To the Addressee

Date
February 2015

Subject
RUG Language and Culture policy

Appendices:
1. Summary with recommendations, overall principles and budget
2. Specific recommendations for staff (academic and supportive), students and management and organization
3. Policy paper
4. Description of process with working groups (in 2014)
5. Updated legal documents.

Dear Faculty Board or Service Department  Board,

Please find attached both a summary and all specific details of RUG Language and Culture Policy (adopted in April 2014), with specific recommendations for implementation (adopted in January 2015), which has been developed within the International Classroom (IC) project (from August 2013 until January 2015).

CvB has made a budget of 4.5 Million Euro available for a proper implementation and evaluation at all faculties and service departments (“UB, FB, Bureau, CIT”) in the next three years (2015-2018), in line with the specific principles and recommendations adopted.

This process of implementation and evaluation will be co-ordinated by a project manager who will work under the Department of Education & Students (to be recruited).

A steering committee with Faculty (Board) members from 7 different faculties (Law faculty: Wezeman (Chair), FWN: Poelstra, GMW: van der Werf, FEB: Boonstra, GGW: van Stuckrad, FWB: Veenkamp, Arts: Gaenssmantel, and expert members (IC project: Haines and student) will advise CvB in this process. The steering committee will have a first meeting in March 2015.
The next steps

- Disseminate and discuss this RUG Language and Culture Policy with all relevant stakeholders within your faculty or service department
- Collect relevant data for a good overview of current state of affairs at your faculty or service department
- Assign faculty/departmental contact person(s) for this purpose
- Describe gaps and priorities given the current stage of internationalization and faculty/departmental objectives for internationalization, in particular related to language and culture
- Discuss plans in a first stage with CvB in governance meetings (BO’s) in April 2015
- Further develop plans in close co-operation with project manager and steering group
- In Autumn 2015: plans will be advised by steering group and CvB will decide about matching.

We trust that our RUG Language and Culture Policy will be a strong tool in the further internationalization of our university and can be used by all involved in a way that is fit-for-purpose.

Sincerely,

Prof. Elmer Sterken, Rector Magnificus
1. Summary

Overall goals

The RUG language and culture policy established in March 2014 is an important instrument for RUG for economic/governance motives as well as for reasons of quality assurance and innovation. Firstly, RUG faces a decreasing number of Dutch students after 2020 and needs to attract an increasing number of international students to ensure the same budget and volume. Secondly, more diversity of students and staff will add to the quality of education and research, and to innovation if dealt with effectively. Thirdly, academic skills in English are increasingly important for citation and publication, two relevant parameters in rankings. And last but not least, we learn from research that language and culture skills are increasingly important for the employability of our students. For these purposes, all barriers in language and culture need to be removed before 2020. In addition to this language/culture policy, multiple strategies need to be applied in an integrated approach, for example in international marketing/reputation management, admissions, international classroom & learning communities, learning outcomes, and in career guidance/“employability”.

The results in 2020 should be: an innovative university, with high-quality research-based international education, with high positions in international rankings, with a high % of international students and staff, known locally, nationally and internationally for its open and inclusive environment, reflected in an adequate participation of international staff and students in governance and senior management positions, with the international character being confirmed by the acquisition of the NVAO quality label for internationalization (DFII/CeQuint).

The language and culture policy paper implies:

- a compulsory approach for English for all staff and students with a good quality control system, to be integrated in BKO/UTQ for teaching staff in English-taught programs
- a voluntarily, yet stimulating approach for Dutch for all international students and staff
- a voluntarily, yet stimulating approach for other languages to be integrated in a number of international programs and to be stimulated at an individual level
- a focus on intercultural awareness and competences, to be integrated in BKO/UTQ for teaching staff in English-taught programs.
Process

The implications of the language and culture policy in terms of training, support and implementation in the organization have been discussed in working groups with many staff and students from different levels, faculties and units. Next, the recommendations were discussed and set by the Task Force Language Policy chaired by Professor Frans Zwarts and by the Expert Group International Classroom (April-June 2014).

Overall recommendations

- demand-oriented, “fit-for-purpose” approach
- integrated approach in which language, culture and didactics are combined
- improve quality assurance system for assessing and monitoring English for staff
- establish clear, consistent entrance and exit levels of English for all English-taught programs
- define a functional level of Dutch for international staff (within specific context) and provide budget and time
- continue subsidizing Dutch language courses: available for free up to B1 level for all international students throughout the programs
- workshops/modules in intercultural competences available for students and staff
- workshops in academic skills (in English) available at low costs for students
- integrate academic skills development (in English) in international programs
- integrate a third language into a number of appropriate international programs
- extend on-line support where appropriate.

Budget

At individual level, faculties1 should use part of their budgets assigned for the training and development of their staff for further development of English, Dutch, intercultural competences, and possibly other languages within a specific (didactical) environment. Staff members and students also have their own responsibility for their further development. Students can take extra-curricular courses in language and culture at low costs. Staff can take language and/or intercultural courses, either paid (partly) by their faculty if considered of added value to the working context, or paid (partly) by the staff member.

At program level, the faculties will submit their plans in line both with the policy and recommendations, and with the faculty’s current stage of internationalisation and strategic and measurable goals for internationalisation at faculty level. More specific criteria will be developed by the steering group in Spring 2015. If approved, the faculty plans will be paid 50% by the Board with a 50% match from the faculty.

At the institutional level, the Board (CvB) will pay for required investments for a proper implementation in the organization, with new systems, tools, expertise and courses to be developed and for the project organization. The Board will also continue and extend her subsidy for Dutch language courses for all international students up to B1 level, given that this is an important tool for marketing, integration and binding.

1 Read: faculty or service department
2. **Specific recommendations for implementation**

Our recommendations are specified for staff (teaching and supportive) and for students, for language and for intercultural awareness and competences.

**Overall principles**

1. **For staff**
   This language and culture policy implies new requirements for teaching and supportive staff, to be included in HR and UTQ policy and in the PDCA/quality assurance cycle, setting and monitoring clear quality standards. It also implies an integrated (language, culture, didactics) and tailor-made approach and a clear line of support.

2. **For students**
   Courses & training in Dutch language up to B1 level and a workshop in multicultural awareness and competences development will be available for free, while courses in other languages and extra-curricular courses & workshops in academic skills will be available at low costs for students. If courses cannot be part of the regular programme, the extra-curricular credits will be added to the diploma or a supplement thereof (compare Honours College). For a small number of appropriate international programmes, it is recommended to integrate a third language into the programme.

3. **Intercultural competences (for staff and students)**
   The main objective is to create more intercultural awareness and develop intercultural competences and attitude at the individual and the organisational level and provide support in learning how to deal with diversity as a resource/ i.e. communication across cultures (in specific contexts) in order to make RUG a truly international, inclusive organisation².

   Please note that intercultural competences are only one tool to realise a more international university with an inclusive³ environment. There are many other factors that can either be motivators (e.g. diversity of staff and students), or obstacles for inclusiveness (e.g. “Dutchness” of institutional culture, informal rules and networks). All of these factors should be taken into account in the cultural change process of becoming an international university.

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² Definition of “intercultural competence” (Bennet 2008, commonly accepted): “a set of cognitive, affective and behavioral skills and characteristics that support effective and appropriate interaction in a variety of cultural contexts”.

³ Core definition “inclusive”: inclusive learning and teaching in higher education refers to the ways in which pedagogy, curricula and assessment are designed and delivered to engage students in learning that is meaningful, relevant and accessible to all. It embraces a view of the individual and individual difference as the source of diversity that can enrich the lives and learning of others (C. Hockings, 2010).
Recommendations for staff

1. Establish an overall quality assurance framework for assessing and monitoring (in terms of “CAN DO”/CEFR framework, Council of Europe, 2009) the English and Dutch of all staff (academic and supportive) in terms of level and competences

Responsible: HR, LC, ESI, O&S, faculties, service departments

- adapt the CEFR-related TOEPAS (Copenhagen) scales\(^4\) as a basis for assessment and feedback for English proficiency for academic staff
- consider including these scales in the international supplement to the UTQ/BKO criteria regarding English proficiency alongside other instruments for the training and support of didactic and intercultural skills
- use these scales in the observation/assessment of real teaching events, and combine with feedback based on (video) evidence
- make linguistic and intercultural proficiency a possible item in all staff development (R&O) interviews
- for non-teaching staff, make a matrix incorporating (clustered) profiles which have similar support needs\(^5\)
- faculty boards and directors of service departments will determine the required activities for their faculty or department within the framework of the recommendations and their strategic goals, decide about assessment and lines of support, and act on evaluations.

2. Pay attention to diversity of staff (in gender, culture, educational background, etc.)

Responsible: faculties, HR, Communication Department, ESI, service departments

In development:
- create more intercultural awareness with all staff
- encourage and enable the development of Dutch for non-Dutch staff
- provide teaching staff with qualitative feedback on their performance through evaluations and observations
- create explicit opportunities to highlight and discuss language and intercultural competences and ideas for further development.

In support:
- ensure that introduction procedures provide international staff with a good insight into the working environment at RUG; be explicit about Dutch academic and local culture
- use a buddy system to provide new international staff with a ‘softer landing’ and facilitate more integration between Dutch and international staff.

3. Integrate language and intercultural competences with didactic skills in the UTQ/BKO

Responsible: ESI, HR, LC, O&S, faculties

- ESI will work with the Language Centre, O&S and HR in defining the international context, language and intercultural element for the UTQ competences and requirements. The UTQ committee will receive a proposal.
- in a transition period until 2017, new staff who start teaching in L2\(^6\) will be required to take the UTQ/BKO including the international supplement.

\(^4\) Soren Kling & Staehr, 2013
\(^5\) consider adapting Erasmus Rotterdam matrix to RUG organisation, see Forum 2013.
\(^6\) L2 stands for teaching in English as a second language.
- after 2017, the international supplement will be fully integrated in UTQ/BKO. In the context of lifelong learning, all staff teaching in L2 will be supported to acquire the international supplement. Staff who start teaching L2 will be assessed in the L2 as early as needed.
- Staff already certified with the UTQ in the previous years (>80% of the teaching staff will have the UTQ certificate in 2015) will be facilitated with a variety of possibilities to acquire the language and intercultural competences as part of a programme for lifelong learning.

4. **Provide adequate feedback and a line of support (for English in particular)**

Responsible: LC, ESI, HR, O&S, faculties, service departments

- provide support consistently across faculties and service departments
- in each faculty and service department, assign a specified unit/person to liaise with the support units
- communicate consistently about levels i.e. C1 is the lowest threshold for teaching, but ideally we want people to be more flexible in their use of language, implying C2 (and higher)
- communicate consistently that language is not the only factor that contributes to the quality of teaching (it combines with content knowledge, pedagogical skills and intercultural skills)
- use the Steinert (2010) model so faculties will be able to design their own lines of support that are ‘fit for purpose’, meeting the specific needs of their staff and their local context and within their organizational culture based on Can-Do statements
- ensure (through a specified person/department) that faculties and service departments liaise with the units that provide the intensive training and support e.g. Language Centre, ESI, HR (including translations, style guide and terminology database available).

5. **Define a functional level of Dutch for staff (non-native speakers of Dutch), in their specific context and given their specific ambitions**

Responsible: LC, faculties, ESI, service departments, staff

- enable non-Dutch staff to reach defined levels within defined periods of time e.g. 80% to reach A2 within a year, and B1 within two years
- enable further development of Dutch (B2 to C1/C2) through tailor-made communicative courses (small groups or individual) with a focus on the working context (e.g. for those needing to work or teach through Dutch)
- make consistent use of language portfolios and online materials (e.g. provide online Dutch course for potential staff before they arrive) to support staff in the ongoing development of their Dutch
- offer assessment for all non-Dutch staff interested, using intake interviews and national Dutch tests at A2-B1 (NT2 II for B2, NT2 III for C1 (under development) if more formal certification is desirable
- Offer support for international staff to attain their NT2-I and NT2-II (NT2-II more relevant for academic staff and PhD, especially those planning on staying more than five years)
- develop Nestor course with receptive Dutch (reading and listening) to develop from A2 to C1/C2
- provide budget and time.
6. **Offer learning and support of other languages than English and Dutch plus options for on-line learning**

Responsible: LC, faculties, service departments, staff

- provide staff with the opportunity to enhance skills in other languages as the professional needs arise (making budget and time available)
- encourage faculties to make structural use of the existing expertise provided by the Language Centre, including both tailor-made courses and online self-study resources such as ‘Tell Me More’.

**Recommendations for students**

1. **Continue subsidizing Dutch language courses for international students and offer those courses for free**,  
   Responsible: LC, faculties, O&S, students

   and:

   - allow them to take these throughout their programme (not only in the first year)
   - raise the level to B1 (so they are able to follow meetings in Dutch)
   - add supplement for Dutch language to degree
   - make online materials available for students for self-study
   - offer online courses before they arrive in Groningen about Dutch language and Dutch culture
   - offer support for international students to attain their NT2-I and NT2-II.

2. **Offer academic skills support, preferably curricular, otherwise extra-curricular**  
   Responsible: LC, O&S, faculties, students

   Depending on the needs (and deficiencies) of the students, they may take a workshop on these skills or they may need to take a longer course.

   - Offer academic skills **workshops** for students during their studies (after a short pilot with 1st year students) in: 1) academic reading, 2) academic writing (i.e. spelling & style, essay writing, thesis writing), 3) academic presentations and 4) academic discussion & debate.

   - Offer academic skills **courses** in: 1) academic reading, 2) academic writing, 3) academic presentations and 4) academic discussion & debate.

   These courses are longer than the workshops and offer students more guidance and support. These can be integrated into the Bachelor and Master programmes or can be extra-curricular.

3. **Create more intercultural awareness and sensitivity**  
   Responsible: LC, SSC, faculties, students

   - Offer an Intercultural workshop in the introductory week for Bachelor and Master students in international programmes. All students take the IET\(^8\) test and the results will be discussed in the workshop (awareness raising)

   - Integrate explicit intercultural and international learning outcomes in Bachelor and Master programmes\(^9\). Stimulate students to collect ‘evidence’ of their multilingual and multicultural competences by working with an e-portfolio (Nestor, EU MAGICC project\(^{10}\), etc.).

   - Offer extra-curricular courses for students to work on their multilingual and multicultural competences (i.e. MAGICC scenarios). Credits will be added as supplement to diploma and/or official EU MAGICC certificates.

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\(^7\) NT2-III is more relevant for academic staff and PhD, especially those planning on staying more than five years

\(^8\) IET stands for Intercultural Effectiveness Tool, developed by prof. J.P. van Oudenhove and Dr. J. Hofstra (Faculty of Behavioural Sciences RUG) and provided by the LC

\(^9\) a generic model for international and intercultural learning outcomes is being developed in the IC project

\(^{10}\) MAGICC project: http://www.unil.ch/magicc.
4. **Establish clear, consistent entrance and exit levels**
   Responsible: O&S, LC, faculties, students

Currently, the **entrance and exit requirements** differ per faculty per programme. We recommend:

- ALL students, should have C1 English reading skills (needed to read academic articles written in English, 60% of the literature is in English). Those that are below this level should be stimulated to take an academic reading workshop/course
- ALL students must have a minimum of a CEFR B2\(^{11}\) level in the language their Bachelor programme is taught through. The students entering with the minimum level should be advised to immediately enroll in academic workshops/courses in the target language
- Students should exit their Bachelor phase with a minimum of C1 in their active proficiency levels of the language their programme is taught through, to be included in learning outcomes. Their Bachelor thesis must be minimally of C1 language level as a pre-requisite, with borderline cases and fails reviewed by a language expert
- To enter the Master Phase, students must have a minimum of a CEFR C1 level in the language their Master programme is taught through.

**Overview of required entrance levels**

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<tr>
<th>Language of Instruction</th>
<th>Bachelor phase</th>
<th>Master phase</th>
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| **English**\(^{12}\)    | Entrance: min. B2 English, academic reading C1  
Exit: min. C1 (thesis min. C1) | Entrance: C1  
Exit: C1 (thesis min. C1) |

5. **Stimulate students to learn an additional language**
   Responsible: LC, faculties, students, Communication Departments
   This should be done by clear and consistent communication, subsidizing costs and adding it to their degree or supplement to their degree. Offer official language tests for English, Dutch, German, French, Spanish, etc.

**Recommendations for intercultural competences (for staff and students)**
   Responsible: faculties, service departments, communication departments, LC, ESI, HR, SSC, students, student associations, staff.

\(^{11}\) CEFR B2 is roughly equal to VWO grade 6 .

\(^{12}\) For students in a programme taught in Dutch, academic reading skills in English should be C1.
Overall

- Make the issue of cultural sensitivity and inclusiveness more visible and concrete for all staff and students at all levels; showcase international experiences close to the discipline (to make it explicit)
- The Language Centre (LC), Department for Education Support and Innovation (ESI), HR department and Student Service Centre (SSC) will together develop a more integrated offer (related to didactic and language context) of training and support in intercultural communication for both staff and students, using available tools and on-line scenarios e.g. Intercultural Effectiveness Tool and EU project MAGICC.

- **For teaching staff**, provide training and support combined with English language support and their specific didactic context, stimulate working abroad in a purposeful way relevant to the working context and stimulate participation in international academic networks. ¹³

- **For support staff**, define the specific required intercultural competences for specific (categories of) functions (e.g. policy advisors, senior management, desk staff, secretaries) based on e.g. scenarios from EU MAGICC project, combined with English language requirements and develop a line of support. Stimulate working abroad in a purposeful way relevant to the working context.

- **For students**, integrate intercultural competences in (a selection of) international programmes in a systematic way, combined with the development of academic skills and language learning, starting with specific international learning outcomes and a vision on internationalisation at programme level¹⁴. In addition, provide extra-curricular tools and scenarios for students to test and develop their intercultural communication skills at low cost¹⁵.

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¹³ e.g. make use of EU Erasmus Plus programme including funding opportunities, for all staff
¹⁴ refer to IC framework developed in international classroom project
¹⁵ e.g. Intercultural Effectiveness Tool, on-line scenarios from EU project MAGICC.
Recommendations for management and administration\textsuperscript{16}

Responsible: communication departments, legal department, faculties, service departments.

In management and administration, Dutch is the primary language at RUG, in accordance with Dutch society in general, while English is the secondary language. This implies that RUG is managed and administered in Dutch (both internally and in relation to the Dutch authorities). Yet, given the dual plus policy, the university should also:

- communicate in English in all governance bodies at central and faculty level to ensure transparency and equal access for all staff and students (from academic year 2015/2016 onwards)
- communicate both in Dutch and English in such a way as to ensure that staff and students are in a position to perform their functions in the organisation regardless of linguistic and cultural background
- ensure that students and staff who are not (yet/sufficiently) proficient in Dutch are able to communicate with relevant supportive staff in English
- ensure that communication regarding the rights and duties of staff and students are available both in Dutch and in English
- ensure that the legal procedures of lodging a complaint, objection or appeal are equally accessible for non-Dutch students as they are for Dutch students
- ensure that formal, written communication in letters/mails/documents is available both in Dutch and in English
- ensure that communication on the RUG website with relevance for non-Dutch speaking students, staff members and/or their internal or external audiences is available in English.

Overall recommendations

1. To fully implement this language policy (internal and external) in management and administration (before the academic year 2016/2017)
2. To create internal and external awareness through marketing and communication among staff and students and other stakeholders about the “inclusive dual plus” language policy. The overall message is that on the one hand RUG wants to ensure high quality and an inclusive environment by setting clear criteria, while on the other hand enabling and facilitating staff and students
3. To provide information about the language conditions for students and staff and the opportunities to learn Dutch, English and other languages.

To examine the possibilities for language support in legal procedures of non-Dutch students.

\textsuperscript{16} RUG language policy paper, April 2014, page 16.
RUG Language Policy. An Inclusive\textsuperscript{17}, Dual\textsuperscript{18}-Plus\textsuperscript{19} Approach.

Memo

In the summer of 2013, the Executive Board gave Professor Frans Zwarts (Professor in Linguistics, former RUG Rector) the assignment to form a Task Force with internal and external experts and develop an appropriate language policy for RUG. The assignment was given in the context of the International Classroom Project.

The draft policy paper has been reviewed by two international authorities in this field: professor Hans de Wit (Amsterdam/Milano) and professor Karen Lauridsen (Aarhus). Both were very positive in their response.

The draft policy paper has also been discussed in the expert group of the International Classroom project. The paper was received positively and with enthusiasm. The issues raised have either been adjusted in the attached version, or will be taken into account in the preparation for the implementation.

\textsuperscript{17} Core definition inclusive: inclusive learning and teaching in higher education refers to the ways in which pedagogy, curricula and assessment are designed and delivered to engage students in learning that is meaningful, relevant and accessible to all. It embraces a view of the individual and individual difference as the source of diversity that can enrich the lives and learning of others (C. Hockings, 2010).

\textsuperscript{18} Dual: local language plus English as a medium of instruction.

\textsuperscript{19} Plus: fostering multilingualism on a more individual level/in specific programmes.
RUG Language Policy. An Inclusive\textsuperscript{20}, Dual\textsuperscript{21}-Plus\textsuperscript{22} Approach.

Preparing world class graduates and fostering our staff in a globalising world.

Abstract

This paper illustrates the need for a consistent institutional language policy at the University of Groningen (RUG), given the fast developments in internationalisation at RUG and the changing needs from an increasingly diverse population of staff and students. The developments in the national and EU context show interesting examples and reveal the relevance of context and history. The recent discussion in academia marks the increasing dominance of English as a tool of communication in higher education and the need for more quality control. The academic experts also stress the importance of proficiency in the local language, and of intercultural competences, and advise to use an integrated content-based approach for language teaching and learning, development and support, based on new insights and technologies. Subsequently, this paper includes an advice for a language policy in line with the particular history and context of RUG, based on RUG’s mission and vision, and concludes with an advice for implementation.

\textsuperscript{20} Core definition inclusive: inclusive learning and teaching in higher education refers to the ways in which pedagogy, curricula and assessment are designed and delivered to engage students in learning that is meaningful, relevant and accessible to all. It embraces a view of the individual and individual difference as the source of diversity that can enrich the lives and learning of others (C. Hockings, 2010).

\textsuperscript{21} Dual: local language plus English as a medium of instruction.

\textsuperscript{22} Plus: fostering multilingualism on a more individual level/in specific programmes.
Task Force RUG Language Policy

- Professor Frans Zwarts, Chair, Professor in Linguistics, former Rector RUG, University of Groningen
- Bernd Waechter PhD, Director of the Academic Cooperation Association (ACA)
- Robert Coelen PhD, Lector Internationalization of Higher Education, Vice-President International, Stenden University of Applied Sciences
- Wijnand Aalderink MA, Director of Education and Communication Services/Career Services, Faculty of Economics and Business, University of Groningen
- Kevin Haines EdD, Consultant, Teacher/Trainer in English, University of Groningen & University Medical Center Groningen
- Grytsje van der Meer MA, Policy Advisor HR, University of Groningen
- Estelle Meima MA, Coordinator Testing & Assessment and Lecturer in English, Language Centre, Faculty of Arts, University of Groningen
- Kristel Modesti LLM, Legal Advisor, University of Groningen
- Franka van den Hende MA, Policy Advisor International Relations/Project Manager International Classroom, University of Groningen
- Marten Houkes MSc, Project Assistant International Classroom, University of Groningen.
Introduction

During the past 10-15 years, RUG has taken major steps in becoming an international university. Nowadays we have over a hundred English-taught Master programmes, 21 English-taught Bachelor programmes and more than 20 joint programmes with international partners. This has resulted in 12% of our students and 18% of our academic staff coming from abroad. Moreover, approximately 20% of our students do part of their study abroad. In sum, we have reached our goals set for this phase.

It is now time for the next steps. RUG is entering a new phase of internationalisation, in which internationalisation will be increasingly relevant for ALL staff and students, with a systematic approach of internationalisation as a quality instrument in education and research, and a monitoring system from which the added value of internationalisation will be evident. In 2013, the International Classroom (IC) project was started with the objective to qualify for the distinctive quality label for internationalisation (DQFI) awarded by the Dutch/Flemish accreditation agency “NVAO”, by demonstrating the added value and clarifying the institutional conditions of the international classroom. One of the first results of this IC project reveals that English language support should be directed more towards qualitative measures and contextualised needs, e.g. academic communication and study skills for students, and individual needs for staff.

In earlier years (2004-2007), English language support was provided on a large scale for academic and supportive staff, with directives from the Executive Board for assessment and monitoring. Assessment was generally done at a voluntarily basis, except for the Faculty of Economics and Business. These directives have resulted in different faculty policies for assessing and monitoring English for current staff, and various or no language policies for hiring new staff. Meanwhile, the numbers of staff and students dealing with English in their work and study environment have grown immensely, and there has grown a strong need for good quality control.

More recently, in 2012, the Executive Board started to offer free Dutch language courses for international students. This initiative received great enthusiasm from both the international and the Dutch students. In 2014, approximately 1,000 students are being expected to participate in a free Dutch language course. For international staff, faculties often pay for the Dutch language course, but there is no overall policy.

Current language infrastructure

Our RUG juridical and policy documents related to language and quality control are outdated. The English language directives from the Board date from 2004. The last version of the RUG Language Code of Conduct (“Gedragscode Voertalen”) dates from May 2003. This Language Code of Conduct is based on article 7.2 from our Dutch Law (“WHW”), which was included in 1992 for political reasons. The phrase ‘education and exams are in Dutch unless...’ illustrates the main concern then to protect the Dutch language. In 2011, the Dutch Education Council acknowledged the relevance of English in higher education in the context of a globalising world, in addition to the continuous importance of Dutch for Dutch culture and identity. The Council advised the Dutch government to require from all higher education institutions to establish a clear language policy, ensuring a good quality control of English and provision of Dutch language and culture for internationals. Considering the changes in the national as well as institutional context, it is clearly time for RUG to establish a new language policy.
Urgency

A few examples from the RUG context illustrate the urgency of a new language policy. In the current situation, there is no overall framework with common regulations to control the quality of English for staff. Although in the International Student Barometer (from 2009-2012), international students evaluate the academic English of their lecturers as “sufficient” (3.5/5.0), these scores are rather average in an international comparison, and not satisfactory given our high ambitions for internationalisation. From a different perspective, the lack of Dutch language proficiency of many international staff and students hinders their inclusion in their new study, work and social environment. With most RUG governance bodies’ meetings held in Dutch and most policy documents written in Dutch this limits the access to governance bodies and senior management positions for our internationals. Moreover, outside the formal setting of the international classroom, conversations and small talk are often in Dutch. For students another language related problem is that they often lack good academic communication and study skills, in both English and Dutch. In addition to English and Dutch, many staff and students do not have a good command of a second or third foreign language which would be beneficial, for example, when they are going for study or work abroad. Finally, the results of our IC pilot project reveal clear needs for extended and new lines of language learning and support.

National and EU context

Our wider context shows similar developments. Both in the national and in the EU context of higher education, there has recently been an increased attention for language.

In 2013, the Dutch government launched the action plan “Make it in the Netherlands” with the main objective to attract more internationals to stay in the Netherlands for work after their studies. Although the plan has a limited focus on certain fields or disciplines and economic gains, and lacks resources, it recognizes the high relevance of both the Dutch and English language in internationalisation of higher education. One of the planned activities is that NUFFIC will develop an online course in Dutch language, using the new opportunities of e-learning.

One year earlier, in 2012, the EU Commission published the document “Rethinking Education: Investing in Skills for Better Socio-economic Outcomes”. For Europe, considering the massive increase in the global supply of highly skilled people over the last decade, language competences are particularly important for reasons of competitiveness, employability and mobility (Kelly, M. (2013). Language competences for employability, mobility and growth. In: European Journal of Language Policy). The EU commission advocates a “dual” language policy (local language plus English as a Medium of Instruction), inspired by a clear vision, integrated with other policies in learning and teaching (e.g. learning outcomes) and supported by innovative methods (e.g. Integrating Content and Language in Higher education, a HE-focussed interpretation of CLIL) and adequate guidance and monitoring. With more than 400 languages spoken in Europe, the EU Commission recognizes the value of multilingualism, being reflected in many projects including projects RUG participates in (Intl Uni project and MAGICC project).

The first results of the Intl Uni project reveal that the majority of the HEIs offer programmes both in English and in the local language. Other HEIs have implemented a parallel or multilingual language policy, or have opted for English as a unique Lingua Franca. Support mechanisms in place tend to be more student than staff-focused and are primarily optional (from “Synthesis Report work package two”, January 2014). The Intl Uni project results also confirm that it is difficult, and often impossible, to distinguish language from culture (from “Synthesis Report work package three”, January 2014). Recent research has shown that foreign language learning is rather poor in Europe, with major differences between countries. In the new Erasmus Plus programme one of the conditions is that institutions should offer more flexible and cost efficient support for language preparation. The EU language policy is in line with the EU lifelong learning policy.
Policy examples

We have been able to find some interesting institutional language policies. Recent literature on English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) tends to focus on cases in specific departments in universities, with the exception of Lauridsen (2013) and the European Language Council\(^{23}\) who take a broader perspective. This focus on programme level could be indicative of the absence of integrated policies across institutions. Yet, the University of Maastricht (2013) has developed a comprehensive “English, unless” policy, aligned with their Strategic Plan (2012), in the context of their learning and working environment, and the social and employability context. The Maastricht policy is supported by results from a survey among (international) employers in the Netherlands, which indicate that 47% require university graduates to have a sufficient language level with specific competences of English and Dutch, while government institutions tend to require even three different languages. Erasmus University in Rotterdam (EUR) has recently implemented a dual language policy. The “Englishness” or “Dutchness” of the environment in which staff members work and their specific role determines the extent to which they need to be proficient in both English and Dutch. A language matrix has been developed by EUR for assessing required language proficiency.

Outside the Netherlands, juridical and political conditions are sometimes different. In Finland, there are two national languages: Finnish and Swedish. In her language policy (2007) the University of Helsinki shows to be very aware of her historical background and national bilingualism in relation to the internationalisation of the university. Multilingualism is seen as a strength and a resource for all members of the academic community. In Flanders, there are still severe limitations to offering English-taught bachelor programmes. In France, a recent government policy to allow French universities to teach in English caused a lot of controversy. In Italy, the “Politecnico di Milano” announced the teaching of all graduate education in English as of 2014, sparking quite a debate and even a case at the National Court.

These various examples within Europe show the relevance of context and history. At the same time, with an increased use of English in European higher education there seems to be a common concern over the possible loss of linguistic and cultural diversity. English is often pointed out as a major threat to multilingualism. House (2003) rightly differentiates between language for communication, enabling communication in a specific context, and language for identification, loaded with culture and belonging to a certain group or culture. While English serves as a facilitator, setting a framework for an international classroom, it also opens doors to new languages and cultures inside as well as outside this classroom.

Discussion in academia

The recent discussion in academia also illustrates the relevance of context and history for language policies. The influence of the English language as a medium of communication in research has been dominant for a long time already (de Wit, 2012). Additionally, over the past twenty years there has been a tendency in higher education to teach in English as an alternative for teaching in one’s mother tongue. Although there are sufficient reasons why it can be important to teach in English, there are also unintended negative effects which need our attention. It is a common misconception that teaching in English is equivalent to internationalisation. This misconception can result in less attention for other foreign languages and not sufficient focus on the quality of English of staff and students for whom English is not their native language (de Wit, 2012). Consequently, such a perspective could lead to a decline of quality and diversity in higher education.

The discussion about the language of teaching is influenced by the economic, political as well as the socio-cultural context. De Wit (2012) illustrates this with examples from Asia and Europe. In

\(^{23}\) European Language Council
Asia, the approach seems more economically motivated and pragmatic: “English is the current common language of communication in both research and teaching. If we want to stay connected to the rest of the world, we had better make use of that reality”. In Europe we see different approaches and debates. The aforementioned examples of Italy, France and Flanders reflect a strong political involvement and strong emotions in society. The debate in Northwest Europe has moved from political to more economic and academic. Whereas, in the 1990s, the Dutch parliament still demanded that teaching in English in higher education would be limited to a small number of programmes, there is now a common understanding that English is required to compete internationally, and there is a growing focus on the quality of teaching in English.

This need for a more qualitative policy on teaching in English has also been recognised in Northern Europe. Among others, Bradford (de Wit, 2012) addresses some linguistic concerns combined with cultural and organisational challenges. Her linguistic concerns are related to the high number of staff and students involved, for whom English is not their mother tongue. The cultural challenges Bradford sees, concern the need of intercultural knowledge for developing internationalised curricula, more inclusive learning and teaching, and reciprocal cultural understanding. The organisational challenges she refers to are related to good and ongoing language support, not only for academic staff but extended to administrative and support staff. The cultural concerns addressed by Bradford are confirmed by Lauridsen and the European Language Council (2013): “It has become apparent that teaching difficulties are not simply a question of language but are rooted in profound cultural differences. Even in Britain, universities need to address the fact that they can’t just teach in English the way they teach native speakers”.

**Innovative methods for support**

From recent literature (for example Klaassen 2008, Airey 2011, Sandhu and Amara 2012, Lauridsen 2013) related to English Medium Instruction (EMI), it emerges that there are many new ideas and innovative methods for language training and support. Klaassen (2008) describes how training and support for staff should be integrated with the training and support of didactic and intercultural skills. The International Education Association of Australia provides a Good Practice Guide for teaching across cultures that integrates language development with intercultural awareness in good practice [http://www.ieaa.org.au/documents/item/128](http://www.ieaa.org.au/documents/item/128). Our RUG Medical Faculty is currently introducing a reference model (Steinert 2010) to build a new approach to the professional language support of teachers in the G2020 programme, including needs analysis. The aforementioned authors describe the main adaptations for teaching in English (for example, in presentation and interaction), and give very practical recommendations (e.g. do not just translate your lecture, make a list of key terms, check pronunciation, practice and structure). Moreover, new technology (e.g. video) should provide the basis for individual reflection, feedback from teachers and peers, and be evidence for formative assessment.

**Lines of support**

**Staff**

The Steinert model used at our RUG Medical Faculty can help us to define a well-balanced line of support for teachers and other staff including several complementary approaches (individual and group; formal and informal), meaning that programmes can make the combination of choices most appropriate to the context(s) in which staff are working. The (central) mentorship role ensures that development is continuous and fits in with the individual’s past experience as well as their future needs and ambitions. While part of the OWI role will involve mentoring through workshops and in other less formal settings, peer coaching implies that OWI will often be ‘mentoring the mentors’ or facilitating mutual support between staff (see Airey 2011). One fundamental idea would be that for every staff role, a line of support will be developed that at least includes all of the above elements i.e.

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24 OWI = Onderwijsinstituut (Institute for Medical Education in English).
formal, informal, group, and individual. A blend of face-to-face and online approaches can be used, as in Airey (2011), taking into account the need to find the most appropriate blend of content knowledge, pedagogy and technology (Koehler & Mishra 2009). It is essential that there is a clearly defined line of support for all teaching roles and other staff roles to ensure continuity and evaluation.

**Students**

For students, language support should be closely related to the curriculum. Innovative methods for support can possibly be reports students have written as well as video recordings of meetings and presentations, and self-reflection reports. In the EU MAGICC project, different scenarios of tasks related to learning outcomes for multilingual and multicultural competences for students are being created, and e-portfolio models for students are being developed (http://www.unil.ch/magicc).

**Assessment**

For the assessment of the language needs of teaching staff, we recommend the use of global scales such as those developed at the University of Copenhagen by Soren & Staehr (2013). The advantage of such scales is that they can be applied to the actual context in which staff are teaching, while also being benchmarked to more detailed CEFR-related descriptors. This also allows us to set a minimum level of C1 for the proficiency of academic staff teaching in English, while still assessing their use of the language in context.

As much as possible, especially for the many staff falling within Category 3 (on the Copenhagen scales this is C1), this support should focus on work that staff have to do anyway (course or class preparation, presentation of teaching materials etc.) so that it adds a significant aspect to their actual work rather than presenting them with an additional “burden”. Clearly, academic staff falling within Category 2 (B2) or below on the Copenhagen scales will need extra language tuition beyond their work environment i.e. tailored language courses. For all other (non-teaching) staff, appropriate levels should be defined depending on the complexity of the English they need to use in their professional lives, which will differ significantly depending on the nature of the tasks they fulfil.

For students, their language proficiency should be assessed in relation to the specific programme entrance requirements and learning outcomes/graduate attributes. The “Can do” descriptors from the European Framework should be used for assessment in addition to international tests to further develop academic communication and study skills throughout the programme. For example: Can-Do for essay writing at C1 = can write clear, well-structured expositions of complex subjects, underlining the relevant salient issues. Can expand and support points of view at some length with subsidiary points, reasons and relevant examples (Council of Europe 2001: 62).

**RUG language policy: aims and objectives**

From literature, developments and examples described above, it is clear that RUG needs a language policy that takes into account its specific history and context, actual strategic plan and internationalisation policy. RUG has a long history of internationalisation, and has always been open to other languages and cultures. The RUG mission states that we “prepare students for a life and career in a globalised world. RUG strives to be a truly international university and a major global player”. Our values illustrate how we do this: “we highly value our cross-disciplinary character; our work contributes to international developments. We work in a context of academic excellence and integrity, and embrace diversity. Being an international university should be reflected in, for example, an inclusive environment with equal rights and access for all staff and students, an international perspective throughout research disciplines and degree programmes, and an international perspective at the institutional level, reflected in all policies and regulations” (RUG Internationalisation Vision, 2014. This includes our language policy, as well as our policies on University Teaching Qualifications.

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26 Inclusive: understandable, accessible and relevant (Hockings, C. (2010)).
(UTQ/BKO and STQ/SKO), learning outcomes/graduate attributes\textsuperscript{27}, international marketing and admissions, and the selection of our international partners.

The aim of our new RUG language policy should be to make ALL staff and students feel at home and confident, and comfortable in using another language, so that we can all be effective in what we do, as we strive for academic excellence. \textbf{We envision language proficiency as a competence both for effective participation and inclusion during study and work at RUG as well as for employability and international mobility in a life-long learning context}. We intend to be a bilingual university, fostering individual multilingualism and enhancing linguistic and cultural diversity and awareness. In our perspective, language proficiency is strongly related to intercultural competences and with teaching and research related skills.

If RUG wants to be a truly international university and prepare her students for a life and career in a globalised world, English is the “lingua franca” in education and research, a communication tool for transferring knowledge, competences and attitude, with maybe the exception of a few programmes and disciplines with a specific Dutch focus. Providing education and research in English is also a logical choice in order to attract an internationally diverse group of talented students and to conduct high-level research. At the same time, RUG has strong regional roots and a long history of engagement with society. Dutch is part of our culture and identity. Additionally, as described in our internationalisation vision, we aim to “use diversity of staff and students as a resource”. Consequently, RUG’s mission and vision will result in an inclusive dual-plus language policy, accommodating the use of Dutch and English, and fostering multilingualism on a more individual level.

\textbf{Dual-plus language policy}

A dual-plus language policy fostering multilingualism will have the following implications. Accommodating the use of Dutch implies that ALL international staff and students at RUG should learn about Dutch language, culture and society to a functional level for their study, work and social environment, and be facilitated in their learning process. Accommodating the use of English implies a good quality control system, in particular for all non-native speakers of English, and language support integrated with intercultural competences and pedagogical skills, closely related to the curricula and to specific needs. Fostering multilingualism applies to, for example, our students going abroad for study, or our staff working with colleagues from different language and cultural backgrounds. While, in such specific contexts, proficiency in a third or even fourth language can be very useful, multilingualism is overall highly valued by employers and highly relevant for international mobility and understanding. Additionally, the five other world languages (German, French, Spanish, Portuguese, Chinese) should be integrated in the curriculum of specific programmes. In the related policies, English language proficiency and intercultural competences should be an integral part of our University Teaching Qualifications (UTQ/BKO and STQ/SKO), as well as in programme learning outcomes/graduate attributes.

\textsuperscript{27} See Jones, E. and D. Killick (2013). Graduate Attributes and the Internationalized Curriculum.
Management and administration

In management and administration, Dutch is the primary language at RUG, in accordance with Dutch society in general, while English is the secondary language. This implies that while RUG is managed and administered in Dutch (both internally and in relation to the Dutch authorities), the university also:

- communicates both in Dutch and English in such a way as to ensure that staff and students are in a position to perform their functions in the organisation regardless of linguistic and cultural background
- ensures that students and staff who are not (yet/sufficiently) proficient in Dutch are able to communicate with relevant administrative staff in English
- ensures that communication regarding the rights and duties of staff and students are available both in Dutch and in English
- ensures that formal, written communication in letters/mails/documents is available both in Dutch and in English
- ensures that communication on the RUG website with relevance for non-Dutch speaking students, staff members and/or their internal or external audiences is available in English.
Recommendations

Overall
- To establish an INCLUSIVE, DUAL PLUS language policy in line with RUG mission and vision, interrelated with RUG policy on University Teaching Qualifications (UTQ/BKO and STQ/SKO), HR policy on staff recruitment, development and support, learning outcomes/graduate attributes, and international marketing/admissions, implying that:

- ALL staff and students should master Dutch and English to a level required for their work, study and social environment, in an integrated approach with intercultural and didactic skills. The PLUS component adds that other languages than English and Dutch should be fostered and supported on a more individual level (for students and staff) and in specific programmes.
- To foster an inclusive multicultural learning environment; all staff should possess the intercultural competences required for their work environment during their first year of teaching whereas students will develop these during their BA.

For English
- For staff, to establish an overall quality control framework for assessing and monitoring (in terms of “CAN DO”\(^\text{28}\)) the English of all staff (academic and administrative) and provide adequate feedback and a line of support
- For students, to define both the required level of English related to academic communication and study skills in the entry requirements and in learning outcomes/graduate attributes, at programme level, and provide an adequate line of support.

For Dutch (language and culture)
- To define and establish a functional level of Dutch for international staff and international students\(^\text{29}\) in their specific study, work and social environment and for future employability and mobility, and provide an adequate line of support.

For other languages
- To offer and support learning and development of other languages than English and Dutch on a more individual level and in specific programmes, resulting in provision for learning German, French, Spanish, Portuguese and Chinese including the options for on-line learning, fostering effective participation and inclusion during study and work at RUG and future employability and mobility in a life-long learning context.
- To offer all students the opportunity to take TOEFL/IELTS or other internationally recognised language tests at RUG.

For multiculturalism
- Tailor-made training/feedback will be offered to staff to support them in teaching in a multicultural classroom and environment. Multicultural competences\(^\text{30}\) will be made an integral part of UTQ and STQ.
- Students will work on multicultural communication skills while taking their respective courses, collecting evidence/samples of their intercultural skills and with the opportunity to gather them in an e-portfolio, and may also be offered a multilingual/multicultural module to take as an elective, for extra credits.

\(^\text{28}\) CAN DO statements refer to competences defined in Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR, 2001).
\(^\text{29}\) International being defined here as non-native Dutch speakers.
\(^\text{30}\) Multicultural competences for staff and students will be defined and specified within the specific functional context.
For overall management

- To implement this language policy for formal communication (internal and external) in management and administration.
References


Language Proficiency at Maastricht University (2013). Policy note on the contribution of languages to functioning in an international environment.


Wit, H. de. (2012). An introduction to higher education internationalisation. Centre for Higher Education Internationalisation (CHEI), Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Milan, Italy.

Wit, H. de and N. Ripmeester (2012). Het behouden van buitenlandse studenten voor de Nederlandse arbeidsmarkt; een vergelijkende analyse van beleidsplannen en initiatieven in vier Europese landen: Duitsland, Denemarken, Zweden en Finland.
**Relevant links**

Action plan OCW/SER Make it in the Netherlands:

http://www.internationalstudy.nl/sites/default/files/Gedragscode


Assessment framework NVAO for internationalisation:


Code of conduct for international students in higher education:

http://www.internationalstudy.nl/sites/default/files/Gedragscode


EU Intl Uni project: http://intluni.eu

EU MAGICC project: [http://www.unil.ch/magicc](http://www.unil.ch/magicc)

4. Description task and participants working groups

Working group staff/HR policies and support – Kevin Haines (co-ordinator, Task Force, IC project team/UMCG), Frans Zwarts (Chair Task Force), Franka van den Hende (Task Force, project manager international classroom), Grytsje van der Meer (HR), Jaap Mulder (ESI), Jan Borleffs (Faculty of Medical Sciences), Berna de Boer (Language Centre), Nienke Bastiaans (FEB), Vicky Blum (student), Gerald Jonker (Faculty of Mathematics & Natural Sciences), Mayra Mascareno (Groningen Institute for Educational Research).

- how to include language and intercultural competences (ICC) in BKO/UTQ
- implications for HR policy on staff recruitment, development and support
- how to establish an overall quality control framework for assessing and monitoring
- (in terms of “CAN DO”/CEFR framework) the English of all staff (academic and supportive) level/competences
- how to provide adequate feedback and a line of support (for English in particular)
- how to define a functional level of Dutch for staff (non-native speakers of Dutch), in their specific context and given their specific ambitions
- how to offer learning and support of other languages than English and Dutch –
  - plus options for on-line learning
- what is the current offer of training, support and assessment for staff
- implications for training, support and assessment – per group/UFO profile.

Working group student policies and support – Estelle Meima (coordinator, Task Force, Language Centre), Frans Zwarts (Chair Task Force), Steven Brakman (FEB), Kirsten Wolkotte (admissions, Faculty of Law), Alexandra Crisan (student, University Council), Catherina Meissner (IC project/FEB,), Willemijn Jonkheer (student), Erwin Uildriks (Student Service Center).

- related to academic skills development, how to develop intercultural communication competences (ICC)- and English language competences in programmes
- additional - for (specific) international programmes, how to integrate a third language
  - and options for on-line learning (e.g. EU MAGICC project)
- how to integrate ICC and language competences in learning outcomes – overall and per programme
- how to integrate required competences for entrance in admissions – CAN DO statements (CEFR framework)
- how to define a functional level of Dutch for students (non-native speakers of Dutch), in their specific context, and given their ambitions
- to offer students the opportunity to take TOEFL or another internationally recognised language test at RUG in Groningen
- what is the current offer, for language and ICC development, within and outside programmes, for students
- implications for (specific) programmes and (additional) training and support (including on-line).

Working group inclusiveness / intercultural competences – Franka van den Hende (co-ordinator), Wijnand Aalderink (FEB/career services), Dicky Tamminga (HR), Robbert Maseland (FEB), Peter de Vrieze (student, University Council), Anje Dijk (Language Center), Tom Koole (Communication Studies, Arts)

- how to define required ICC competences in RUG context, for specific staff /UFO profiles (academic and supportive) and for students in specific programmes
- opportunities for on-line learning and e-portfolio scenarios for students
- how to create more awareness and appreciation for diversity of staff and students
  - what is the current offer for ICC training – for staff and for students

31 Minutes of meetings and background information submitted available at request.
- how to match training in ICC (and language development) with requirements of employers (employability, NEXT project)
- implications for training, support (e.g. buddy/mentor system) and assessment
- implications for activities (in and outside of classroom) and projects (outside the scope of the language policy).
University of Groningen Code of Conduct: Languages used in Teaching and Examinations (“Gedragscode Voertalen RUG”)

In light of the provisions of Section 7.2 of the Higher Education and Research Act (WHW: Wet op het hoger onderwijs en wetenschappelijk onderzoek) concerning the language of instruction in education, and considering that the University of Groningen is internationally oriented, which in the area of education is demonstrated by its:

a. international student population
b. English-taught degree programmes (Bachelor’s, Master’s and PhD degree programmes)
c. international cooperation agreements with universities on:
   - joint and double degree programmes
   - international mobility of students and staff (both outgoing and incoming exchange programmes)
   - participation in projects of the European Union (such as Erasmus+)
   - strategic partnerships (e.g. U4 Network, Coimbra Group)

For more, see also the University of Groningen website on international partner agreements

the following provisions shall apply to the University of Groningen.

Article 1 Definition

The language of instruction shall be the language in which the teaching of a degree programme, or parts thereof, takes place, in which the examinations or final assessments are taken and in which the teaching material is presented.

Article 2 Teaching language: Dutch

1. The language of instruction for a degree programme is Dutch.
2. Notwithstanding the first paragraph, another teaching language may be used if:
   a. the degree programme concerns that language;
   b. the instruction is provided by a foreign lecturer;
   c. it is an optional part of the programme, i.e. does not form part of the mandatory course units of the curriculum;
   d. the specific nature, organization or the quality of the teaching makes such necessary, or the origin of the students makes this necessary.

Article 3 Teaching language: English

The language of instruction for a degree programme shall be English if the international character of the degree programme makes this desirable, in accordance with the provisions of Article 2.2d.

Article 4 Degree programme information and rules

If a degree programme is (largely) taught in Dutch or in English, information about the programme as well as the specific rules which apply to that programme, including the Teaching and Examination Regulations (OER: Onderwijs en Examenreglement) and the Rules and Regulations of the Board of Examiners shall be available in the same language.

Article 5 Teaching and examination regulations

1. The Teaching and Examination Regulations (OER) shall specify the following:
   a. the language of instruction for the degree programme or course units in a degree programme;
   b. the entry requirements concerning the teaching language, and;
   c. how the entry requirements referred to under b will be assessed.
2. The entry requirements for a Bachelor's degree programme with another language of instruction than Dutch shall be in accordance with the statutorily laid down entry requirements.

3. The use of another language of instruction than Dutch shall not lead to an increase in the study load of the degree programme.

**Article 6    Competence to designate the language of instruction**

1. Competence to decide on the use of English as a language of instruction lies with the Faculty Board, which may be at the request of the Programme Director of the programme concerned. The Faculty Board shall take into consideration the recommendations of the relevant degree programme committee requested by the Programme Director.

2. Competence to decide on the use of another language of instruction other than Dutch or English rests with the Board of the University, at the request of the Faculty Board. The Faculty Board shall follow the procedure set out in paragraph 1. If this concerns a degree programme related to that language, as referred to in Article 3.2a, the Faculty Board shall be competent in accordance with paragraph 1.

3. A change in the language of instruction for a degree programme shall take place only from the start of a new academic year.

4. Transition arrangements shall be put in place for students who had already started the degree programme prior to a change in the language of instruction, as laid down in the Teaching and Examination Regulations (OER) for the degree programme.

5. The students referred to in paragraph 4 should be able to take the examinations and write their thesis in the language which applied at the time when they began the degree programme. This condition shall apply throughout the duration of the nominal study period for the degree programme plus one extra year of study (C+1), provided that registration for the degree programme was not interrupted from the time of the change of language. In the event of interrupted registration after the change in language, the new language of the degree programme shall apply from the date of re-registration.

**Article 7    Quality and practicability**

1. The use of a non-Dutch language of instruction for a degree programme, or parts thereof, may not be at the expense of the quality of the teaching and the practicability of the degree programme.

2. To safeguard quality and practicability, the Faculty Board shall be responsible for:
   a. the demonstrable language competence of the lecturers using the other language of instruction in performing their teaching tasks;
   b. the demonstrable language competence of the students registered for the degree programme who will be taking the relevant degree programme and associated examinations.

3. The Faculty Board shall enable those lecturers who do not yet meet the language competence standards to meet them.

4. The Faculty Board shall inform students registered for the degree programme who do not meet the language competence standards about the opportunities available for improving their language skills.

Adopted by the Board of the University on: .............
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 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.