



UJ LANGUAGE POLICY

Policy Owner	Registrar
Division/Unit/Department	Registrar's Office Deputy Vice Chancellor: Academic
Date of Initial Approval	2006
Approved by	Council
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Platform to be published on	Intranet, UJ website

¹ Approval must be by the same structure that approved the initial policy.

LANGUAGE POLICY

1. PREAMBLE

The University of Johannesburg's (UJ) Language Policy aligns to section 27(2) of the Higher Education Act (1997) which requires higher education institutions to develop and publish a language policy. UJ subscribes to a trans/multilingual ethos in keeping with national policy and the linguistic diversity of its students and staff. The policy provides for the creation of conditions that support access and success through the provision of successful trans/multilingual teaching spaces, constructive and meaningful academic discourses, and effective institutional governance and communication of the language policy.

In addition to the policy requirement outlined above, the value and benefits of multi/translingual teaching practices are acknowledged. UJ recognises the importance of a develop respect for and scholarship in South Africa's indigenous languages. This Policy elaborates UJ's commitment to multi/translingualism across its various domains and in its teaching and learning environments, to promote inclusive education, creating an enabling environment in which all students from all language groups are able to develop pride in their own language, respecting the diversity of others. UJ seeks actively to remove barriers to learning presented by monolingualism and to respond to its context as an urban university based in Johannesburg, Gauteng. Language policy and plans for its implementation must take cognisance of the national value system in which such policy is embedded. These values are expressed primarily in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act, Act 108 of 1996, and in the Higher Education Act, Act 101 of 1997 (as amended). This Policy provides for the institutional mechanisms set out in the National Plan for Higher Education in South Africa, (2001), the Language Policy for Higher Education 2003, and the Language Policy Framework for Public Higher Education institutions (2020).

2. POLICY OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the UJ Language Policy aligns to national and institutional imperatives. These are, to:

- designate the language/s of instruction
- develop indigenous language scholarship and epistemologies
- develop indigenous languages as academic and research languages through investment and participation in the development of glossaries, dictionaries, teaching and learning materials, etc, in the dominant indigenous languages to facilitate the acquisition of knowledge and skills thereby improving access and success
- develop a higher education environment in which multi/translingual learning and teaching practices are enabled
- provide UJ students and staff with opportunities to study foreign languages
- encourage and incentivise all staff to speak an indigenous South African language
- create an institutional platform to coordinate multilingual teaching and learning to encourage academics, students and staff to share their efforts, ideas, expertise, and best practices in multi/translingualism.

3. SCOPE

This policy has institution-wide application and refers to all staff and students as appropriate, as set out below:

- 3.1. Registrar's Office; Offices of the Deputy Vice Chancellors: Academic, and Research and Internationalisation.
- 3.2. Academic / teaching staff
- 3.2. Demonstrators, tutors, facilitators, etc
- 3.3. Researchers
- 3.4. Administrative and support staff
- 3.5. Undergraduate and postgraduate students.
- 3.6 Faculties²
- 3.7 Teaching and learning support domains which implement projects and activities.

4. DEFINITIONS

South African indigenous languages	IsiNdebele, isiXhosa, isiZulu, Sesotho, SeSotho sa Leboa, Setswana, SiSwati, TshiVenda, XiTsonga
Official languages	as set out in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996
UJ designated languages	SeSotho sa Leboa, English, isiZulu, Afrikaans (<i>UJ Institutional Statute, 2017</i>)
UJ medium of instruction	English
Multi/translingualism	An approach in which language diversity is not as a barrier to be overcome or managed, but a valuable resource for the production of knowledge and meaning through writing, speaking, reading, and listening. In this approach, the decision to use a particular language is determined by context, purpose and the language itself.

5. PRINCIPLES

The Language Policy and plans deriving from this policy are / will be based on the recognition of the following principles:

- 5.1.1 the rich multilingual character of South Africa and the particular concentration of languages in Johannesburg, Gauteng
- 5.1.2 the notion of functional multi/translingualism and its value for higher education
- 5.1.3 the need to cultivate respect for indigenous languages in higher education contexts as part of achieving the transformation of the higher education sector.
- 5.1.4 the multi/translingual repertoires of students and staff as resources for effective teaching and learning
- 5.1.5 the role of language in promoting human dignity for all in the context of a culturally diverse and inclusive framework to transform and build a free and just democracy
- 5.1.6 the need to develop a scholarship and epistemology of indigenous languages as fields of academic study.

6. STATEMENT OF POLICY

² References to 'Faculty' and 'faculties' include the College of Business and Economics (CBE) and the Johannesburg Business School (JBS).

- 6.1 The vision of UJ's is to be "an international University of choice, anchored in Africa, dynamically shaping the future". UJ is rooted both in its Pan-African vision, but also in the distinctiveness of its allocation in Johannesburg, Gauteng. This position and the range of languages spoken by its students and staff, Sesotho sa Leboa (Northern Sotho), English, isiZulu (Zulu) and Afrikaans are designated the primary languages of UJ (Article 9, UJ Institutional Statute, 2017).

The various domains in the University will develop implementation plans in line with the Policy. Measures may include, for example, the use of multilingual signage, promoting functional multi/translingual teaching practices, etc.

- 6.2. All approved modules and programmes are offered in English, with multi/translingual teaching practices provided in at least the three designated languages where practicable.
- 6.2.2 English academic literacy courses facilitate the use of English as a language tool for teaching and learning and professional purposes. Students and staff will have access, whether through informal or formal learning opportunities, to acquire an indigenous language as relevant or required.
- 6.3 Working Language(s):
- 6.3.1 English is the primary language of internal governance, administration, marketing, and internal and external communication.
- 6.3.2 The use of the other three designated languages in these areas is promoted as far as reasonably practicable with due consideration of the nature of the target audience, and the availability of human and other applicable resources.
- 6.3.3 Where practicable, the use of any particular language(s) should not serve as a barrier to participation in official institutional governance and communication, as well as in learning and teaching activities and practices.
- 6.3.4 The University will implement measures to promote multi/translingual practices in teaching and learning.
- 6.3.5 The University's linguistic landscape supports the institution's multilingual ethos through, for example, signage and naming of facilities.
- 6.4 Future of Designated Languages:
- 6.4.1 Conditions will be created for the ongoing and systematic elaboration / intellectualisation of isiZulu and Sesotho sa Leboa as academic languages and languages of science.
- 6.4.2 Strategies and support mechanisms for ongoing and systematic elaboration / intellectualisation will be updated to align with national guidelines.
- 6.5 Foreign Languages:
- 6.5.1 The study of foreign languages as academic subjects will be encouraged in line with national policy requirements to promote South Africa's cultural, trade and diplomatic relations, and with languages common to the region.
- 6.6 Students whose first language is a designated UJ language other than English may have the reasonable expectation that they will be assisted as necessary and practicable in that language with the:
- 6.6.1 provision of basic information about the module, (e.g., contact times and assessments);
- 6.6.2 assistance with understanding academic records and administrative information.
- 6.7 Professional body requirements for professional indigenous language ability are met through the provision of appropriate language fluency in one of the UJ designated languages other than English as approved by Senate.
- 6.8 UJ has a Multilingual Language Services Office (MLSO) that offers support in collaboration with faculties and divisions. The reporting line is to the Faculty of Humanities as determined by the Management Executive Committee.
- 6.9 The University will incrementally offer staff and students opportunities to acquire conversational fluency in the four UJ designated languages.

- 6.10 The execution of the Language Policy is in accordance with UJ's Language Implementation Plan which reflects the University's specific strategies for the promotion of multilingualism.

7. EVALUATION

7.1. The implementation of the Language Policy is the responsibility of the Registrar and the Deputy Vice Chancellors.

7.2. Implementation is monitored at numerous levels by the Management Executive Committee, the Multilingual Language Services Office, the Institutional Forum, Senate and Council.

7.3. Faculties and other domains will report annually on progress made towards the achievement of the goals of this Policy in alignment with the national framework.

7.4. In keeping with UJ grievance procedures, the Office of the Registrar receives complaints and resolves grievances with respect to language issues.

8. REVIEW

The Language Policy is reviewed at least every five years.