

---

# LANGUAGE POLICY

Document type: Policy  
Policy Category: Governance

Document number: R 31/16

---

## CONTENTS

|                               |   |
|-------------------------------|---|
| 1. Purpose .....              | 1 |
| 2. Organisational scope ..... | 1 |
| 3. Principles.....            | 1 |
| 4. Policy statement .....     | 2 |
| 5. Implementation rules.....  | 2 |
| 6. Document metadata .....    | 4 |

---

### 1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to determine language planning, management and practice at the University of Pretoria in a framework that promotes academic quality, equality and social cohesion, as well as to redress imbalances.

### 2. Organisational scope

This policy has University-wide application.

### 3. Principles

The University of Pretoria's language policy seeks to:

- 3.1 facilitate the provision of education of the highest quality to ensure post-university success for graduates and promote the University's local, regional and international standing through thriving scholarship;
- 3.2 promote inclusiveness and social cohesion, while guarding against exclusivity and marginalisation, and in this way contribute to creating an environment where all students and staff feel confident and comfortable and can enjoy a sense of belonging;



- 3.3 be transformative in attending to historical injustices and promote justice and equality;
- 3.4 facilitate an equitable learning environment that provides equal access to knowledge and resources;
- 3.5 recognise the intrinsic value of the diverse range of linguistic backgrounds that students and staff bring to the University;
- 3.6 promote multilingualism in all South African languages, with specific responsibility for the development of Sepedi to the highest level of scholarship; and
- 3.7 be sustainable and practicable within the context of the University's financial, staffing and infrastructural resources.

#### **4. Policy statement**

In support of the above considerations, the following policy is adopted:

- 4.1 English is the language of teaching and learning (in lectures, tutorials and assessments) except in cases where the object of study is a language other than English, and in programmes with profession-specific language outcomes, subject to approval by Senate;
- 4.2 The University must identify needs and provide the necessary financial and other resources to facilitate learning in the medium of English;
- 4.3 The University must provide spaces and resources for drawing on students' strongest languages (in particular Sepedi and Afrikaans, but where possible also other South African languages) to assist students in understanding key concepts in their modules;
- 4.4 English is the language of official communication and administration, on all campuses and in residences with services being provided in other South African languages where requested and feasible;
- 4.5 The University must adequately resource the development of Sepedi to a higher level of scientific discourse and must support the maintenance of Afrikaans as a language of scholarship;
- 4.6 The University must encourage and enable students and staff formally and informally to learn other South African languages;
- 4.7 The University must provide staff members with the necessary support and training to enable them to communicate in at least English;
- 4.8 The University must use at least Afrikaans, English and Sepedi for ceremonial purposes;
- 4.9 The University must provide learning support for language and visually impaired students and staff.

#### **5. Implementation rules**

##### Transitional measures

- 5.1 This policy applies from 1 January 2019.

- 5.2 Where the class size remains practically feasible and academically justifiable, existing students (2018 first-time enrolments and pre-2018 enrolments) will continue to receive their tuition (lectures and tutorials), study guides and assessment materials (tests, examinations, assignments and the like) in Afrikaans for the designated completion time of the programmes where these were available in Afrikaans when the student first enrolled for that programme.
- 5.3 Where this right currently exists, existing students (first-time 2018 enrolments and pre-2018 enrolments) will be allowed to answer any assessments in Afrikaans for the designated completion time of the programme.

#### Faculties

- 5.4 With reference to this language policy, all faculties must submit language plans to the Executive and to Senate detailing how the faculty aims to manage its affairs regarding the language of tuition and assessment with reference to the programmes and modules in the faculty. Faculty plans may include modules or programmes where the object of study is a language other than English, and any programmes with profession-specific language outcomes.
- 5.5 These plans are subject to approval by the Executive and Senate.
- 5.6 The University's budget and staff policy must enable a faculty to execute its approved language plan.
- 5.7 The relevant dean will be responsible for the execution of the approved language plan.

#### Communication

- 5.8 Notice must be given in official University publications of which programmes and modules will be presented in which language(s).
- 5.9 A faculty's language plan is made known to prospective students in publications. Should a faculty's language plan be amended, sufficient notice must be given to prospective students.

#### Assessments

- 5.10 Notwithstanding 4.1 above, students enrolled for professional qualifications may be required from time to time to complete a task in a particular language as part of their professional training.
- 5.11 Notwithstanding 4.1 above, undergraduate research essays and postgraduate dissertations and theses may be completed in any language, where reasonably practicable.

#### Disputes

- 5.12 Should a problem about the language of tuition occur between a lecturer and a student, the following persons, in this order, are responsible for addressing and attempting to solve it:

Head of Department

Dean

Member of the Executive designated by the Vice-Chancellor and Principal

Responsible member of the Executive

- 5.13 The member of the Executive designated by the Vice-Chancellor and Principal is responsible for overseeing the implementation of and all decisions relating to the University's language policy.
- 5.14 The member of the Executive designated by the Vice-Chancellor and Principal will report annually to Council on the implementation of the University's language policy.

**6. Document metadata**

|                              |  |
|------------------------------|--|
| Document number:             | <i>R31/16</i>  |
| Document version:            | <i>Final version (R31/16) approved by Council<br/>Replacing R 16 /10</i>   |
| Document approval authority: | <i>Council<br/>Approved by Senate on 20 June 2016 as<br/>S4631/16 (amended 17 June 2016)<br/>Approved by the Executive on 21 June 2016<br/>(Rt 266/16)<br/><br/>Implementation dates amended<br/>Council – 27 November 2017<br/>Senate – 28 September 2017</i> |
| Document approval date:      | <i>22 June 2016</i>  |
| Document owner:              | <i>Registrar</i>   |
| Document author(s):          |  |
| Visibility:                  |  |
| Display on staff intranet    | <i>√</i>   |
| Display on student intranet  | <i>√</i>   |
| Display on public web        | <i>√</i>   |