Policy	Language
Responsible Committee/Unit/Division	Language Policy Committee
Responsible Chairperson/Director/Manager	Chairperson: Senate Chairperson: Language Policy Committee
Policy Effective Date	2025
Date of Approval of Previous Policy	28 September 2013
Policy Approval Pathways, **(e.g., Committee, Senate, Council)**	Language Policy Committee: 7 November 2024 Senate: 22 November 2024 Council: 12 December 2024
Review Cycle	5 years
Next Review Date	2029

Definition of Terms

Term	Definition
Development	This refers to the promotion and strengthening of the marginalised South African indigenous languages across all domains of public higher education institutions including scholarship, teaching and learning, as well as wider communication in line with Section 29(2) of the South African Constitution.
Intellectualisation	"intellectualisation" refers to a language planning programme whereby the use of different languages is developed and they are implemented as languages for administrative, teaching and research purposes, to measures designed to ensure the scholarly use of the languages.
Interpreting	This refers to the transference of an oral or signed text from one language into the other. In this instance, a source text may be in a particular language then the target text be in other languages but all in an oral or signed form which is different from written translation.
Kaaps	Kaaps is an African language formed out of a slave lingua franca used among the indentured indigenous and enslaved populations in the Cape Colony. Its sound system, word formation, syntactic structure, and meaning-making character was historically formed through the use of Cape Dutch mixed with the phonological-lexical variations of Arabic, Low and High Portuguese (also known as Malay- Portuguese), Bahasa-Malay, and Khoi and San languages in the early 1600s to 1700s. It was later influenced by English and standard Afrikaans (and gradually marginalized) as a result of colonial and apartheid nationalism policies.
Language of Communication	This refers to the language/s used to communicate within and externally to the university.
Language of Teaching and Learning	This is the language that is used for instruction within an educational setting.
Language Plan	A language plan outlines the approaches to promoting multilingualism in the domains of teaching and learning, research, communication, and administration. Such a plan indicates how the languages will be used for teaching and learning, communication, and administration.
Marginalised South African Indigenous Language	Within the South African HE language policy context these include all the official languages of the country, which have their heritage roots in Africa, excluding English and Afrikaans. Since May 2023, this includes South African Sign Language (SASL).
Multilingualism	Multilingualism refers to the use of two or more languages for communication, scholarship, teaching and learning. Multilingual societies function using multiple languages within and across different social domains. Functional multilingualism recognizes that different languages are used in different situations depending on the purpose and context.

New Language Policy Framework	The New Language Policy Framework for Public Higher Education Institutions (NLPFPHEIs) was gazetted in 2020. The NLPFPHEIs provides a framework for the development and strengthening of indigenous languages as languages of scholarship, teaching and learning, and communication at higher education institutions. In doing so, it provides guidelines for the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of institutional language policies.
SAQA NQF	This refers to the South African Qualifications Authority National Qualifications Framework
Translanguaging	Translanguaging describes the use of the different languages that a multilingual person has, that is their linguistic repertoire, to communicate. The different languages in a repertoire might not be at the same level of proficiency and competence but can be helpful in communication and meaning making, hence they are called language resources. For multilingual speakers, translanguaging (including code-switching) across a range of language resources is a normal communicative practice. Pedagogical translanguaging in which students and educators explore and make sense of concepts through a range of languages can be used as a planned strategy for teaching and learning in multilingual classrooms.
Translation	This refers to the transference of a written text from one language into the other. In this instance, a source text may be in a particular language then the target text be in other languages, but all in a written form which is different from interpreting.

UCT Language Policy - 2024

1. Preamble/Purpose & Context

UCT Vision 2030 outlines the institutional goal "to draw from the extraordinary social and cultural diversity, creativity and capacity for innovation of all our staff and students to contribute to making the 21st century the Afrikan century." While language continues to be a hurdle to access and success for many students at South African higher education institutions, including the University of Cape Town (UCT), it is also a rich resource. To further the University's commitment to transformation (as captured in its Vision 2030), UCT has adopted this language policy to promote multilingualism. The University adopts English, isiXhosa and Afrikaans as official languages of the University. In addition, the University recognises Kaaps, South African Sign Language (SASL), N|uu, and Khoekhoegowab and is committed to their development. Institutional funding and resources will be directed to the development of isiXhosa, Kaaps, SASL, Khoekhoegowab and N|uu.

This policy is adopted in line with section 29(2) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, which provides that everyone has the right to receive education in the official language or languages of their choice in public educational institutions where that education is reasonably practicable. In addition, section 9(3) of the Constitution prohibits unfair discrimination on several grounds, including language. This commitment is echoed in section 27(2) of the Higher Education Act, 1997, which obliges the council, with the concurrence of the senate, to determine the language policy of a public higher education institution.

In October 2020, the Department of Higher Education and Training gazetted the New Language Policy Framework for Public Higher Education Institutions. According to this Framework, all higher education institutions must develop strategies, policies and implementation plans for promoting multilingualism. The Framework requires the language policy to indicate at least two official South African languages, other than English, for the development of scholarly discourse as well as communication.

The University acknowledges the marginalisation of indigenous languages in teaching, learning, research, and internal and external engagement. In this regard, the University commits to promoting and developing the use of these indigenous languages in the afore-mentioned domains of the university.

The language policy framework provided by DHET focuses on key areas that fall within the language policy. The university language policy is to be complemented with a language implementation plan that will describe how to realise the aims set forth in this policy.

2. Principles/Objective Principles

The official languages at the University of Cape Town are English, isiXhosa and Afrikaans. Furthermore, the university recognises the importance of translanguaging as a communicative practice of multilingual speakers. The UCT community commits to:

- Promoting and using marginalized South African indigenous languages in teaching, learning, research and communication
- Shifting from an exclusive valorisation of English to valorising collective multilingual resources of the staff and student community
- Acknowledging that multilingualism is a resource that should be deployed differently in different spaces and places in the university.

3. Core Provisions

3.1 Teaching & Learning

Teaching and learning at the university will be informed by the dual principles of promoting South African indigenous languages as well as access to academic literacy in English. The university will empower educators and students to work collaboratively to draw on their multilingual repertoires for teaching and learning.

3.1.1. Language of teaching and learning

IsiXhosa will be increasingly resourced as a language of teaching, learning and assessment alongside English. In addition, the use of all South African official languages is encouraged in teaching, learning and assessment.

Pedagogical translanguaging in which students and educators explore and make sense of concepts through a range of languages as a planned strategy for teaching and learning is encouraged.

3.1.2. Undergraduate students

All undergraduate students (as per SAQA NQF levels 5-7) without a marginalised South African indigenous language as a subject at Grade 12 level, or without proficiency in an African indigenous language, are encouraged to take a course in isiXhosa communication.

3.1.3. Postgraduate students

The university will work towards requiring PhD abstracts be translated into a marginalised South African indigenous language. The university language unit will provide translation into the university's official languages. The use of other South African indigenous languages in abstracts is encouraged and supported.

In line with 3.1.1., students are encouraged to produce theses in South African official languages where this is possible and desirable.

3.2 Research & Scholarship

The University is committed to promoting research and scholarship in and on indigenous languages through providing resources:

- for scholars conducting research in indigenous languages;
- for scholars conducting research on indigenous languages;
- for the development of discipline specific language; and
- encouraging research on multilingual pedagogies for higher education.

Further, we recognise the need for software support for marginalised languages and various multilingual communications tooling. It is therefore also considered part of the research endeavours to investigate theory, techniques, methods, and tools for software support for the official languages.

3.3 Communications

3.3.1   Internal

Internal institutional communication, such as but not limited to campus announcements, UCT news, notices etc, should be conveyed in a subset, or all, of the official institutional languages suitable for the occasion and medium of communication. This would be done by emulating the parliamentary approach, especially with regards to the university minutes.

3.3.1.1 Oral

Two or more of the university official languages should be used (where appropriate accompanied by a SASL interpreter) as languages of communication at official functions such as graduation ceremonies

3.3.1.2 Written

Official university languages should be used in written communication including but not limited to letters, memoranda, UCT communiques, minutes of official meetings, etc. The UCT website and faculty webpages should be available in the official university languages. Signage should be multilingual using the official university languages.

3.3.2 External

Communication and marketing material should portray the multilingual commitment of the University of Cape Town, using the appropriate language for the audience. UCT respects the language policies and preferences of its stakeholders, partners and external correspondents and should accommodate their preferences as far as these are part of South Africa's official languages.

3.4 Language Plans

The UCT language policy will be implemented at university and faculty level. Faculties and support structures will develop implementation plans which will address research, teaching, learning, assessment and communication. Plans should cover short-, medium-and long-term strategies. The plans must be approved by the Senate, and faculties/support structures are responsible for their implementation. Plans should be reviewed every five years.

The university will support faculties through the establishment of a language unit. In addition, faculties will be able to request dedicated budget and related resources for the implementation of their plans.

3.5 Core Roles

3.5.1. The Language Policy Committee (LPC) reports to Senate.

3.5.2. A Language Unit must be established to support the implementation of the university's multilingual language policy. The unit will:

3.5.2.1. Provide translation and interpreting services;

3.5.2.2. Support discipline specific multilingual glossaries through terminology development;

3.5.2.3. Provide support to staff with the development of multilingual teaching and learning strategies;

3.5.2.4. Support the academic use of isiXhosa.

3.5.2.5. Promote research in or into the university official language, IsiXhosa, as well as SASL, Khoekhoegowab, N|uu and Kaaps.

3.5.2.6. Represent the linguistic interests of the university community by proactively promoting the language policy.

4 Monitoring & Mediation

The Language Policy Committee is responsible for monitoring the implementation of the policy. For queries and concerns on language policy matters, staff and students should approach the respective faculty executives or the Department of Student Affairs or Office for Inclusivity and Change for further assistance.