

FACULTY OF AGRISCIENCES
LANGUAGE IMPLEMENTATION PLAN: 2017
25 October 2016

1. Introduction

The Faculty of AgriSciences acknowledges the value of cultural, linguistic and other forms of diversity as an asset in pedagogical, research, administrative and social contexts in the Faculty and therefore supports the principle of multilingualism without exclusion. The Faculty further acknowledges the complex role of language and is committed to the Language Policy of the University in order to facilitate inclusivity through diversity.

There are facts specific to the Faculty of AgriSciences that is important in the context of the language policy that should also be considered as a guiding principle for decisions taken regarding the language implementation plan. The first fact is that this is nationally the only Faculty where AgriSciences is still separate and not merged into another faculty as at other Universities and many of the subject disciplines are only presented at Stellenbosch for students to get focussed tertiary training for those specific sectors of agriculture.

Secondly, the majority of the agricultural business sector is Afrikaans and as future employers of students there is a need for Afrikaans proficiency on the basics of the subject matter to enable the students to communicate in their workplace. The other aspect that is currently a reality is that most of the first year modules in AgriSciences are presented by the Faculty of Science which means that students will have the choice of being taught in either English or Afrikaans.

The Faculty's Language Implementation Plan is therefore based on the principle of ensuring that language does not form a barrier to access, thereby promoting optimal teaching and learning opportunities in the Faculty.

2. Aims

The Language Implementation Plan of the Faculty aims to:

- promote a welcoming and inclusive culture;
- access to the Faculty;
- respect for diversity among students and staff;
- excellence in teaching and learning, research and community interaction;
- student success; and,
- flexible solutions for any challenges of multilingualism.

3. Language of tuition and administration

Communication regarding teaching, learning and administration will be available in English and Afrikaans. The details of the implementation plan will be determined by pedagogical and administrative needs, including student needs and the linguistic abilities of staff.

3.1 *Language practice in tuition*

3.1.1 Undergraduate students

Undergraduate students can study in English and/or Afrikaans, with teaching staff providing access to learning material in either language. The language arrangements of a particular module will be published in the relevant module framework on SUNLearn. In the pedagogical space, the practical implementation of language will take the realities of the specific disciplines, student and lecturer language needs and proficiencies into account.

Option 1

Where it is reasonably practical in terms of the student numbers per module, the time table, venue availability and lecturer capacity, undergraduate lectures will be presented in parallel-medium. In this case, Paragraph 7.1.3 of the Language Policy of the University, which states the following, will apply.

7.1.3 For undergraduate modules where it is reasonably practicable and pedagogically sound to have more than one class group:

7.1.3.1 There are separate lectures in Afrikaans and English;

7.1.3.2 Learning opportunities, such as group work, assignments, tutorials and practicals involving students from both language groups are utilised to promote integration within programmes;

7.1.3.3 Students are supported in Afrikaans and English during a combination of appropriate, facilitated learning opportunities (e.g. consultations during office hours or scheduled tutorials and practicals).

To ensure integration between the two language groups, out-of-class learning opportunities (tutorials, practicals and through e-learning platforms) will be available in English and Afrikaans.

Option 2

Where parallel-medium offerings are not practicable, undergraduate lectures will be offered in English with additional support through, e.g. lecture notes, blended learning, interpreting services, and terminology lists. In this case, Paragraph 7.1.4 of the Language Policy of the University, which states the following, will apply.

7.1.4 For undergraduate modules where both Afrikaans and English are used in the same class group, the combination of facilitated learning opportunities is as follows:

7.1.4.1 During each lecture, all information is conveyed at least in English and summaries or emphasis on content are also given in Afrikaans. Questions in Afrikaans and English are, at the least, answered in the language of the question;

7.1.4.2 Students are supported in Afrikaans and English during a combination of appropriate, facilitated learning opportunities (e.g. consultations during office hours, or scheduled tutorials and practicals);

7.1.4.3 For first-year modules, SU makes simultaneous interpreting available during each lecture. During the second and subsequent years of study, simultaneous interpreting is made available by SU upon request by a faculty, if the needs of the students warrant the service and SU has the resources to provide it. If two weeks have passed with no students making use of the interpreting service, it may be discontinued.

To ensure access to course content, lecture material and activities in Afrikaans:

- Tutorials will be available in English or Afrikaans;
- Learning materials designed for use in lectures, tutorials and on e-learning platforms will be provided in English and Afrikaans;
- Additional support is provided for students who experience challenges with language and subject content;
- Assignments, test and examination papers will be made available in English and Afrikaans and students may use either English or Afrikaans in tests, examinations, assignments, reports, seminars, etc. Alternative marking arrangements will be put in place where lecturers are not proficient in Afrikaans.

Option 3

Given the unique context of the Faculty, the assigned lecturers are often only proficient to teach in either Afrikaans or English. Interpretation services as prescribed by the Language Policy of the University are provided during lectures; out-of-class learning opportunities are available in Afrikaans and English.

An electronic secret ballot system may be used to survey the students in a specific class group in terms of the use of a single language.

In this case, Paragraph 7.1.5 of the Language Policy of the University, which states the following, will apply.

7.1.5 In the following instances, lectures will be offered in one language only:

7.1.5.1 Where the nature of the subject matter of the module justifies doing so, for example where the module is on the language itself.

7.1.5.2 Where the assigned lecturer is proficient to teach only in Afrikaans or English. For these modules additional support is provided:

(a) If the lectures are in Afrikaans, SU makes simultaneous interpreting available in English. If the lectures of the first-year modules are in English, SU makes simultaneous interpreting available in Afrikaans; and during the second and subsequent years of study, simultaneous interpreting is made available by SU upon request by a faculty, if the needs of the students warrant the service and SU has the resources to provide it. If two weeks have passed with no students making use of the interpreting service, it may be discontinued;

(b) In addition to lectures, there are appropriate, facilitated learning opportunities (e.g. consultations during office hours, or routinely scheduled tutorials and practicals) in Afrikaans and English.

7.1.5.3 Where all the students in the class group have been invited to vote by means of a secret ballot and those students who have voted, agree unanimously to it, the module will be presented in Afrikaans only or English only, provided that the relevant lecturers and teaching assistants have the necessary language proficiency and agree to do so.

3.1.2 Postgraduate students

For postgraduate offerings, English is the language of instruction and communication. As suggested in the Language Policy, final year modules and postgraduate teaching and learning may take place in either language based on proficiency and as agreed upon.

3.2 *Language practice in administration*

For administrative purposes, communication is conducted in both English and Afrikaans. This means that:

- All administrative communication with undergraduate students is in both English and Afrikaans (e.g. correspondence from the Dean's Office and departments, information on websites, yearbook entries, promotional material), as contextually determined;
- English will be the official language used at postgraduate level;
- Correspondence with and from the Dean's Office, Faculty Committees and Faculty Committee Proceedings will be in either English and/or Afrikaans subject to the principle that all participants must have access to all information;
- Faculty Board meetings will be conducted in a flexible manner in English or Afrikaans with participation in English and Afrikaans.

4. Language feedback in the Faculty

Mechanisms for student feedback include specific questions on the practice and experience of the use of language in teaching modules as part of the student feedback system. The feedback will be available to lecturers, departmental chairpersons and the Dean.

Mechanisms for lecturer feedback include specific questions on the practice and experience of the use of language in teaching as part of the lecturer feedback form. Lecturers will be able to discuss and reflect on language of instruction with their departmental chairpersons.

Any concerns about language practice will be addressed in the following manner:

- Students are to report the matter to the Class Representative who will take it further with the lecturer/s;
- Should the expected outcome not be reached, the matter should be escalated to the Module Coordinator first, then to the Departmental Chair and finally to the Dean's Office.

Departmental Chairperson are to report:

- language matters to the Departmental Chairpersons' Forum with the Dean quarterly;
- within the framework of their annual departmental strategic plans to the Dean about best practices and challenges.

Lecturers may report on their experience of the Faculty's Language Implementation Plan during their annual performance appraisals.

5. Revision of the Faculty's Language Implementation Plan

The Faculty's Language Implementation Plan will be reviewed on an annual basis in conjunction with the Faculty's Strategic Plan.

During 2017 the following aspects of language implementation will be examined and expanded upon:

- Availability of administration function in isiXhosa;
- Development of glossaries in Afrikaans, English and isiXhosa;
- Podcasting of all lectures.

6. Detailed information per module

The language arrangements of a particular module will be published in the relevant module framework on SUNLearn. See the attached documents, Addendum A for the Faculty's specific language arrangement per module, and, Addendum B for application for funding 2017: language related matters.

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