out the school allocations. Once you receive information regarding your school, you should write immediately to your school(s) confirming acceptance of the post.

You should also ask them for some information about the school(s) that you will be working in. For example, it may be useful to know the age range of pupils, the average class size, the general level of ability, the social background of pupils, the facilities available and if you should bring any specific materials from home. It is also important to enquire about the dress code for teachers and any other general school information. We would also advise asking about their policies for staff regarding tattoos and piercings if you have them.

Schools in Québec close for the summer holidays at the end of June and re-open in the last week of August. Do not worry if you have written to your school and have not yet had a reply. You may still get a phone call. It is essential, however, that you reply to any letter you receive from Québec, be it from the Commission Scolaire or direct from the school.

3.2 Period of Appointment

The period of appointment for UK assistants in Québec will be **1st September 2026 – 31st May 2027**. Assistants are expected to work 18 contact hours per week, and a further 6 hours of preparation time can be incorporated into your timetable as decided by the Commission Scolaire (local education authority) or school. Those who have been appointed to more than one school will be asked to divide their time between the schools concerned. You can request information regarding how your timetable will be arranged from the head of the host school.

3.3 Holidays and Sick Leave

Assistants are entitled to the usual school holidays. The Québec Government's Education website has further details regarding the school calendar. You should not be absent on other

occasions without prior permission. Attending the induction course does not give assistants the right to take leave at a later date.

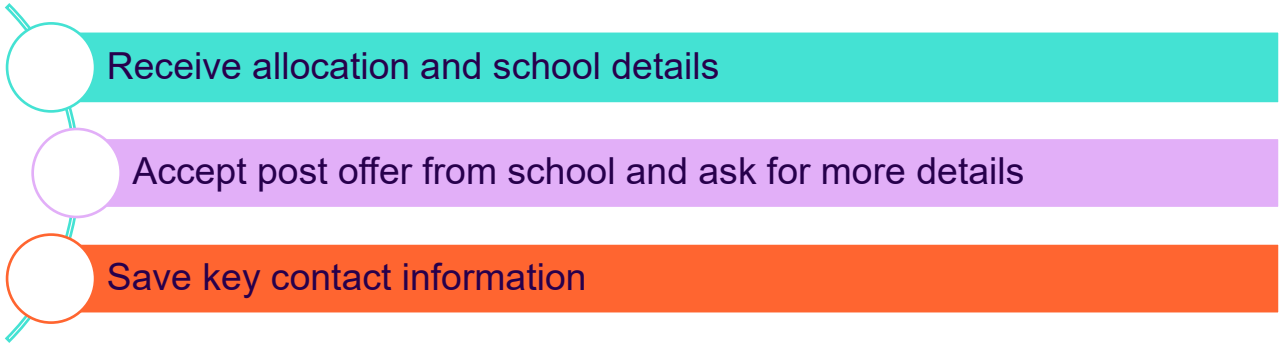
Please see section 7.3 for more on absence from school.

Requests for leave of absence for any other reason should be made in advance to the Head of the school(s) who is within their right to refuse it. You are reminded that if you are absent from school without prior authorisation your allowance will be discontinued from the first day of your absence.

3.4 School allocation

The maximum number of schools to which you can be appointed is three. Please contact us if you have been appointed to more than three schools. If the different schools are several miles apart and you have to travel between two on the same day, you are entitled to ask for help towards travel expenses. Under no circumstances should an assistant be required to buy a car just to get to their schools. After contacting your school, if you establish that there is no regular public transport which serves your school(s), and there are no lifts available to your school(s) please inform us of the situation. Please do not contact us without contacting your school first.

Section 3 Recap



Preparation before you go

4 Read before you go

4.1 Costs to prepare

You should prepare for the following costs:

- Administrative costs:
  - Medical for the work permit upwards of £250
  - £103 ICPC
- Travel costs
- Accommodation costs
- Insurance costs
- £1,500 - £2,000 to cover your first month's expenses. This amount may differ depending on your location and how much rent you are required to pay in advance.
  - Take $CAN 350-500 of this in ready cash.

4.2 Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) advice

During a crisis, official advice for British nationals will be published on the travel advice website and regularly updated. For your safety and to stay well-informed, we **strongly recommend** you subscribe to receive FCDO email updates for Canada so that you are immediately notified of any important changes to the FCDO's advice.

As international issues and subsequent advice can change often and rapidly, you must take responsibility for your own health and safety by staying informed of any changes to such advice. When responding to an immediate in-country danger or threat to your health and safety, you should always prioritise your own health and safety and make decisions in the best interest for your personal circumstances – do not wait for advice from the British Council.

The FCDO have published a comprehensive guide for Living in Canada. The guide sets out essential information for British nationals residing in Québec, including advice on health, education, residence requirements and more. We recommend you read this guide thoroughly.

You can also contact the British embassy for advice in event of an emergency.

4.3 Passports and Work Permit

Assistants must be in possession of a standard 10-year passport before leaving the UK and are advised to ensure that it will not need to be renewed until 6 months after the end of the assistantship.

Those who are not in possession of a passport, or need a new one, should complete the application procedure as soon as possible either through a regional Passport Office or online.

You will be applying for a work permit which involves a medical exam, online application, supporting documents and giving your biometrics when handing in your application. **It is essential that you have this before you leave the UK, otherwise entry into Canada may be refused.** This process requires your own investment of time and money. The British Council UK team will provide step-by-step guidance on this process when the time comes to apply.

Assistants are expected to cover the costs of this, which can include upwards of £250 for the medical exam and costs of travelling to visa appointments.

Assistants are advised to take 2 or 3 physical copies of the documents in section 9. Remember to store the originals separately in a safe and secure place. You should also take note of the number to call if you need to cancel a credit or debit card whilst abroad.

4.4 Travel to and around Québec

You are responsible for the upfront cost of your own travel and any travel to and from your place of appointment during the year.

The British Council strongly advises against booking your travel until you have received your work permit and are certain that you will be able to travel on your chosen date. In some instances, you may be able to pay the airline a small fee for flexible dates if you wish to book further in advance. The British Council is not responsible for arranging your travel.

Past assistants have advised that you check the baggage allowance for both outbound and return journeys when travelling by plane.

The most widely used travel sites in Québec are:

Flights	In Quebec
• Canadian Affair • Air Transat • British Airways • Air Canada • Skyscanner	• VIA Rail Canada • Expedia • Budget Travel • Orbitz • Travelocity • WestJet

Former Assistant recommendations:

- Many assistants in the past have used the 'organised lift' company, called Amigo Express.
- There is also a Route Verte cycle network for those who are keen cyclists.

4.4.1 Taking a car abroad

Please note that in Canada you have to be at least 21 years old to hire a car in your name; some car-hire companies even have a minimum age of 25. An assistant who is less than 21 can sometimes be nominated co-driver on a car-hire contract (since the minimum legal age to drive is 18) but this, too, varies from one company to another.

For detailed information on road conditions throughout Canada, please see the Transport Canada website or the Canadian Automobile Association site both of which provide tips for travelling safely on Canadian roads. Canadians drive on the right-hand side of the road.

4.5 Comprehensive Insurance

Please see section 5.1 for more information regarding a comprehensive policy for the first 90 days of your stay.

The British Council is unable to advise on insurance packages; you are recommended to consult professional advice, or to check whether you are covered by any existing family policy. Booking insurance should be carried out before any travel.

Undergraduate assistants should consult with their university to check what cover is provided for. It is important to check the small print of your policy.

Personal Accident Travel insurance is recommended to cover medical expenses, air ambulance, repatriation, personal accident & civil liability, luggage & valuable items, and cancellation in extreme cases.

Personal Accident Travel policies are readily available on price comparison websites, or by using a search engine to search for 'travel insurance'. The UK Foreign & Commonwealth website offers additional advice on taking out Travel Insurance.

4.6 Graduates with student loans

If you have a student loan, you will need to let student finance know that you are going to Québec. Complete an Overseas Income Assessment Form to enable the Student Loans Company to calculate how much you need to repay.

You will be required to provide evidence of income or means of support. They will then send you a repayment schedule showing how much you need to pay each month. Your monthly payments will be based upon the earnings threshold for your destination Québec. The British Council UK team are not able to advise on student loans matters. For all questions relating to student loans please contact Student Finance directly.

4.7 Benefits and Universal Credit

If you are in receipt of government support in the UK, you must inform the authorities that you are moving to work abroad. Tell your local Jobcentre Plus or the office that pays your benefit if you're going abroad. If it's a temporary move, tell them when you're coming back. You must also tell HMRC if you're leaving the UK.

Section 4 Recap



5 Health and wellbeing

5.1 Before you go

Planning

At least 8 weeks before your trip, check the latest Québec-specific health advice from the National Travel Health Network and Centre (NaTHNaC) on the TravelHealthPro website. Each Québec-specific page has information on vaccine recommendations, any current health risks or outbreaks, and factsheets with information on staying healthy abroad. Guidance is also available from NHS (Scotland) on the FitForTravel website.

General information on travel vaccinations and a travel health checklist is available on the NHS website. You may then wish to contact your health adviser or pharmacy for advice on other preventive measures and managing any pre-existing medical conditions while you're abroad.

Make sure you have comprehensive travel and medical insurance covering healthcare and medical evacuation and repatriation for the duration of your stay.

Medication

The legal status and regulation of some medicines prescribed or purchased in the UK can be different in Québec. If you're travelling with prescription or over-the-counter medicine, read this guidance from NaTHNaC on best practice when travelling with medicines. For further information on the legal status of a specific medicine, you'll need to contact the embassy, high commission or consulate of the Québec or territory you're travelling to.

If you're on prescription medication, make sure you either bring enough with you or have access to a supply once in Québec. Certain medicines may not be available in Québec (including major brands readily available in the UK), and you may be prohibited from bringing some medicines into Québec. For more information and advice, check with your GP and the Embassy of Québec before travelling.

5.2 Insurance

The Québec National Insurance Plan (RAMQ or Régie de l'assurance maladie du Québec) covers assistants for most medical expenses. However, due to government legislation, all non- residents applying for a RAMQ card will not be covered for the first 90 days (i.e. from the date on which you apply for your health card). Full details and application forms will be provided when you are in Québec.

You are strongly advised to take out a comprehensive policy for at least the first 90 days before the issue of your RAMQ card (Carte Soleil). The card is free as a condition of the programme however there is a small administrative fee for the pictures (around $CAD 12). In the rest of Canada outside of Quebec or outside of Canada (US), treatment will generally be covered up to the cost of the same treatment in Québec. When spending time outside Québec, it's a good idea to take out private insurance before leaving. Generally speaking, RAMQ does not reimburse the full cost of healthcare services received outside Québec and certain services are not covered by the Health Insurance Plan at all. Beware: outside Québec medical expenses, even for minor complaints, can be very high.

In Québec

Once in Québec

Please see the FCDO website for more information regarding healthcare in Canada.

If you require urgent medical attention in Québec dial **911**.

Medication

If your medicine is available from suppliers in Québec, doctors may first want to conduct their own diagnosis before repeating a prescription issued elsewhere. It is also important to find out where your nearest doctor, dentist and hospital are as soon as you arrive. You should ask your school for information about the facilities in your area and advise staff and your landlord of any medical conditions. Assistants should note that the policy provided by the Québecois authorities does not cover prescriptions (these can be very expensive), routine dental and ophthalmic treatment, or ambulance transportation. You may therefore wish to consider private insurance against these eventualities.

5.3 Mental health

Although working abroad can be enjoyable, it can also be challenging. Lack of familiar support systems disrupted daily routines, language barriers, culture shock and unexpected situations can intensify stress levels rather than alleviate them.

It is important to remember that culture shock affects everyone. There is no shame in admitting that you are having a difficult time. Québec is a very culturally distinct place. If you do feel homesick or frustrated, please talk to your fellow assistants on the programme as they will understand how you are feeling better than anyone else. Also, be sure to keep up to date with your family and friends back home.

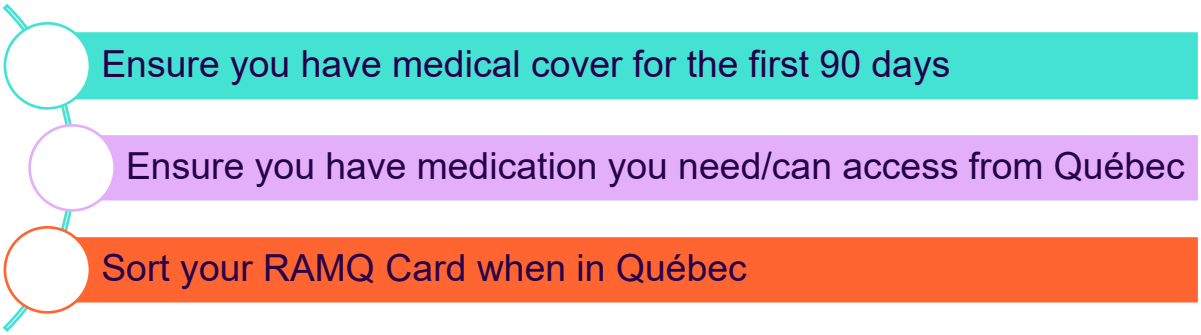
Your mental health is just as important as your physical health. It is advised to read this information even if you are not currently suffering from mental health problems.

The Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office provides information about mental health and travel via the following link:

- Mental Health and Wellbeing Abroad

The NHS website lists a couple of helplines that can offer expert advice to people with different mental health needs.

Section 5 Recap



6 Outside of school: Arrival and settling in

6.1 Arriving at the airport

Your visa will be processed on arrival at the airport. This can take some time if there is a long queue. Please be prepared by taking some snacks and a drink with you as it has taken some assistants several hours in the past. Make sure you take paper copies of all of your essential documents.

Some airports have a kiosk where you can apply for your NAS (social security number). You will need this later on to apply for your RAMQ (health insurance). If you are able to apply for this at a kiosk before leaving the airport, we would encourage you to make use of this. If a kiosk is not available, do not worry, you can still apply for your NAS later with Service Canada.

Accommodation

6.2.1 General Advice

The Commission Scolaire and/or the schools will help assistants find somewhere suitable to live: either in a studio, with a family or sharing a flat. Obviously, the remoter the area, the more limited the choice of accommodation, but it is worth taking your time to find something suitable. Do not feel pressured into taking the first thing you see.

When renting accommodation, you should not be asked for a deposit as this is **illegal** in Québec. Renters' rights are protected by the Régie du logement. When you leave your accommodation, remember to cancel any personal contracts e.g. internet or utilities.

6.2.2 Before Signing an Agreement

- Get any agreements in writing, and obtain receipts for any transaction, keeping them secure.
- Confirm your period of notice you must give to move out
- Enquire about the possibility of including a ‘diplomatic clause’ in the rental agreement to allow for a shorter notice period in case of early termination of your placement.

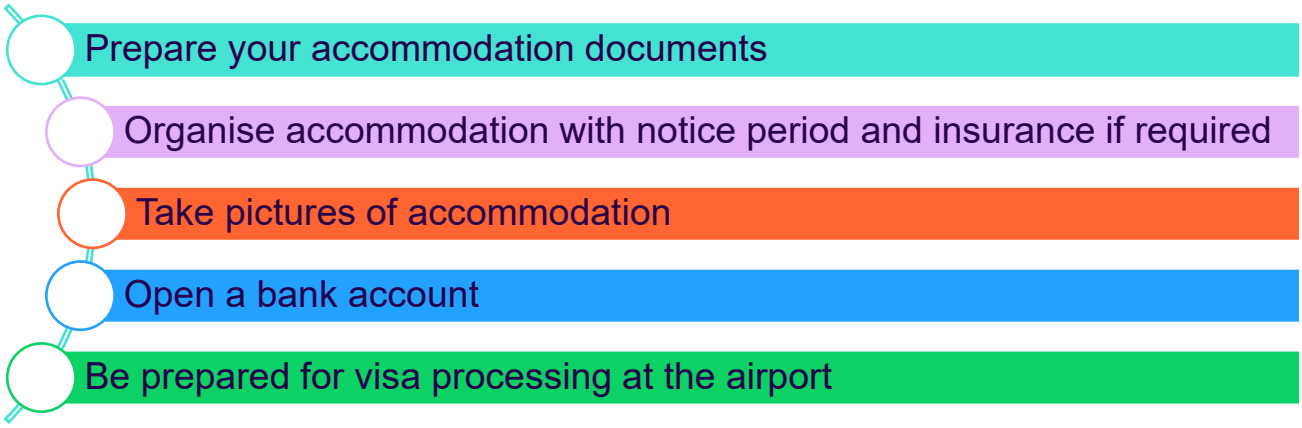
- Take photos capturing the condition of your room and the flat before moving in
- Check health and safety issues (temporary and long term) such as fire alarms and exits, gas leaks, electrics, water etc

When you have found somewhere to live, even if it has been arranged for you, do not sign any agreement you are not comfortable with and make sure that there is a period of notice written in the contract to avoid problems, should you decide to change your accommodation during the year.

6.3 Bank accounts

It is advisable to open a bank account once you arrive in Québec, and your mentor teacher can help you do this. This will allow you to research local options, seek recommendations and choose what will be most convenient for the rest of the year.

Section 6 Recap



7 In school: arrival, settling in and support

7.1 Induction

You may have received information from EI about arriving in Québec and the induction days. Please familiarise yourself with any information provided by EI and keep it for reference amongst your papers.

7.2 Observation Period

When you arrive at your school(s) you should ask for a period of observation of 1-2 weeks. It may not be offered to you automatically. Observation will allow you to familiarise yourself with the school environment, to experience the classroom, get to know the names, faces and personalities of your pupils and gauge their level of English. Try to note the following:

- How the teacher starts and ends the lesson
- How the teacher speaks to pupils
- How the teacher involves all pupils, including shy ones, in the class activity
- What the teacher's attitude is to pupil errors and error correction
- How the teacher controls disruptive behaviour, lateness and lack of effort

This can also be a valuable opportunity to discuss with your mentor teacher about the following:

- How you are finding your experience and settling in

- If you have any additional requirements which may facilitate your placement.

7.2.1 Settling into school life

You can hear tips from former assistants in our settling in podcast.

Starting any new job can be a daunting experience, no matter how confident a person you are.

It's completely normal to be unsure of where to go, what to do or who to talk to at the beginning. Remember – it is not good practice to correct another teacher in front of students.

Apart from your work in the classroom, you may be able to attend other classes in subjects which interest you. You will find that you become much more integrated into school life and gain considerably more from your stay if you become involved in activities organised by the school, such as sports days, theatre or music productions or modern language societies. Go to school 'open days' or parent evenings as these are also a good way of meeting people.

Assistants who are proactive and take the initiative often settle into school life much faster. Being a self-starter is a great way to make a strong first impression. Teachers are often very busy and will certainly appreciate your efforts to help and try to make an impact.

7.3 Absence from school

Please remember that you are a member of staff and must therefore adhere to the holiday dates set by the school. If you cannot work because of illness you should inform your school(s) and local education authority immediately by telephone. You may be asked to provide a letter from a doctor. This should cover the entire duration of the absence and must be sent to the school and, if applicable, local authority, as soon as it is issued.

The school(s) must also be informed by telephone of any absence. Any prolonged absence on account of illness should be reported as soon as possible to Éducation Internationale (EI) and to the British Council.

If you wish to withdraw from the programme, you must give sufficient prior notice in writing of your intended departure to the school, EI and the British Council, setting out your reasons in full.

If you are an undergraduate, you must also inform your university/college in the UK. Withdrawing is also strongly discouraged, as it means that pupils are left without a language assistant, which can affect academic results and our relationship with our partners in Québec.

7.4 Social media

You should be very careful about how you use social networking sites while you are an assistant in Québec. Keep your profile private so that it can only be seen by people you intend to see it. If you invite other teachers to be 'friends', remember to remain professional in what you post and be careful what you say about your employer.

You should not exchange personal contact details with students, invite them to be 'friends' or accept similar invitations from them. Check with teachers about the school's internet policy, particularly regarding any online communication involving students either in or outside school. It is exceptionally important that you understand issues around child protection, both to protect the students and to protect you from any damaging and potentially serious accusations.

You are welcome to join a private Facebook or WhatsApp group to facilitate communication with other assistants in Québec. We will also be updating social media with further opportunities and items of interest throughout the year – follow @Languageasst on twitter. We also encourage you to keep in touch with us throughout the year with details of your activities – you can email **languageassistants.uk@britishcouncil.org,** or tag us on social media and we'll be sure to give you a like!

7.5 Support networks

Give yourself some time to adjust –in the beginning, you will have a lot of administrative matters to deal with. Former assistants have recommended that you don't spend all your free time with other programme participants, as you will not be able to integrate into your community and life in Québec. On the other hand, don't feel that you must cut yourself off from them – your programme peers can provide a very good support network for each other, as you understand each other's experiences.

Start at school

- Showing that you are enthusiastic and keen to get to know staff will go a long way. Start with a simple hello or ask how their weekend went. Remember, though, that you will be working in a school environment therefore staff may not have a lot of free time.
- Try introducing yourself to staff you may not directly work with, for example teachers in other departments, lunch time staff, receptionists, caretakers etc. If there are social occasions or team meetings try to make an effort to attend.
- If you hear about something happening which interests you, ask if you can become involved. Don't wait to be invited as people may assume that you're not interested.

Here are some other ways to meet people in the area:

- Enrol for an evening class, join a sports club, music group, choir
- Join or set up a language exchange
- Enquire about joining the local university and attending lectures
- Get involved in the local culture and join clubs that you couldn't join in the UK
- Volunteer for a charity, society, festival, etc.

7.6 Concerns and Queries: Who to contact?

Conditions in schools in Québec differ from those in the UK. We have come up with a who to contact guide to assist you with who to ask if you have a query or concern regarding your placement. Please consult this guide for help on who to contact if you have a query or an issue. The British Council has a zero-tolerance policy approach to discrimination of any kind. If a serious incident occurs and the who to contact sheet is not appropriate, please contact us.

Meeting regularly with your mentor gives the opportunity for them to feedback about your performance and for you to raise any concerns or issues. Do tell people if you have problems or if you need information as otherwise, they may assume everything is fine.

A lot of past assistants may tell you that their assistantship in Québec was the best year of their life. This can raise expectations and often leads to people feeling low, especially during the first few weeks until they settle in.

The assistantship year is a wonderful opportunity to absorb French language and Québecois culture and gain much in life experience and transferable skills. However, it is perfectly understandable that when abroad in a completely different environment there may be times when you feel homesick, have

trouble with pupils or colleagues, or with your living situation and so on.

Section 7 Recap



8 Money Matters

8.1 Bank Account

It is essential that you open a bank account soon after arriving in Québec in order to receive your payments.

We recommend waiting until you arrive in your town of appointment allowing you to research all the local options, seek recommendations and receive help from your school.

Things to consider:

- Assistants are usually entitled to open a current account which provides a cheque book and cash card; some banks may offer a ‘student account’
- Do not open a savings account as your school will not be able to pay your allowance into this
- There may be a possibility of opening an online bank account if this would be beneficial

8.2 Monthly Salary

The language assistant allowance is usually updated every year in September, so the following key info is liable to change.

Assistants posted to primary and secondary schools receive a gross sum of

$CAN 2,600 per month paid by bank transfer. The method of payment depends on the Commission Scolaire or the school in question, but you will have received the same amount at the end of the year as others on the programme.

Consider taking a Credit Card to cover initial costs and be aware that you are often charged for using your British debit card to withdraw money abroad.

8.3 Income Tax

Since the salary for assistants going to Québec has now increased to CAD $2,600, you should expect to be taxed on your income for the financial year. There will also be a small amount deducted from each pay for social contributions (pension plan and parental insurance plan).

You are most likely to have tax deducted from every payslip. As you are in Canada only part of the financial year, it could be the case that too much tax is deducted from your pay. If this is the case and you have paid too much, the government will calculate how much you will get back when declaring your taxes. This may vary from individual to individual as the government takes

into account all sources of income for that given financial year when calculating this.

Please note, the financial year in Canada runs from January to December. During February, your school should provide you with two tax sheets: **T-4** and **Relevé 1 (R1).** You must use these documents to declare your taxes before 30 April. In Canada, you are subject to both federal and provincial tax. The T-4 is for the federal tax and the R1 is for the tax in Québec.

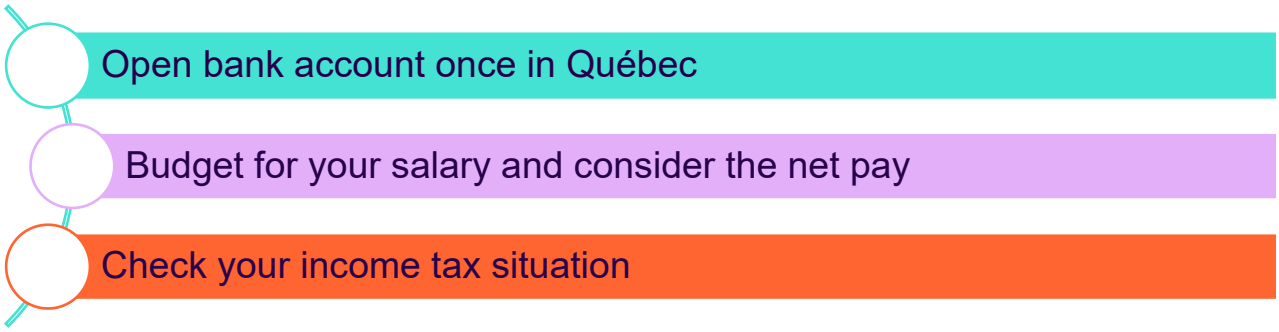
There are some organisations that provide free advice regarding declaring your taxes in both Canada and Québec.

For more information in general about federal and provincial tax in Canada, please consult the following webpages for Canada: Agence du revenu du Canada and for Québec: Revenu Québec.

N.B. You are reminded that the UK tax year runs from 6 April to 5 April and that income earned in the UK between April and the start of your assistantship may be taken into account when your own or your parents' tax liability is being assessed.

Enquiries regarding UK income tax should be addressed to a local Inspector of Taxes, not to the British Council. This is because we are not trained in tax and cannot give advice on how your personal circumstances will affect your tax. It is also for data protection reasons.

Section 8 Recap



9 Language learning and studies

9.1 For language learning

- BBC- Learn French: Offers a wealth of resources for learning French, including short guides, videos and the BBC World News service in Québec.
- Memrise: A sophisticated platform for language learning, with a large online community. App also available.
- Duolingo: A simplistic platform for language learning which is very easy to access. Bite-size lessons allow the user to practice for anywhere from 5 minutes a day. App also available.
- Anki: An online platform for learning, focusing on memory-recall. Packs for specific levels of French available.

10 End of your placement

10.1 Administrative matters

Bank: Make sure you do not close your Québec bank account until you have received any final payments you are due. You are advised to keep your account open for a month or so after the contract with your school has ended to ensure that all outstanding payments have been received. Please do check on the conditions for transactions relating to your account. For example, it might be that you can only close your account in the same branch in which you opened it.

Accommodation: Please make sure that you leave a good impression with your landlord – a future assistant may be depending on this:

- Leave a forwarding address with your landlord so that they can forward any mail on to you.
- When you leave your accommodation, remember to cancel any personal contracts,

e.g. internet or utilities.

- Discuss with your landlord what you need to do for them to terminate your rental agreement, as well as arranging the return of your belongings if you have already left.
- If you rent your flat through a property agency, they may want to carry out an inspection at the end of your stay; if possible, you should make sure that you are present during the inspection to avoid any potential disagreements at a later date. Alternatively, you may wish to take photos of your accommodation before leaving to document how it was left.

Reference: If you haven't already done so, please liaise with your host school to ask for a reference.

- This will be invaluable when it comes to an official record of your assistantship and for any future applications to be an ELA. This should ideally be on headed paper, stamped

and comment on your performance as an assistant.

- Please note that as the British Council is not the employer, we are unable to provide references for language assistants, only a certificate certifying participation upon request.

10.2 Staying a consecutive year

To stay for a consecutive year as a British Council language assistant in Québec, you must inform Renaud at Éducation Internationale by February 2027. More information about this will be communicated by Éducation Internationale later in the year. The work permit process for renewals can be time consuming, so it is recommended you begin this with sufficient time.

10.3 Ambassador

Ambassadors play an essential active part in promoting this opportunity. By representing a British Council programme, former assistants will be able to develop their creative, organisational and professional skills and network with the future generation of assistants. To have an opportunity to be involved with this, you must have filled out our end of year survey.

10.4 Getting into Teaching

If you want to take your assistantship to the next level, find out more from the links below of how to get into teaching and inspire future linguists:

- England: Get into Teaching
- Wales: Educators Wales
- Scotland: Teach In Scotland
- Northern Ireland: Getting into Teaching