

STE-0218 Language Policy

Language Policy

The Iceland University of the Arts is at the forefront in professional discourse in the field of the arts. Therefore, it has an important social role to play in developing vocabulary and disseminating knowledge on the arts in the Icelandic language. As a national higher arts education institution, it also operates within the international domain and actively participates in international collaboration, both in relation to teaching and research. The University's language policy is developed with this in mind.

Icelandic is the main language of communication within the University, both in the spoken and written language, whether in teaching, research or administration. The University requires that its employees make exemplary use of Icelandic in their teaching and research.

The University provides students with training in disseminating their knowledge and skills in Icelandic in a clear and organised manner. The University stresses that its students are capable of participating in professional discourse on the arts in Icelandic, both in speech and writing.

The University emphasises that academic staff disseminate knowledge to the local community and thus create a channel for the development of a professional discourse on the arts in Icelandic. In addition, the University staff and students are active participants in international professional discourse in other languages. The University operates international study programmes and a number of exchange students and visiting academics and professionals work and study temporarily at the University. Furthermore, international academic and support staff are employed on a regular basis. The use of languages reflects this double role of the University. Academic staff are expected to be able to articulate their subjects in more than one language and they are required to speak proficient English in teaching, just like Icelandic.

The University underscores the equal status of Icelandic vis-à-vis other languages. It maintains that English or any other languages are not to be prioritised over Icelandic, even though information is communicated in more than one language and that the teaching language is English within international study programmes. At the same time, it is important to respect the language use of all those who speak Icelandic and to ensure that language is never used in an exclusive manner.

EXECUTION AND IMPLEMENTATION

1. ICELANDIC IS THE MAIN LANGUAGE OF COMMUNICATION AT THE UNIVERSITY, IN WRITING AND IN SPEECH, WHETHER IN TEACHING, RESEARCH OR ADMINISTRATION.

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Upplýsingar um skjalið

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Útg.d:	21.10.2026
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- a. The main rule on the interplay between Icelandic and English is that staff use English along with Icelandic but not in its place.
 - b. Information about the University and its activities shall be available in Icelandic and English on its website and the intranet. At the same time, it shall be ensured that all students and academic staff are aware that Icelandic is the default language of communication within the University.
 - c. All University records are considered original in the Icelandic version, and publications in other languages are considered translations. The Icelandic version shall apply if a linguistic dispute arises.
 - d. Meetings among administrative staff are usually held in Icelandic. If held in English or another foreign language it should be announced in the meeting invitation.
 - e. Students and academic staff have the opportunity to use language technology equipment for Icelandic, e.g., grammar corrector software, speech synthesis, speech recognition and translation software.
2. IT IS EMPHASISED THAT ARTISTIC PRACTICE AND RESEARCH BY STAFF AND STUDENTS ARE DISSEMINATED TO THE LOCAL COMMUNITY, THEREBY IMPACTING THE PROFESSIONAL DISCOURSE IN THE FIELDS THAT THE UNIVERSITY OPERATES IN. IN THIS WAY, THE UNIVERSITY AIDS THE DEVELOPMENT OF A PUBLIC DISCOURSE IN ICELANDIC AND SUPPORTS THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A FORMAL PLATFORM FOR DISCUSSION ON RESEARCH IN THE ARTS.
3. THE TEACHING LANGUAGE AT THE UNDERGRADUATE LEVEL IS ICELANDIC.
- a. In teaching at BA level it is emphasised that students make an effort to speak efficiently and that they use Icelandic as a vehicle for the generation and dissemination of knowledge. The aim is to strengthen their ability to express themselves in Icelandic, both in speech and in writing.
 - b. Icelandic translations of foreign-language books, articles and other scholarly texts are used whenever available. Teachers are also encouraged to discuss neologisms and translations of terms from foreign languages with their students.
 - c. Students at the BA-level write their final thesis in Icelandic and are required to apply proficient spelling and language. Students are encouraged to translate terms and citations into Icelandic in order to strengthen the use of Icelandic in academic writing. In cases where students' mother tongue is other than Icelandic, they can be granted an exemption to write their final thesis in English.
 - d. In cases where international students are allowed to attend a course taught in Icelandic, teachers will try to accommodate them without changing the language of instruction.

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- e. In cases where teachers' mother tongue is other than Icelandic and when a course is taught as part of the University's international collaboration, the teaching language will be English.
 - f. The teaching language in the international BA study programme in Dance Practices at the Department of Performing Arts is English.
4. THE TEACHING LANGUAGE AT THE GRADUATE LEVEL IS GENERALLY ENGLISH.
- a. The international master's programmes emphasise proficient use of English as a teaching language. Students receive training in writing in English.
 - b. International master's students with a mother tongue other than English must meet the minimum requirements for English proficiency according to a recognised international English examination.
 - c. Icelandic is the teaching language at the Department of Arts Education, emphasising the importance of Icelandic as a language of instruction in the pedagogy of the arts.
 - d. When a teacher is Icelandic-speaking and no non-Icelandic speaking students attend the course, the teaching can be done in Icelandic even though the syllabus states that the course is taught in English.
 - e. Although English is the teaching language in the international master's programmes, students can submit their final thesis in Icelandic, if they so wish.
5. INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS ENROLLING IN STUDY PROGRAMMES TAUGHT IN ICELANDIC, ALONG WITH EXCHANGE STUDENTS STUDYING AT THE UNIVERSITY, HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO ATTEND AN ICELANDIC LANGUAGE COURSE, IN ADDITION TO OTHER AVAILABLE SUPPORT.
- a. International students enrolling in study programmes taught in Icelandic undergo an indicative assessment in the Icelandic language.
6. THE UNIVERSITY ENCOURAGES ITS EMPLOYEES TO DEVELOP A GLOSSARY IN THEIR FIELD OF SPECIALISATION IN COLLABORATION WITH OTHER SCHOLARS AND INSTITUTIONS.
7. INTERNATIONAL EMPLOYEES AT THE UNIVERSITY ARE ENCOURAGED TO ATTEND AN ICELANDIC LANGUAGE COURSE AND DEDICATE THEMSELVES TO LEARNING THE LANGUAGE. THE UNIVERSITY STRESSES THAT INTERNATIONAL ACADEMIC STAFF ON PERMANENT CONTRACTS USE ICELANDIC AS THEIR TEACHING LANGUAGE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

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- a. Permanent employees with a mother tongue other than Icelandic are expected to conduct their work in Icelandic after an appropriate adjustment period. The University pays for an Icelandic language course at the beginning of employment. Reference shall be made to the University's language policy in job advertisements.

RESPONSIBILITY

The Rector is responsible for the University's language policy, but departments are responsible for its implementation.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

1. Application of an international English test for international programmes.
2. Application of an indicative assessment in the Icelandic language.

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