

THE UNIVERSITY OF JYVÄSKYLÄ
LANGUAGE POLICY



UNIVERSITY OF JYVÄSKYLÄ

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THE LANGUAGE POLICY SUPPORTS AND PROMOTES THE UNIVERSITY'S INTERNATIONALISATION

The University of Jyväskylä is a multilingual and multicultural academic community with a strong Finnish-language background. In 2015, the University's day-to-day activities clearly reflect the diversity of society, with students and staff representing more than 100 different nationalities. Throughout the University community, multilingualism and multiculturalism are resources that are valued and systematically utilised.

According to the vision for 2030, the University of Jyväskylä is an internationally renowned multidisciplinary research university. In compliance with its strategy, the University conducts significant world-class research and participates in solving global problems. The University is a nationally and internationally attractive place to work and study, and its international campus motivates and prepares students to live and work in a multicultural environment. The University's competitiveness is based on the recruitment of top students, the synergy of research and teaching, the pedagogical competence of its staff and the high-quality degrees that enhance students' employability. The University's recruitment practices are efficient and promote the internationalisation of the University and the international staff's integration into the Finnish community. The University also promotes active and systematic internationalisation of its students and staff.

The University of Jyväskylä Language Policy is based on the notion of language as communicative and interactive competence. Language is used to construct and share knowledge, to influence and to persuade. Language is an integral part of research, education and societal interaction. Every teacher, researcher and expert maintains, develops and teaches content of their discipline as well as the language, discourse and communication typical to it.

The language policy promotes dynamic multilingualism, the ability to flexibly and rapidly react to communicative situations, the willingness to resort to even limited language skills as well as an open mind and a positive attitude towards different languages and language use. Modern multilingualism encompasses spontaneous and flexible co-existence of parallel languages in various communicative situations. In different contexts, participants may use the languages that come naturally to them. They need not master all the languages in their repertoire at the same level. The possibility to use different languages increases the opportunity for equal participation and access to a wider array of discourses.

The University of Jyväskylä Language Policy anticipates the University's challenges in a multilingual, multicultural and internationalised society. It specifies the University's strategic objectives and helps the University achieve its targets. The language policy defines the general principles of language use for the entire University community. Individual units use the policy as a foundation for building the practices that their particular disciplines and activities require.

The implementation of the language policy requires commitment from the entire University community. The University management, unit management and supervising personnel have a particular responsibility to make the language policy, through their own example, an everyday practice of the University.

The University of Jyväskylä Language Policy is primarily guided by the needs of staff, students and society. Accordingly, the policy is divided into three sub-areas:

1. The University as a working environment
2. The University as a learning environment
3. The University as a societal agent

In compliance with the Universities Act (558/2009), the language of instruction, examination and administration at the University of Jyväskylä is Finnish, but the University may also decide to use other languages in research, instruction and study units. Furthermore, according to the Act, individuals have the right to use Finnish or Swedish in administrative matters which concern them. At the University of Jyväskylä, the working languages are Finnish and English. In addition to these, the faculties and departments use other languages that are central and significant for their activities.

1 THE UNIVERSITY AS A WORKING ENVIRONMENT

Significant world-class research and high-quality education in a multilingual and multicultural academic environment require the University staff to have multifaceted language, cultural and communication skills as well as international competence. These skills are requirements for all applicants. In turn, the University is expected to systematically and continuously develop these skills in accordance with the employees' tasks.

The advancement of a dynamic, multilingual working environment plays a significant role in the integration of international staff into the University community. Such a working environment is built on dialogic, flexible and barrier-free interaction in which all participants have an equal communicative status and are able to contribute to and affect discussion and the handling of matters. The Finnish language skills of the international staff are developed in accordance with the Language Policy Action Plan.

Aims of the language policy:

- The University staff displays expertise and continuously develops its competences in an international, multilingual and multicultural working community.
- Equal and barrier-free communication is the right and responsibility of every member of the University's working community.

2 THE UNIVERSITY AS A LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Society requires graduates to have good communication and language skills. These skills should develop progressively from one degree level to another and be relevant for the roles, international activities and cooperation of their respective fields. Knowledge, competence and expertise are built discipline-specifically through language and communication. The University guides and creates conditions for the development of students' discipline-specific language skills as well as their multilingual and multicultural competence. This includes fostering knowledge of the Finnish language and Finnish culture, diversifying communication skills in the second national language, English and other languages, as well as promoting cultural awareness and competence. These are also means to increase the international profile of the University, the attractiveness of its learning environment and employability and social integration of its students.

Aims of the language policy:

- Graduates of the University are experts who possess the diverse and discipline-specific language, communication and internationalisation skills required in working life.
- Finnish-medium teaching fosters high standards in the language and promotes the development of multifaceted interactive skills in students. Particular attention is paid to both oral and written academic communication.
- The University offers high-level, internationally competitive English-medium education.
- The University as a multilingual and multicultural community and operational environment is a systematically utilised resource in education.

3 THE UNIVERSITY AS A SOCIETAL AGENT

The University participates in solving national and global problems and is expected to share research information, competence and expertise to benefit society. This requires the wide-ranging education and recruitment of experts in various fields as well as training and support for lifelong learning, scientific publication, science communication, public discussion and societal impact.

The University actively participates in societal discussion and openly shares its research for the benefit of society in Finland as well as globally.

Aims of the language policy:

- The University trains experts who master the communicative and discourse practices of their discipline and who are able to communicate knowledgeably and effectively within their own field as well as to external target groups and the general public.
- The University's publications meet high scientific and linguistic standards in Finnish as well as in other languages.
- The University promotes the development of Finnish as a language of science.

4 INDICATORS AND FOLLOW-UP

The University Board approves the language policy and the Rector approves the action plan. The Language Policy Committee, appointed by the Rector, is responsible for updating the University's language policy and its action plan, as well as for promoting, monitoring and evaluating their implementation. In this work, the committee utilises the University's own research on language, language policy, communication and culture, while also applying internationally acknowledged and research-based indicators. From 2016, the implementation of the language policy is monitored as part of the Board Review.