Multilingualism policy

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Decision-making body: Board of Governors of the University of Luxembourg

This is a courtesy translation. Only the French version is considered binding.

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Preamble

As an international research university, the University of Luxembourg (UL) considers the multilingual and intercultural expertise of its members to be an essential characteristic of academic internationalisation and crucial for its graduates to ensure their local and global employability. To better situate and define multilingualism as lived by the members of the University community, the University has undertaken a process to define the expectations for multilingualism in our context.

Over the period January to March 2019, a working group established by the rector and led by then vice-rector Romain Martin, developed the key principles for a language policy across the following missions and areas: study programmes, internal and external communication; research; and staff language skills. Many of these basic principles, as proposed by the working group and revised by the rectorate, were presented and discussed by the Board of Governors, rectorate, director of administration and finance, deans and directors at the strategic retreat held on 13 September 2019.

The present document reflects the important work undertaken by these stakeholders and puts forward a common vision and path for active multilingualism at the University of Luxembourg.

Purpose

The present document outlines the principles, definitions, scope and application, and key areas comprising the University of Luxembourg's policy on multilingualism and defines how multilingualism is implemented in the University.

Principles

Reflecting the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg's multilingual environment, and rooted in several major European academic traditions, the UL recognises linguistic and cultural diversity as an important resource for learning, teaching, and research. Learning and using multiple languages is thus a hallmark of the University of Luxembourg and a reflection of the values of the country. The University promotes in particular the use of English, French, German and Luxembourgish. English is an important lingua franca in many academic disciplines worldwide, and French, German, and Luxembourgish are the three administrative languages of the Grand Duchy. Each of the four languages has a specific role in the University deriving from its position as academic, legal or national language, from the disciplinary research context, the character of a teaching programme or pragmatism in communication (see Annex I).

In the use of the different languages, the University aims to respect the following principles:

- Learning and using multiple languages is an added value to student and employee experience.
- Multilingualism must promote inclusion.

Definitions

Academic and research staff	The *personnel enseignant-chercheur* as defined in Title III, Chapter II « Le personnel enseignant-chercheur » of the Law of 27 June 2018 (modified) on the organisation of the University of Luxembourg.
Common European Framework of Reference for Languages	The Common European Framework (CEFR) provides a common basis for the elaboration of language syllabuses, curriculum guidelines, examinations, textbooks, etc. across Europe. It describes in a comprehensive way what language learners have to learn to do in order to use a language for communication and what knowledge and skills they have to develop so as to be able to act effectively. The description also covers the cultural context in which language is set. The Framework also defines levels of proficiency which allow learners' progress to be measured at each stage of learning and on a life-long basis. In particular, the CEFR describes foreign language proficiency at six levels: A1 and A2, B1 and B2, C1 and C2. It also defines three 'plus' levels (A2+, B1+, B2+). The full framework may be accessed here: https://www.coe.int/en/web/common-european-framework-reference-languages
Law of 27 June 2018 (as modified) on the organisation of the University of Luxembourg	The law that defines the University's mission and legal status, and lays out provisions regarding its governance bodies, constituent components, personnel, organisation of teaching and research, appeals procedures, relationships with the government, and its financing and financial management.
Lingua franca	A language that is adopted as a common language between speakers whose native languages are different.
Multilingualism	This University uses the three administrative languages of Luxembourg plus English. Multilingualism hereafter refers primarily to the use of these languages in research, teaching and administration.
Mandate	The mandates laid out in the University Law include: • Rector • Vice-rector • Secretary general to the Board of Governors • Dean • Director of Interdisciplinary Centre • Vice Dean • Deputy Director of Interdisciplinary Centre • Head of department • Study programme director

Scope and application

With the exception of academic recruitments for which this policy has immediate effect, the policy and any relevant modification to the internal regulations or study regulations shall enter into force in 2021 (academic year 2021/2022). The requirements apply to staff hired after that date; it shall have no retroactive effect on current staff or students.

The University commits to implementing the present policy. As such a budget envelope is foreseen as from 2021.

The policy will be reviewed every two years.

Policy areas

Learning and teaching

The Law of 27 June 2018 (modified) on the organisation of the University of Luxembourg states that "Teaching of Bachelor and Master degree programmes is multilingual, unless the study programme does not so permit" *[(6)"L'enseignement des programmes de formation menant aux grades de bachelor et de master est multilingue, sauf dans les cas où le programme d'études ne le permet pas." (Section 1, p. 18)]*. Multilingual teaching in the form of bi- or trilingual study programs is used to foster a deeper understanding of different academic cultures within a given discipline and to enrich learning outcomes. The University promotes multilingualism as a competence of its graduates. The definition of study programme instructional languages takes into account the requirements of the job market(s) most closely related to the given discipline.

Within a bilingual study programme, at least 20% of the ECTS credits must be acquired through courses given in each of the two languages in which the programme is taught. Within a multilingual study programme, at least 20% of the ECTS credits must be acquired through courses given in each of the languages in which the programme is taught.

In addition, study programmes, including those leading to a Doctoral degree, provide credits to students for language skills acquired, in the target languages of the programme but also other languages as part of free elective courses. A student may acquire up to three (3) ECTS credits per language if s/he demonstrates proficiency at level B2 under the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages – CEFR.

During University admissions, language levels should be documented by students in the following ways:
- Secondary/high school certificate from a school at which the UL teaching language was the teaching language or one of the teaching languages;
- University degree (Bachelor of Master level) certifying completion of a programme in which the UL teaching language was the teaching language;
- Internationally recognised test certificate dating from no more than a year ago, such as TOEFL, TOEIC or IELTS for English, DELF or DALF for French and GOETHE Zertifikat or TestDaF for German, in the teaching language(s) of the programme that corresponds at least to CEFR B2/B1 level (full list will be attached); or

- Secondary school diploma documenting at least 5 years of intensive language classes in the relevant language(s).

In case of doubt, the University Language Centre carries out a language entry test.

On University diplomas (Bachelor, Master, Doctorate), the name of the study programme that is indicated includes at least one of the administrative languages of the Grand-Duchy (name of the programme, discipline, grade). The main title of the programme should be in the primary language of course instruction and one of the administrative languages of Luxembourg. For multilingual programmes, the name should be indicated in all the languages of the programme.

Research

The University accepts the specific role of English as lingua franca in research in many disciplines, but also supports the other administrative languages (French, German, for some areas also Luxembourgish) as academic languages in research and education in doctoral programs. In publication repositories, researchers are actively encouraged to write short abstracts and add keywords of their publications in English, but also in at least one of the other languages. In order to increase a broader and non-academic audience, the University encourages researchers to also publish and disseminate expert information in the national languages beyond traditional research publication channels, e.g., through print, audiovisual and social media, as appropriate to the discipline.

Administration

Administrative documents: The primary administrative language of the University is the language of Luxembourgish law: French. As such, French is the administrative language for regulations and policies. English versions of documents will be provided as a courtesy; the French version will be the only legally-binding version. Minutes, decisions, and other records of the Board of Governors and other governing bodies will be provided at a minimum in French. Commercial or research contracts may be negotiated in French, German and/or English.

Meetings: The language in which the meeting is held will be agreed among the participants based on their most widely used common language.

Marketing and communication: The use of languages for communication is flexible and is adapted to the particular situation:

- Concerning the **names of faculties and departments**, the French version is the official legal version; English and German translations are available.
- Concerning **disciplines, buildings, and signs**, the UL opts for a flexible use of languages here, without mandatory translations.
- Website: On the University internet page, at least an English version of every page must exist. As required by content or target audience, pages are presented in other languages, reflecting the multilingual nature of the University.
- Media relations: The use of languages in media relations should remain flexible and depends on the targeted outlets and countries.

- Promotional material: All promotional material for study programmes shall be provided in the target languages of instruction.
- Internal communications: Internal communications must be provided at least in English. As required by content or target audience, communications may also be translated into other languages.

Staff: Frontline services of the administration must have sufficient internal staff competences within the team to address students and staff in four languages: French, German, English, and Luxembourgish. As the administrative language, knowledge of French is strongly encouraged. Thus, the composition of teams must take into account language skills of all of its members. For roles which do not directly interact with large populations of students and staff, position holders must speak at a minimum either French and English, or German and English. In the latter case, a passive understanding of French is appreciated. Depending on the specific tasks of the person to be hired, a higher requirement may be set. The University actively encourages learning additional languages of Luxembourg and makes resources available for this purpose.

Management

Management roles are those defined in modified Law of 27 June 2018: Rector, Vice Rector, Director of Administration and Finance, Dean, Interdisciplinary Centre Director, Vice Dean, Deputy Director of Interdisciplinary Centre, Head of Department. In addition to English, a passive command of French – as the language of Luxembourgish law – is required at the very least for management positions and/or mandates. Holders of positions will be provided a period of two (2) years to learn French if needed. The University will provide a budgetary envelope for the financing of intensive private lessons.

For certain roles – including that of rector, vice-rector and Secretary general to the Board of Governors – an active mastery of French is required. This is laid out in the profile approved by the Board of Governors.

Criteria in terms of language proficiency will be applicable **for future appointments only**.

Academic and research staff

Workforce planning: The University ensures that, within a given discipline, a sufficient number of professors speak the primary languages of instruction to a sufficient level to conduct lectures. Across the University, the percent of professors who speak neither French nor German to minimum CEFR B2 level should not exceed 10 percent.

Recruitment : When recruiting Professors, the standard language requirement listed is: "The University of Luxembourg operates in a multilingual environment. Academic and research staff who are recruited must have a strong command of English as well as French or German. The University encourages its staff to learn the other language and provides language support to this end."

As an exception to this general rule, two profiles out of ten may be advertised with a monolingual profile. Recruitments and profiles will be monitored according to the approach in Annex II.

Promotion: Language skills are, however, a condition for career development within the University. In addition to English, good command of either French or German is a criteria for eligibility for promotion and tenure of academic and research staff at the University. At the time of recruitment, professors who speak neither French nor German must commit to learning one of the two languages to minimum CEFR B2 level within three years if they wish to be considered for promotion or tenure; this is irrespective of the type of contract on which they are hired. Similarly, to be considered for promotion or a permanent contract, research scientists (*maître-assistant*) who speak neither French nor German must learn one of the two languages to minimum CEFR B2 level. Command and level in the target language is verified upon presentation of an internationally recognised test certificate. The University will provide a budgetary envelope for the financing of intensive private lessons.

Titles for academic and research staff are provided in French and English, in contracts and – insofar as technically possible – on the University website. Business cards may be printed in English, French, or English and French.

Implementation and monitoring

Implementation

The University of Luxembourg Language Centre (ULLC) will be in charge of assuring and organizing support in order to successfully implement, and stabilize in the mid-and long term, the present policy at the UL.

The ULLC's mission is to enable the members of the University to function well in this multilingual educational and working environment, to facilitate international academic mobility and integration into Luxembourg society, and to enhance the employability of the University's graduates by strengthening their language skills. To this end, the ULLC offers:

- Academic and professional language courses for students in the University's official languages (English, French, German, Luxembourgish) that are integrated in multilingual study programmes and award ECTS points); and
- General language courses for staff and students partly in cooperation with the INL.

Initial implementation of the policy will require special effort and consideration of additional services.

Monitoring

The University administrative departments, faculties and interdisciplinary centres, as applicable, are responsible for more detailed implementation and realisation of the policy. The vice-rector for academic affairs is responsible for the present policy.

A report on the implementation of the present policy will be produced every two years.
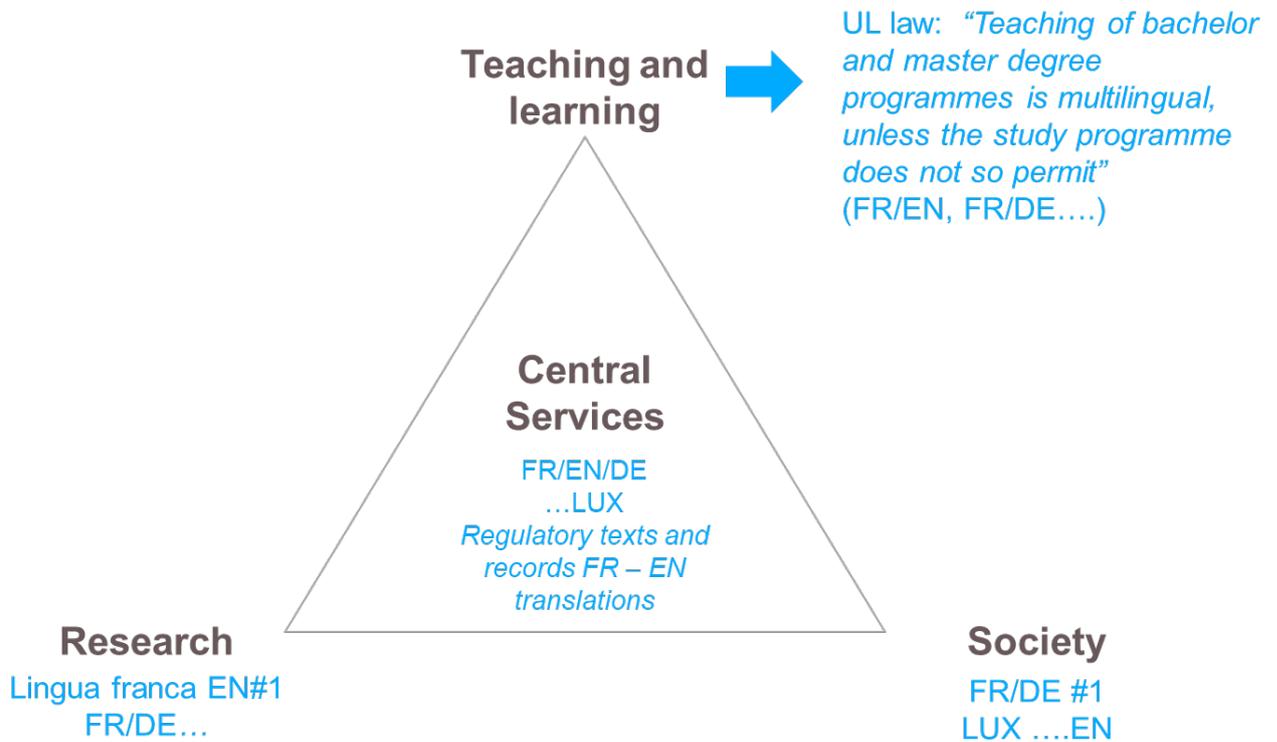
Related policies or legislation

- Règlement des études
- Règlement d'ordre intérieur
- Competitive Promotion Policy, as approved by the Board of Governors on 5 April 2019
- Policy and procedure on Tenure and Promotion-track Positions ("prétitularisation conditionnelle"), drafts in progress
- Academic Recruitment Procedure, draft in progress
- Email policy

Related forms and guidelines

- Templates for work contracts
- Academic position profiles
- Employee self-service form
- Guidelines on corporate communication language, to be drafted

ANNEX I – Schema for multilingualism at the University of Luxembourg

Teaching and learning → UL law: *"Teaching of bachelor and master degree programmes is multilingual, unless the study programme does not so permit"* (FR/EN, FR/DE….)

Central Services
FR/EN/DE …LUX
Regulatory texts and records FR – EN translations

Research
Lingua franca EN#1
FR/DE…

Society
FR/DE #1
LUX ….EN

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ANNEX II – Rules for monitoring language criteria for academic profiles and recruitment

1. The number of positions available for submitting an Anglophone profile is **2.00** as of 1 June 2020.
2. The number of positions available for submitting an Anglophone profile **increased by 0.25** with each submission of a multilingual profile.
3. The number of positions available for submitting an Anglophone profile **decreases by 1.00** with each submission of an Anglophone profile.