



university of
 groningen

Explanatory notes by Article to the University of Groningen Code of Conduct: Languages used in Teaching and Examinations

The principle laid down in Section 7.2 of the Higher Education and Research Act (WHW: *Wet op het hoger onderwijs en wetenschappelijk onderzoek*) is that Dutch shall be the language in which instruction will be given and examinations taken. It also provides some grounds for deviation from this principle. For example, a teaching language other than Dutch is permitted if the specific nature, the organization or quality of the teaching, or the origin of the students makes this necessary. These statutory grounds for deviation are laid down in the Code of Conduct in Article 2.2d. The international character of the degree programmes of the University of Groningen means that these statutory grounds for deviation are met and it is therefore possible to use English, or a language other than Dutch to teach a degree programme.

Article 1

This article explains what is meant by the language of instruction for a degree programme, this is the language in which:

- the teaching is provided (i.e. lectures, working groups, practicals)
- the examinations are taken and final assessments made
- the study materials are written (e.g. books, files and folders, etc.).

Article 2

As a rule the language of instruction for a degree programme will be Dutch, as laid down in Section 7.2 of the WHW. There are a number of possible exceptions to this rule, as set out in Article 2.2.

Article 3

If a language of instruction other than Dutch is to be used, this will generally be English. Justification for the use of English as the teaching language lies in the international orientation of the University of Groningen. Another language of instruction other than Dutch could be used for a degree programme (or parts thereof) concerning that language, such as German, Frisian or Spanish (Article 2.2a).

Article 4

If Dutch or English are to be used as the teaching language then the associated degree programme information should also be available in that language. This also refers to information in the prospectus, the Teaching and Examination Regulations (OER: *Onderwijs en Examenreglement*) for that particular degree programme and the Rules and Regulations of the Board of Examiners. Information about the degree programme on the website or Nestor should also be provided in the relevant language.

NB: If English is the teaching language of the degree programme, the programme information does not also have to be provided in Dutch (or vice versa).

In view of the international student population that may be expected for a degree programme with English as the language of instruction, it is only natural that the degree programme information should also be in English.

This requirement does not apply where the language of instruction is a language other than Dutch or English. This will almost only be the case with a degree programme (or parts thereof) in that particular language, such as German, Frisian or Spanish.

Article 5

The language of instruction for the degree programmes (or parts thereof) will be stipulated in the Teaching and Examination Regulations (OER).

University applicants will be required to meet the admission requirements for this language. These entry requirements will be stated in the OER. Students should be sufficiently proficient in the language to be able to follow and complete the degree programme.

The language proficiency standard for a Bachelor's degree programme will be the same as the statutory admission requirements for a Bachelor degree programme, e.g. English at pre-university education examination level. For the Master's degree programme additional language proficiency may be required, if this is necessary to be able to successfully complete the Master's degree programme.

How language proficiency will be assessed (e.g. by means of a TOEFL or IELTS test) will be laid down in the OER. The argument that the degree programme is 'more difficult' because of the different language of instruction and thus worth more ECTS will therefore not be accepted.

NB: Where Dutch or English are used as the language of instruction the OER should also be available in that language (see Article 4).

Article 6

The Faculty Board has the authority to change the language of instruction for a degree programme. It will seek the advice of the relevant programme committee, which shall not be binding, however. The Board of the University has the authority to decide when another

language of instruction than Dutch or English may be used. It should be noted that any deviation from Dutch as the language of instruction will generally be to English, apart from degree programmes related to another language.

The language of instruction for a degree programme cannot be changed during an academic year nor with retroactive effect. Transitional arrangements need to be provided for current and repeating students and specified in the OER for the degree programme. Students who started a degree programme in a particular language are entitled to expect that they can complete the degree programme in that language, provided that this takes place within a reasonable period of time.

In general a change in the language of instruction will gradually 'evolve' as more course units are offered in the new teaching language, together with the study materials. This is why it has been set as a minimum requirement that current or repeating students should be able to take the examinations and write their thesis in the original language of instruction. In many cases they will have already been taught in the new language. The nominal study period for the degree programme plus one year extra is considered to be a reasonable period of time. If there is an interruption in the degree programme, the new language of instruction will apply from the date of re-registration. This is to avoid a situation where entitlement to the original teaching language can still be claimed upon re-registration after a break of several years.

Article 7

The quality of the degree programme may not be compromised by opting for a language of instruction other than Dutch.

On the one hand, this means that lecturers must have a good knowledge and understanding of the language. This needs to take into account the international student population taking the subject, such that the language proficiency standard is higher than simply 'translated Dutch' that can be understood primarily by Dutch students. The Faculty Board is responsible for the language competence of lecturers and should make it possible for them to meet the proficiency standard, for example through the University Teaching Qualification (UTQ) or additional language training.

On the other hand, the students on the degree programme must be sufficiently proficient in the teaching language concerned to be able to keep up. Requirements may be set for admission to the degree programme which can be used for assessment purposes (see notes to Article 5). If current or repeating students appear to have insufficient language competence, information should be available on how they can catch up, for example through the University of Groningen Language Centre. In principle students are responsible for their own language proficiency.