



**UNIVERSITY
OF TURKU**

LANGUAGE POLICY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF TURKU

University of Turku 2023

International, multilingual, and multicultural University of Turku

Founded in 1920, the University of Turku is the oldest Finnish-language university in the world. According to the Universities Act, Finnish is the primary language in the University's research, education and services. It is a particular honour for the University of Turku to participate in the development of the Finnish language by providing expertise and, at the same time, to ensure the high level of Finnish language in its own operations.

The University of Turku is part of the international and multilingual academic community. The equal and responsible language environment of the University is developed so that it becomes genuinely international and inclusive by encouraging the community towards parallel lingualism and receptive multilingualism.

The University of Turku is committed to the principles of the United Nation's Agenda 2030 on sustainable development, according to which language equality and appreciating multilingualism is important both for social and societal engagement.

The University's central services have to be equally available in Finnish and English for international students, researchers, teachers and other personnel.



Parallel lingualism –
using other languages besides
Finnish when it is possible and
practical

Receptive multilingualism –
Participants use their
respective first languages while
communicating, if everyone
can understand each other

The general objectives of the Language Policy are:

- to increase language awareness and understanding of the significance of language and to improve the proficiency of language in all fields of academic activities.
- to promote the development of a functional, multilingual language community and to actively improve it as well as to foster linguistic and cultural diversity according to the principles of sustainable development.
- to give guidelines and recommendations on how Finnish and other languages are used in a controlled and balanced way in academic teaching, research and services.
- to give guidelines and recommendations on those support measures that the successful operation of a multilingual academic community requires.
- to increase the University's international attraction.

Implementation and follow-up of the Language Policy

The Language Policy should be taken into account when planning and implementing the units' activities, e.g. in communications and in recruiting new employees.

The Working Group on Language Matters is responsible for the follow-up of the Language Policy. It prepares and updates the Language Policy at the beginning of each new strategy period.

The University Board decides on the contents of the Language Policy.

Languages in research

- By definition, academic research is free and dependent on the researcher, and the same applies to the language of research. The academic community is international and it is practical to select the language of research according to the field of science and research topic.
- In order to meet the needs of Finnish society, the aim is that researchers and research groups also communicate their research results in Finnish to ensure that scientific terminology and expressions are up-to-date in the Finnish language. For example, with a press release, blog post or in a public debate, researchers can discuss their special field, and international research results and scientific achievements in Finnish or also in other languages if the researcher's native language is not Finnish.
- Scientific precision and consistency require understandable and unambiguous expression. The University supports researchers in academic language use and expression by offering language services (e.g. the First Article Language Checking Service, language and communications training for doctoral researchers, and Supporting Immigrants in Higher Education in Finland SIMHE services).
- The University Communications unit supports researchers in communication directed outside the academic community, for example, by helping to draft a press release. The University Communications unit also helps international researchers in reaching Finnish media.

Languages in education and teaching

- According to the Universities Act, all University of Turku students have the right to receive high-quality teaching in Finnish and to write their theses in Finnish. On the basic degree level, those study programmes, modules and courses that are primarily taught in another language than Finnish form an exception. Master's theses can be written in other languages than Finnish or English in the degree programmes in foreign and Scandinavian languages.
- The objective on the basic degree level is that students internalise the norms of academic language and their significance both in internal communications within the academic community and in external communications directed to audiences outside the academia.
- Sufficient language studies are guaranteed for the degree students and doctoral researchers so that they can achieve good language and communication skills.
- Students selected to the degree programmes and post-graduate training in English have to possess sufficient language skills for completing the studies. It has to be ensured in the student selection process that the students selected to the degree programmes in Finnish also have sufficient language skills for completing the studies.
- The University offers studies in the Finnish language for international students and promotes their readiness for finding employment in Finland and integrating into the surrounding society. Each degree programme in English will incorporate a study module that introduces the students to the Finnish language, society and culture. International degree students are encouraged to strengthen their language skills by offering also advanced-level courses in Finnish. Exchange students are also offered the opportunity to study Finnish.
- If the language of teaching is not the teacher's native language, particular attention has to be paid to the level of their language proficiency, for example, in the recruitment phase or in the development discussion with the supervisor. Supervisors should encourage the teaching staff to participate in language training.
- The possibility to achieve versatile language and internationalisation skills during studies is guaranteed to the University students by offering a wide selection of studies in different languages and opportunities for mobility in different linguistic and cultural regions.

Languages in the University community

- Our University community includes people with diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Everyone must have equal opportunities to participate and act as full members of the University community. The University shows the surrounding society a good example of an equal and multilingual work community.
- Language equality and non-discrimination are promoted at the University according to the principles of sustainable development by using responsible and gender-neutral language in all situations.
- The administrative language at the University of Turku is Finnish according to the Universities Act. English is the primary foreign language in the University's support services and internal communications. The University's documents and online services are available in Finnish or English, but everyone has the right to use Finnish or Swedish in personal matters in accordance with the Constitution of Finland and the Language Act.
- The University offers versatile and flexible language and communications training as well as opportunities to learn and use languages in the University community to both staff and students.
- International staff and students are encouraged to use Finnish in the University community. For example, the work community can support learning by providing opportunities to use Finnish in everyday situations. Also, language tutoring and other peer learning are good ways to advance language learning, and their use should be increased.
- Parallel lingualism and receptive multilingualism ensure that people who do not speak Finnish can participate in the University's activities, for example, by offering enough information in English so that the international members of the University community can take part and make an impact in working groups and University bodies.
- All the key systems and services are offered in English to the international members of the University community.
- In internal communications, the language or languages are selected according to the target group. For example, a short summary in English about the content of the message can be added to an email if there are persons among the recipients who do not understand Finnish.



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