THE LANGUAGE POLICY
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF TURKU

www.utu.fi/languagepolicy
THE INTERNATIONAL 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 as an academic expert and, at the same time, to ensure the high level of Finnish language in its own operations.

Nevertheless, the University of Turku is also part of the international and multilingual academic community. English is the lingua franca of the academic world and the primary language of international research. The University’s central services have to be equally available in Finnish and English for the international students, researchers, teachers and other personnel.

The language environment of the University of Turku is developed into a genuinely international one by encouraging the community towards parallel lingualism and receptive multilingualism.

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
- 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 the support measures needed for the successful operation of a multilingual academic community.
Parallel lingualism – using other languages besides Finnish when it is possible and practical

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

LANGUAGES IN RESEARCH

- In its basic nature, academic research is free and depends on the scholar, 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.
- However, to meet the needs of the Finnish society, the aim should be that research results are also presented in Finnish in order to keep the scientific terminology and expressions up-to-date in the Finnish language.
- As a member of the international academic community, the University has excellent possibilities to mediate and evaluate information produced elsewhere and make it available for the Finnish society in Finnish.
- Scientific precision and consistency require objectively understandable and unambiguous expressions. In addition, the University supports researchers in academic language use and expression.
- The University supports researchers in external communications.
LANGUAGES IN EDUCATION AND TEACHING

• According to the Universities Act, all students of the University of Turku 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 taught in English form an exception. Master’s theses can also be written in other languages when it is justified.

• The objective at 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 academic community.

• Sufficient language studies are guaranteed for the degree students so that they can achieve good language and communication skills. The possibility to achieve versatile language and internationalisation skills during the studies is guaranteed to the University students by offering a wide selection of studies in different languages.

• 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 also ensured during the student selection process that students selected to the degree programmes in Finnish have sufficient language skills for completing the studies.

• The University offers studies in the Finnish language for international students and therefore promotes their readiness for finding employment in Finland and for integrating into the surrounding society.

• During the recruitment process, the University pays special attention to the level of the applicants’ language skills, if the applicant will have to teach in a language that is not their first language, and organises related training for the teaching staff.
LANGUAGES IN SERVICES AND INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

• According to the Universities Act, the administrative language of the University of Turku is Finnish and everyone has the right to use Finnish or Swedish in personal matters. English is the primary foreign language in the University’s services and internal communications.

• All central documents, standing regulations and instructions the employees need when carrying out their duties are also published in English. All the systems and services that the University’s international staff members need in order to carry out their duties are offered in English.

• High-quality language is a basic premise in an expert and scientifically competent academic community.

• The University Communications promotes both the University’s internal flow of information, and the transfer of information within the international academic community and between the academic community and society. The variety of the University Communications’ work tasks requires the parallel use of Finnish and English in many occasions.

• The University offers general language studies and language revision services for its staff to support the use of languages.
LANGUAGES IN EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

• The University Communications actively informs the media about significant research results, events and activities in Finnish and also in English on a case-by-case basis.

• All units, university bodies, job titles, teaching fields and other permanent institutions have names both in Finnish and English.

• All University units have websites both in Finnish and English and they include the unit’s up-to-date contact information, the most important forms of activity and the main research themes. All international Master’s degree programmes have consistent and clear websites.

• The University’s essential presentation materials are prepared both in Finnish and English. All signs and maps on the University Campus are both in Finnish and English.

• A multilingual and multicultural university can show the rest of the society a good example on how students, teachers, researchers and other staff from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds can form a productive, equal and continually developing working community.

IMPLEMENTATION AND FOLLOW-UP OF THE LANGUAGE POLICY

The Language Policy will 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 Matter appointed by the Chief Operating Officer 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.
RECOMMENDATIONS

Internal and External Communications

- The languages used in the University’s internal communications are Finnish and English. The language or languages of internal communications are selected according to the target group.

- All University units have websites in Finnish and English. The Finnish and English versions of the website can differ in their extent.

- The University’s most important brochures and marketing materials are available in Finnish and English according to the target group’s needs.

- The University has both Finnish and English contents in social media.

- Parallel lingualism ensures that people who do not speak Finnish can participate in working groups and University bodies.

- Using Finnish as a foreign language is encouraged and promoted in the University.

Services

- In addition to Finnish, the University offers all the central systems and services in English needed in carrying out work duties.

- The University supports researchers in academic language use and expression by offering language services, such as the First Article Language Checking Service and Finnish Language Clinic.
Titles and Terminology

- All units, university bodies, job titles, teaching fields and other permanent institutions have English names in addition to the Finnish ones. The Working Group on Language Matters handles policies and questions related to terminology.
- The University has its own MOT dictionary that is maintained and updated.
- Glossaries of often used terms, words and expressions are compiled in order to support online communications. They can be utilised, for example, in drafting bilingual websites, surveys and invitations.

Signs, Guides and Maps

- All signs, guides and maps on the University campus are up-to-date in Finnish (also in Swedish when necessary) and English, as well as in Braille whenever possible.

Studies and Training in Languages and Communications

- University makes sure that both students and staff have diverse opportunities for learning and using languages. Flexible and integrated ways of learning languages are increased.
- Each degree programme in English will incorporate a study module that introduces the students to the Finnish language, society and culture. Also by offering advanced-level courses in Finnish, international degree students are encouraged to strengthen their language skills.
- The exchange students must also have the opportunity to study Finnish.
- Language tutoring, i.e. peer learning, is a good way to advance language learning and it should be used more extensively.