



UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN CAPE (UWC)

LANGUAGE POLICY

DATE OF LAST APPROVAL: C2003/3



UNIVERSITY *of the*
WESTERN CAPE

A place of quality, a place to grow, from hope to action through knowledge

THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE

LANGUAGE POLICY

Preamble:

The University of the Western Cape is a multilingual university, alert to its African and international context. It is committed to helping nurture the cultural diversity of South Africa and build an equitable and dynamic society. This language policy relates to one aspect of that commitment. It attempts to guide institutional language practice so that it furthers equity, social development, and a respect for our multilingual heritage.

Language of Teaching, Learning and Assessment:

The languages of teaching, learning and assessment will be discussed under the following headings:

- Language(s) used in lectures, tutorials and practicals
- Language(s) used in the setting of tasks/assignments/examinations
- Language(s) used/allowed in the writing of assignments/examinations
- Language(s) in which text material is available
- Language(s) students use in their self-directed learning processes and activities

Language used in lectures, tutorials and practicals:

Lectures, tutorials and practicals for any module will be delivered in the language formally approved by the Faculty concerned. If lecturers are competent users of other languages, they are encouraged to use these languages in addition to the main language of teaching, if such a practice facilitates communication or discussion.

Languages used in the setting of tasks, assignments, tests and examinations:

Regarding the languages used in the setting of tasks, assignments, tests and examinations, English, Afrikaans and Xhosa should be used wherever it is practicable to do so.

Languages used in writing tasks, assignments, tests and examinations:

Unless otherwise negotiated between a student or a class and a lecturer, the language in which tasks, assignments, tests and examinations should be completed shall be English.

Languages in which texts are available:

Regarding the language students use in their self-directed learning processes and activities, departments should actively seek to appoint some student tutors who can assist students in Xhosa and/or Afrikaans, as well as English.

Access to Academic and Professional Discourse:

- All students will have access to entry-level courses aimed at strengthening their English oral and aural communication skills and improving their academic literacy in English.
- All students will have access to support services to assist them in developing their academic literacy in English.

Promoting Multilingualism:

- The university undertakes to make language acquisition courses in Afrikaans, English and Xhosa available to both administrative and lecturing staff.
- All students will be encouraged, through enrichment programmes, to develop proficiency in Afrikaans, English and Xhosa.

Languages of Internal Communication:

The main language of internal communication for academic and administrative purposes shall be English. However, the university will progressively make important information available in Afrikaans, English and Xhosa. Essential information such as rules will be made available in the three languages as a matter of priority. If departments for whatever reason deem it necessary, or because research into the needs of the client group reveals a clear need, Afrikaans, English and Xhosa translation of formal communications should be made available, provided that it is practicable to do so.

In spoken debate and deliberation, the objective is to be understood by everyone present. Should a speaker prefer to speak in Afrikaans, English or Xhosa, use will be made of informal interpreting if it is practicable to do so.

The university shall have staff available to assist enquiries in Afrikaans, English and Xhosa, particularly in advisory sessions and at registration in the examination periods. In appointing administrative staff who deal directly with students, the university will make their capacity to assist students in Afrikaans, English and Xhosa a strong recommendation. In these ways it will attempt to nurture and use the abilities of all in the university community in accordance with its mission statement, and to promote multilingualism, linguistic diversity and racial harmony at UWC.

Languages of External Communication:

The language used for external communication shall normally be English, unless sensitivity to the recipient requires use of another language. If individuals request information from the university in either Afrikaans or Xhosa, the information will be translated into that language, and the translated version will be sent to the individual accompanied by the English version. In all cases the official version shall be the English version.

Signage on campus will progressively be in Afrikaans, English and Xhosa, having due regard to readability and aesthetic considerations.

Adapted from the original draft discussion document (1998) by the Board of Management of the Lilwini Sentrum.
April 2003