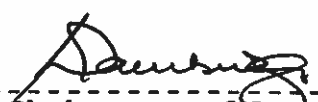


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Language Policy

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Policy Name and Related WSU Policies	
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Language Policy	
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1. POLICY STATEMENT

1.1 Policy Declaration

- English is the *de facto* official language, while isiXhosa is the dominant indigenous language of the Eastern Cape where WSU is situated.
- The dominant language used as the official language at WSU is English. However, the University is situated in an area where the dominant language is isiXhosa; isiXhosa, therefore, shall be elevated to a language of learning, teaching, assessment, communication and research. Sesotho, Afrikaans, isiZulu and South African Sign Language (SASL) will be individual campus approved/authorised Languages.
- There will be provision for foreign languages: French, German, Spanish, Chinese and Portuguese for international communication.

1.2 POLICY OBJECTIVES

The university language policy undertakes to:

- promote proficiency in English as the designated language of teaching, learning, assessment, communication and research;
- recognize and advance the academic viability and status of isiXhosa, English, Sesotho, isiZulu, South African Sign Languages and Afrikaans;
- promote multilingualism and sensitivity in language usage so as to create and foster a supportive and inclusive, non-sexist and non-racist environment in which all members of the University can feel they belong;
- provide appropriate support for the development of academic literacy;
- offer students the option of foreign languages as a way of broadening their multilingual capacity.

1.3 DEFINITIONS

For purposes of clarity of usage, the following terms used in this policy are defined:

- 'Management' refers to all structures and employees responsible for the governance of the University and includes, the University Administration, Senate, Faculties and Schools/Departments.

- 'Monolingual Departments' refers specifically to the following language teaching departments: Afrikaans, English, isiXhosa, and Sesotho, and any other language teaching departments that may be introduced in future.
- 'Staff'
- 'Academic staff' refers to all employees of the University charged with teaching and learning, research and community partnership programmes.
- 'Service staff' refers to all other staff of the University of whatever rank, junior and senior, whose primary activities are not of an academic nature.
- 'Students' refers to the core population of the University, undergraduate and post-graduate, whose primary activities involve learning.
- 'The Community'
- 'Immediate Community' refers to the eastern part of the Province of the Eastern Cape.
- 'Wider Community' refers to the other parts of the Republic of South Africa and the rest of the world.

2. PRINCIPLES GUIDING THE UNIVERSITY'S LANGUAGE POLICY

- The language policy of WSU is based on mutual understanding, tolerance and respect amongst all cultural groups.
- It is crafted in full recognition of the regional, national and international character of this university.
- The university recognises the value of English as the international language of scholarship and the main language of administration and business at Walter Sisulu University.
- The University equally recognises the importance of isiXhosa as a custodian of culture, heritage and tradition and as a means of communication.
- The University intends to develop the use of isiXhosa as a language of instruction, research and communication; and it is the responsibility of the faculties to determine and effect the process.
- Further, this policy is meant to prepare students to participate fully in a multilingual society where multilingual proficiency and awareness are essential.

- **This policy is informed by the following National Legislations:**
 - The 2001 National Plan for Higher Education
 - The National Higher Education Act (1997) and its Amendments
 - The PAN SOUTH AFRICAN LANGUAGE BOARD Act of 1995
 - The DACT Policy Document on Language in the Public Sector (1996)
 - The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996), Section 6
 - Use of Official Languages Act, 2012 (Act No. 12 of 2012), Section 7

3. PROVISIONS OF THE LANGUAGE POLICY

- The fundamental function of the University is to generate and impart knowledge, in accordance with the highest international standards, and to add to the store of the existing knowledge by research and cooperation with scholars, nationally and internationally.
- WSU acknowledges the position of English as an international language of scholarship and believes it will be necessary to work with the status quo while developing isiXhosa for use in all higher education functions.
- The commitment of WSU to implement a functionally multilingual language policy forms part of its efforts to rethink, reposition and review itself in terms of fitness of purpose. This endeavour is aligned with the vision and mission of the University and remains closely linked to the on-going institutional planning process of WSU.
- IsiXhosa is one of the official South African indigenous languages 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 of isiXhosa' and advance its use. The University is also bound to promote the principle of multilingualism for all official languages of South Africa to enjoy parity of esteem and equitable treatment.
- The WSU language policy forms part of a wider interconnected strategy at the national level to promote multilingualism and, at the provincial level, to advance isiXhosa.

4. GOVERNANCE, MANAGEMENT, AND ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- While the WSU Council and Senate, with its envisaged Committee on Languages, fulfil a governance role with regard to the WSU Institutional Language Policy, Institutional Management (with the respective campus and other management structures residing therein) remains responsible for the resourcing, coordination, implementation of the policy across all business units of the University, and for its monitoring.
- The envisaged Institutional Language Directorate acts as the institutional facilitating structure enabling WSU to conduct language management in a pragmatic, systematic and sustainable way, and sees to the equitable provision and coordination of language policy-related matters across all business units of the University.
- The envisaged language Ombud functions, where language queries and complaints can be lodged, reside in the position of the envisaged Director: Institutional Language Directorate.

5. APPLICATION OF THE LANGUAGE POLICY

- Enhancement and promotion of access and success will remain the primary premise for the language policy for learning, teaching, communication, research and assessment at WSU. This determines the way in which WSU implements functional multilingualism in instruction and communication across all campuses of the University.

This policy and plan relate to the following domains:

- the language of learning, teaching and assessment.
- the language of administration.
- the language of research, development and dissemination of information.
- the language for internal, local, national and international communication.

5.1 The Language of Learning, Teaching and Assessment

- English remains the primary language of learning, teaching and assessment at WSU, while the University develops isiXhosa for dual-instruction.

- In line with the above, the University will encourage the implementation of the dual medium of instruction.
 - by sensitizing staff and students to the need for the establishment of a multilingual culture within the institution – and the need to counteract negative attitudes towards indigenous languages:
 - by providing resources for the intensification of the academic development of isiXhosa.
 - IsiXhosa to be developed as the language of instruction, while giving Sesotho and Afrikaans as languages of communication in various campuses.

5.2 The languages of administration

- All communications may be done in both English and isiXhosa.
- The University will provide resources and opportunities for all employees and students, either to learn or improve their competence in these languages.
- The University will encourage the non-speakers of either of the two dominant languages to be fairly competent in these languages within a specified period.

5.3 The language of research, development and dissemination of information

- WSU delivers quality research outputs that are read and utilised internationally, therefore, researchers are encouraged to publish their research results in languages accessible to scholarly peers.
- The choice of language of publication will be up to the researcher, provided that that choice will be within the two envisaged WSU official languages.
- For internal publications, students will be encouraged to consider conducting and publishing their research reports in isiXhosa.

5.4 The language of internal, local, national and international communication

- Notices and circulars on the intranet and notice boards may be in the two envisaged WSU official languages.
- All official meetings will be conducted in one or more languages that ensure optimum effective participation by all participants. Chairpersons of such meetings will have the responsibility to ensure that all participants are able to follow the proceedings. This may necessitate translation and interpreting.
- Documents of general interest to employees that change infrequently, for example the Institutional Statute of the University, conditions of service, rules and forms, will be available in the two WSU official languages.
- Signage, notices on buildings, the website, courses will be in the two envisaged WSU official languages.
- Language of communication with local, national and international community will be English, and isiXhosa where necessary.

6. DEVELOPMENT OF ISIXHOSA FOR ACADEMIC STUDY AND RESEARCH

- WSU will pay particular attention to curriculum development in English and isiXhosa.
- The University will create a platform for the development of isiXhosa for scholarship in collaboration with other institutions and relevant organizations.
- To facilitate the use of indigenous languages, isiXhosa in particular, all faculties will be required to offer credit-bearing courses in isiXhosa.
- The University will encourage research conducted in and through isiXhosa and any other approved indigenous languages.
- All University staff members who do not have a command of isiXhosa will be compelled to acquire communicative competence in isiXhosa within a period of three years.
- Such members of staff will be required to avail themselves for tuition in isiXhosa.

7. PROMOTION OF MULTILINGUALISM IN INSTITUTIONAL POLICIES AND PRACTICES

- WSU recognises its role in the promotion of multilingualism for social, cultural, intellectual and economic development. This includes other official indigenous languages as well as the heritage and foreign languages.
- To this end 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 isiXhosa. The University will therefore provide adequate translation and interpretation facilities to meet this requirement.
- To enhance the language competence of academic and administrative staff the University will provide language courses for staff that do not have English or isiXhosa communication skills.
- Candidates for posts in the administrative or academic sectors shall be expected to have knowledge of English and isiXhosa. Where knowledge of either language is inadequate for the post, there will be provision for access to communication courses as appropriate.

8. RESOURCING OF THIS LANGUAGE POLICY

- The implementation and application of a language policy has cost implications, but the process of transforming higher education takes precedence when it comes to the implementation of the policy so that capacity-building may commence.
- The University undertakes to invest in the promotion and implementation of its language policy.

9. LANGUAGE SUB-COMMITTEE OF SENATE

- The University will establish a Language Sub-Committee of Senate.
- The University will support the African Languages Department

10. LANGUAGE POLICY REVIEW

The Language Policy will be reviewed every three years for possible revision. Amendments to the Language Policy will be referred to Council via Senate.

11 ADDENDUM

11.1 DEVELOPING CAPACITY IN AFRICAN LANGUAGES

The University will re-establish the Department of African Languages, resource and capacitate it.