

Aspects of Language and Culture Policy in the UTS/BUO and UTQ/ BKO

Criteria LCP project:

- *To promote efficiency in English, Dutch and any other relevant language among all staff (academic and support) and students (didactics/tasks)*
- *To create more intercultural awareness and develop appropriate intercultural competences*

LCP within the course Basisvaardigheden Universitair Onderwijs (BUO) and University Teaching Skills course (UTS)

The University Teaching Skills course (in Dutch offered as: Basisvaardigheden Universitair Onderwijs) is a didactical skills course meant for beginning lecturers that is offered twice a year. This course is usually followed in preparation of the UTQ-trajectory.

UTS course (English spoken)

In the first training day of the UTS course, attention is paid to the Dutch Educational system, to get participants acquainted with this system. To prepare for this topic, participants are asked to read a Nuffic document on the Dutch education system (<https://www.epnuffic.nl/en/publications/find-a-publication/education-system-the-netherlands.pdf/view?searchterm=education%20system>) introduce themselves (and their (cultural) background), respond on each other and ask questions about the Dutch system in Nestor. During the first day the Dutch educational system is discussed and participants can exchange ideas and questions with each other and the trainer.

What is also offered in the UTS course, is the possibility to receive feedback on English speaking skills. An expert from the University Language Centre will look at one of the recordings (the recording of a practice lecture or of practice small group teaching activity) and provides the participants with extensive feedback focusing on 5 aspects: range, accuracy, fluency, interaction and coherence. In the Nestor course, useful websites and tools are offered that can provide the participants with extra English support in grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary and presentation skills.

In the Dutch version of the course (BUO) the above mentioned is not included.

In both courses there is also the opportunity to discuss intercultural aspects that lecturers encounter in their teaching practice. This can be done in the session Peer consultancy that is guided by the trainer.

During the last day of the BUO and UTS course a Module Day is organized. During this day both groups are mixed and follow different educational modules of their choice in a morning and afternoon session. One of the modules that we have offered several times, is a 3 hour module on Intercultural Competences, given by Michaela Carriere and Beth Yoder from the University Language Centre. Please find a short description of the module (provided by the trainers) below:

Working with students from many different cultures challenges what it means for us to be an effective teacher. We will start with a short exercise to get a sense of what it is to be an international student, then get a sense of how culture manifests itself in behavior and surface our own cultural assumptions about being a teacher. In a bit of theory we will explore some of the differences that may impact the student-teacher relationship and we will conclude with addressing critical incidents or burning questions raised by the participants.

LCP within the Basiskwalificatie Onderwijs trajectory/ University Teaching Qualification trajectory (Portfolio)

In the UTQ/BKO trajectory lecturers have to show their skills in four Quality requirements/competences that cover the design and implementation of teaching as well as the assessment of learning outcomes and the evaluation of teaching. Lecturers do this by writing a portfolio in which they reflect on all 4 competences. In 2013 a fifth element was added to these competences. Based on the framework of the University of Groningen International Classroom project, an addendum to the UTQ quality requirements was drawn up (based on Leask, 2012, *Internationalisation of the curriculum in action*). This addendum provides the lecturer with training in intercultural aspects and gives (the design of) teaching a more international focus, in particular for lecturers working in an international context. These lecturers **may** emphasize this in their UTQ profile if they wish to do so.

IC) International Competence: *design and teach course units in an internationalized curriculum:*

- Identify facilitating factors and obstacles for the 'international classroom' in course units (and the curriculum)
- Broaden the scope of course units by including international/ intercultural content
- Learning environment: Develop a range of strategies to engage students from diverse cultural backgrounds and assist all students to achieve the desired learning outcomes by the end of the course unit / degree programme
- Specifically provide feedback on and assess student achievement of clearly articulated international and intercultural learning outcomes.
- Reflect on the impact and outcomes of teaching and assessment practices on student learning

The addendum is reflected in the portfolio in the following way:

In **competence 1 Design and redesign of teaching**, lecturers are asked to describe and reflect on the (re)design of a course. To show how international aspects are integrated in the design of the course, the lecturer is asked to describe and/or reflect on:

- How the faculty vision includes internationalization and/or cultural differences and to what extent the course unit contributes to this? In the UTQ/BKO manual is also referred to ¹ See <http://www.rug.nl/about-us/internationalization/> to give lecturers an idea about what intercultural aspects within the University contain
- The learning outcomes and starting level of the course. How are aspects of internationalization and cultural differences taken into account when designing the learning outcomes?
- Testing the learning outcomes. Whether or not there are internationalization/intercultural differences, and how the design takes this into account for the assessment.
- Dovetailing with prior knowledge. How does a course unit design take students' prior knowledge into account. How the lecturer takes into account the presence of international students and cultural differences.

In **competence 2 Teaching and supervising students**, lecturers are asked to describe and reflect on their own teaching, that of their colleagues and individual supervision of students. To show how a lecturer takes into account international aspects in his teaching, the lecturer is asked to describe and/or reflect on:

- The progress of the lecture: how the lecturer takes into account the presence of international students, intercultural aspects and/or transfer students from universities of applied sciences
- The interaction and feedback process (if relevant). How intercultural aspects are taken into account during interaction and feedback.
- The supervision process of individual students or small groups of students (if relevant). How intercultural aspects are taken into account when supervising and interacting with students.

In **competence 3 Testing and assessment**, lecturers are asked to analyse the assessment methods used within a course. To show how international aspects are integrated in the assessment methods of the course, the lecturer is asked to describe and/or reflect on:

- The choice of assessment method. If relevant: how does the mode of assessment take cultural differences between students into account?
- Providing feedback to students about the results. How cultural differences (the diversity of the student population) are taken into account when providing feedback on summative and/or formative assessments?

In **competence 4 Evaluation**, lecturers are asked to analyse the study results and results on student course unit evaluations used within a course. Based on these results and conclusions made earlier in competence 1,2 and 3 the lecturer makes an improvement plan for the course. To show how international aspects are integrated in the evaluation of the course, the lecturer is asked to describe and/or reflect on:

- The validity after the test has been taken. If relevant: to what extent have cultural differences within the student population affected the test results?
- to what extent cultural differences within the student population have affected the results of the course unit evaluation?

Assessment of the portfolio

For the assessment of the UTQ portfolio an assessment instrument has been designed, a rubric in which the criteria for the UTQ are further operationalized. Aspects of the International Competence are also integrated in this rubric. Since the description of and reflection on intercultural aspects in their teaching is not mandatory, lecturers can not fail the International Competence. On the other hand, lecturers can be awarded an excellent score if they do mention intercultural aspects in the portfolio when this is requested in certain sections in the UTQ portfolio.