



**UNIVERSITY OF
KWAZULU-NATAL**

**INYUVESI
YAKWAZULU-NATALI**

**LANGUAGE POLICY OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL**

Ref: CO/02/0109/06

(Revised 2014)

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A: POLICY STATEMENT

1. Purpose statement

The University of KwaZulu-Natal identifies with the goals of South Africa's multilingual language policy and seeks to be a key player in its successful implementation. The policy recognises the need to develop and promote proficiency in the official languages, particularly English and isiZulu. The benefits for students becoming proficient in English, the dominant medium of academic communication and of trade and industry internationally, and the *lingua franca* in government and institutions in South Africa, are clear. Proficiency in isiZulu will contribute to nation building and will assist the student in effective communication with the majority of the population of KwaZulu-Natal. This Policy seeks to make explicit the benefits of being fully bilingual in English and isiZulu in South Africa and to inform a corresponding Language Plan.

The Language Policy for the University aims to:

- preserve and promote respect for, and proficiency in, the languages referred to in the Constitution, and other languages, including the heritage languages, that facilitate potentially valuable cultural, scientific and economic ties;
- develop an awareness of multilingualism through an acknowledgement of all the official languages of the province of KwaZulu-Natal;
- achieve for isiZulu the institutional and academic status of English;
- provide facilities to enable the use of isiZulu as a language of learning, instruction, research and administration;
- foster research in language planning and development;
- become a national hub in the development of isiZulu national corpus and the development and standardization of isiZulu technical terminology and its dissemination.
- support the African Academy of Languages (ACALAN), which seeks to promote and develop official languages of the African Union; and
- promote the intellectualization of isiZulu as an African language.

The University will continue to use English as its primary academic language but will activate the development and use of isiZulu as an additional medium of instruction together with the resources (academic and social) that make the use of the language a real possibility for interaction by all constituencies in the University.

The University's Language Policy shall serve to help implement the University's vision and mission to be a premier institution of African scholarship and its strategic goal to be a research-led University of high international calibre.

2. Introduction and background

The Higher Education Act of 1997 informs language policy for higher education. Under the *Higher Education Act*, and subject to policies determined by the Minister of Higher Education and Training, each higher education institution must determine its language policy and publish such a policy.

The University Language Policy is premised on the provisions enshrined in the South African Constitution section 6 (subsection 2 and 4) and the Language in Education Policy of 1997. It is consistent with the framework set out in the Language Policy for Higher Education of 2002 and congruent with the Use of Official Languages Act 2012 (UOLA 2012). Under UOLA 2012, every national department, national public entity and national public enterprise must adopt a language policy regarding its use of official languages and must publish such a policy.

The rationale for the University Language Policy is set out below.

- 2.1 The Language Policy supports the central function of the University, which is to generate and impart knowledge, including African indigenous knowledge systems, in accordance with the highest international standards, and to add to the store of knowledge by research and cooperation with scholars, nationally and internationally.
- 2.2 At our University, students whose home language is isiZulu form an important and growing language group, reflecting the fact that isiZulu speakers are by far the largest single language group in KwaZulu-Natal. The University therefore has a duty to provide a linguistic and cultural ethos favourable to all students.
- 2.3 The University's capacity to generate and disseminate knowledge in its research, teaching and community engagement activities is linked to its ability to mobilize isiZulu fully.
- 2.4 IsiZulu is one of the official South African indigenous languages named in the Constitution, whose 'use and status' have been 'historically diminished'. The University, following the Constitution, is bound to 'take practical and positive measures to elevate the status and advance the use of isiZulu'. The University is also bound to promote the principle of multilingualism i.e. that all official languages of South Africa enjoy parity of esteem and are treated equitably.
- 2.5 The Language Policy of the University forms part of a wider interconnected strategy at the national level to promote multilingualism and, at the provincial level, to advance isiZulu.
- 2.6 The promotion of isiZulu, as a member of the Nguni language family, will have positive effect on other official languages of the Nguni language family notably isiXhosa, siSwati and isiNdebele.

3. Definition of terms

- 3.1 **Indigenous Language(s)** shall mean all official indigenous languages as contemplated by the South African Language Act and The South African Constitution section 6 (1). 53.6. Multilingualism.
- 3.2 **Constitution** shall mean the official constitution of the Republic of South Africa.
- 3.3 **Bilingualism** shall mean an individual's competent use of two languages, namely isiZulu and English, across a range of everyday activities, *functional bilingualism*.

- 3.4 **Multilingualism** shall mean speaking or using several different languages.
- 3.5 **Language Plan** shall mean the actual strategy that is put in place to operationalize the Language Policy.
- 3.6 **PanSALB** refers to the Pan South African Language Board, established in terms of section 2 of the Pan South African Language Board Act.
- 3.7 **ULB** refers to the University Language Board.
- 3.8 **UTLO** refers to the University Teaching and Learning Office.
- 3.9 **ULPDO** refers to the University Language Planning and Development Office.
- 3.10 **KwaZulu-Natal** refers to the Province of KwaZulu-Natal as contemplated in Section 103 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa.
- 3.11 **University** refers to the University of KwaZulu-Natal.
- 3.12 **Department** is used as a generic term to refer to an operational unit within the University, typically a college, school, centre, unit, division or section.

4. Scope

This policy applies to all Schools and Colleges of the University as well as all Units, Centres and Institutes affiliated to the University. All support and professional services departments are also bound by this policy.

While the University recognises multilingualism, this Policy provides specifically for the development of bilingualism in English and isiZulu.

This policy should be read together with other crosscutting University policies that make reference to the implementation of the University Language Policy such as the Research Policy V and the Policy on Teaching and Learning.

5. The Policy

5.1 Principles guiding the University's Language Policy

- 5.1.1 The University's Language Policy must continue to support learning, teaching, and research to be of the highest quality and to be recognised as such nationally and internationally.
- 5.1.2 The University's Language Policy is informed by national and provincial policy requirements.
- 5.1.3 The Language Policy is in accordance with; the University's vision to be a Premier University of African Scholarship; its mission statement to redress inequities of the past and which includes the injunction to promote and foster tolerance and respect for diverse cultural and social values; as well as its Strategic Plan (2007-2016) Revised, June 2012.

- 5.1.4 The University recognises the value of the English language as an international language of scholarship and the main language of administration and business at the University.
- 5.1.5 The University equally recognises the importance of isiZulu as a custodian of culture, heritage, and tradition and as a means of communication.
- 5.1.6 The University recognises the importance of the official languages of KwaZulu-Natal, their linguistic and cultural traditions and as a means of communication. The University also recognises that the languages and traditions of the South African population of Indian origin enhance the cultural richness of the Province.
- 5.1.7 The University chooses to develop the use of isiZulu as a language of instruction and communication and it is the responsibility of the Schools and Colleges, in consultation with the University Language Board, to determine and effect the process.
- 5.1.8 The University's Language Policy of advancing bilingualism is contextualised within the national policy of multilingualism, which calls for the active cultivation of respect for diversity in language and culture.
- 5.1.9 The leadership of the University shall strive to be exemplary in promoting the implementation of the University's Language Policy and Plan.

5.2 The development of languages of instruction of the University

- 5.2.1 The University acknowledges the position of English as the dominant language of instruction and believes it will be necessary to work with the status quo while developing isiZulu for use in all higher education functions. To this end, the University is committed to intellectualise isiZulu to be a language of innovation and science.
- 5.2.2 The University will develop isiZulu for use in instruction as part of a medium- to long-term strategy to promote bilingualism. For this purpose the University shall draw up a Language Plan setting out details of implementation such as time frames and costing.
- 5.2.3 The promotion of isiZulu for use in instruction will require the development of dictionaries and other teaching and learning materials. To achieve this, the University shall work closely with PanSALB, the National Departments of Basic Education, Higher Education and Training and of Arts and Culture.
- 5.2.4 The successful implementation of the Language Policy will depend on the injection, over a period of time, of substantial financial resources from the State, as undertaken in the Language Policy for Higher Education.
- 5.2.5 In order to ensure that language does not act as a barrier to access and success, the University shall provide language and academic literacy development programmes in English and isiZulu.

5.3 The development of isiZulu and English for academic study and research

- 5.3.1 The University shall pay particular attention to curriculum development in English and isiZulu; and to advance programmes in African indigenous

knowledge systems.

5.3.2 The University will work in collaboration with other Universities to create a platform for the development and study of isiZulu.

5.3.3 The University will encourage research conducted in and through isiZulu.

5.4 The promotion of bilingualism/multilingualism in institutional policies and practices

The University shall use a similar approach to that proposed for the study of isiZulu and English in the clause to encourage the development and study of other languages, in particular those spoken on the African continent and necessary for the promotion of international trade and tourism, as well as academic and cultural contact. These Languages include isiXhosa and Sesotho in South Africa and Kiswahili, French and Arabic in the continent, and emerging global languages like Mandarin.

5.4.1 The University recognises its role in the promotion of multilingualism for social, cultural, intellectual and economic development. This includes other official and other indigenous languages as well as the heritage and foreign languages.

5.4.2 In advancement of English and isiZulu bilingualism, the University emblems, public signs and notices and, where appropriate, public ceremonies such as graduation, inaugural lectures and other public functions will be in English and isiZulu.

5.4.3 The languages of administration will be English and isiZulu.

5.4.4 To enhance the knowledge of existing academic and administrative staff the University will provide language courses for staff who do not have English or isiZulu communication skills.

5.4.5 Candidates for posts in the administrative or academic sectors shall be expected to have knowledge of English and isiZulu. Where knowledge of either language is inadequate for the post, there will be provision for access to communication courses as appropriate.

B: PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

1. The University Language Policy shall be given effect through a University Language Plan which sets out the details of the implementation of the Language Policy across the University.
2. The ULB has the responsibility to develop, implement, monitor and review the University Language Policy and Plan as set out in the ULB Charter. The ULB reports to Senate and the Institutional Forum.
3. The ULB is supported in its operationalising of the University Language Policy and Plan by ULPDO. ULPDO is located in the portfolio of the DVC: Teaching and Learning, (who also Chairs the ULB). The Director: ULPDO reports to the ULB on all matters related to the Language Policy and Plan; and to the DVC: Teaching and Learning as line manager.
4. ULPDO, in implementing the Language Plan, offers the University a range of coordination services; these include corpus and terminology development, research, interpreting, translation, editing services and research oversight on projects in support of the Language Policy and Plan.