

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN LANGUAGE POLICY

Preamble

The University of Cape Town views language as a resource and recognises the personal, social and educational value of multilingualism, as well as the importance of promoting scholarship in all official South African languages.

The language policy of the University takes as its starting point the need to prepare students to participate fully in a multilingual society, where multilingual proficiency and awareness are essential.

The Language Policy has several objectives.

The first objective is the development of multilingual awareness on the one hand, and multilingual proficiency on the other.

The second objective is to contribute to the national goals of developing all South African languages so that they may in the medium- to long-term be able to be used in instruction, and of promoting scholarship in all our languages.

While - given the location of the university in the Western Cape - English, isiXhosa and Afrikaans are all recognised by UCT as official languages, English is the primary medium of instruction and administration. However, although English is an international language, it is not the primary language for many of our students and staff. The third objective is, therefore, to ensure that our students acquire effective literacy in English, by which we understand the ability to communicate through the spoken and written word in a variety of contexts: academic, social, and professional.

Teaching and Examinations

English is both the primary medium of teaching and of examination except in language and literature departments where another language is taught and may be used. This applies at all levels, and to dissertations and theses for higher degrees.

All academic programme convenors and teachers are expected to explore and implement ways in which the objective of the promotion of multilingual awareness and proficiency can be achieved; and to contribute towards realising the national goals of developing all South African languages and their use, and to promoting scholarship in all our languages.

Administration

English is the primary language of internal governance and of administration. All English communication must be clear, concise and gender-sensitive. Where practical, communication will include at least the three official languages of the university: English, Afrikaans and isiXhosa.

The university management and all administrative heads of department are expected to explore and implement ways in which the aims of multilingual awareness and proficiency can be achieved; and to promote the use of the three official languages in their internal and external communication, wherever, practicable.

The UCT Language Plan

The University's Language Plan proposes strategies, guidelines and structures for implementation in relation to teaching African languages to staff and students, promoting scholarship in all South African languages, and facilitating proficiency in English and promoting multilingualism in the environment.

The Language Policy Sub-Committee

The Language Policy Sub-Committee is a Sub-Committee of the Senate Teaching & Learning Committee. Its purpose is to optimise all aspects of language development related to multilingualism at UCT, to consider annual and medium to longer term plans and policies in this area for approval by Senate (via the Teaching and Learning Committee), and to promote informed decisions about the shape, form and focus of programmes and activities designed to promote and achieve a multilingual environment at UCT. It is responsible for developing and monitoring overall policy on multilingualism for the university in the form of an institutional, Senate-approved Language Plan.

Approved by Council: 28 September 2013
