

APPROVED
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of the Senate of Vilnius University

VILNIUS UNIVERSITY LANGUAGE POLICY GUIDELINES

1. Preamble

As the leading institution of science and studies in Lithuania, Vilnius University (hereinafter the University) is responsible for state's cultural and scientific progress and development, their communication, and the dissemination of research results. As a centre of intellectual and creative thought that is guided by the values of openness and the diversity of views, and making a social and cultural impact on Lithuanian society, the University aims to strengthen its international prestige, transparency and competitiveness, and provides members of the University community with an opportunity to actively participate in the national and international areas of education and science.

The Vilnius University Language Policy Guidelines (hereinafter the Guidelines) are intended to define the use of languages within the academic and community life of the University.

The Guidelines provide that Lithuanian, the state language, is the University's main language for research, studies, communication, and service provision. Taking into account the role that language plays in increasing the University's international significance and integrating into international academic networks, English, as an international language of science and education, is the main supplementary language used in the University for science, studies, communication and service provision in accordance with the aims and needs.

The University is also committed to creating a sustainable multilingual, multicultural, and inclusive internal environment.

The Guidelines were developed in accordance with these documents:

- [The Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania](#), which, inter alia, establishes that Lithuanian shall be the state language;
- [The Law on the State Language of the Republic of Lithuania](#), which, inter alia, defines that the State shall guarantee the residents of the Republic of Lithuania the right to acquire university education in the state language;
- [The Law on Higher Education and Research of the Republic of Lithuania](#), which, inter alia, specifies that the medium of instruction in state higher education institutions shall be the Lithuanian language, but other languages may be used in teaching if: the expected study outcomes are linked to foreign language skills; lectures are delivered or other academic events are headed by teachers from foreign states; international higher education institution students are studying in a specific study programme; or studies are carried out pursuant to joint study programmes with higher education institutions in foreign states;
- [The Statute of Vilnius University](#), which, inter alia, establishes the University's mission of responsibility to the Nation and the State of Lithuania, openness and accountability to society, and the aim to educate active, responsible citizens and society leaders of the State of Lithuania, and to ensure that the quality of all forms of study conforms to the highest international standards and meets the requirements of the learners, society, and the State;
- [The Guidelines for the Internationalisation of Teaching and Learning at Vilnius University](#), in which, inter alia, the University commits to developing the internationalisation of teaching and learning as well as intercultural competencies;
- [The Vilnius University Strategic Plan for 2021–2025](#), which, inter alia, provides for the positioning of the University as a place of science and studies on the European and global university map.

2. Language policy objectives

The University sets out the following language policy objectives:

- to ensure the usage and development of the Lithuanian language as an academic language, as well as the development of scientific Lithuanian, and the sustainability of academic discourse in Lithuanian;
- to strengthen the dissemination of scientific, educational, and cultural achievements in Lithuania and the European higher education area in Lithuanian and other languages;
- to develop the usage of English as the main supplementary language in various fields of the University's activity in order to consolidate the image of the University being open to the world, and to provide members of the community with the opportunity to actively participate in global educational and scientific contexts;
- to develop multilingualism based on openness to diversity and to allow the members of the community to improve their language skills and intercultural competencies;
- to strive to ensure that in a multilingual and multicultural academic and professional environment, members of the University community would be able to communicate fluently, both orally and in writing, in Lithuanian, English, and Lithuanian as a foreign language – at a level no lower than C1 according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (hereinafter CEFR) – and be able to communicate in at least one additional language at A1–B2 level according to the CEFR or other, non-European, language standard. In all areas of activities, the Lithuanian, English and/or other languages used must meet the language quality standards of these languages.

3. Language usage at the University

3.1. The use of Lithuanian language

The official language at the University, in accordance with the Law on the State Language of the Republic of Lithuania, is Lithuanian. The University provides residents of the Republic of Lithuania with access to education in Lithuanian as provided for in the Law on the State Language of the Republic of Lithuania and other legal acts that regulate the University's activities.

At the University, the Lithuanian language is not only used but developed and fostered in all areas of activity. The University's achievements in education and science are presented to the University community and Lithuanian society in coherent, fluent, and grammatically correct Lithuanian.

The researchers at the University ensure the sustainability, development, and dissemination of the Lithuanian language in Lithuania and abroad.

The University acknowledges the importance that the translation of scientific and literary works from and into Lithuanian has on the national culture and the sustainability of academic Lithuanian discourse.

3.2. The use of English language

In addition to the Lithuanian language as provided for in the Law on the State Language of the Republic of Lithuania and other legal acts that regulate the University's activity, the English language is used as the main supplementary language of research and studies.

The use of English in the areas of studies, research, and communication is an important factor that enables the University to achieve one of its key strategic objectives: to develop the University's internationalisation in the area of studies and scientific research.

Studies conducted in English contribute to the creation of an international and multicultural study environment at the University, and broaden the range of opportunities for mobility and international cooperation for the members of the University community.

The University attaches the most importance to mastery of the English language and the dissemination of the results of scientific achievements in the English language since it allows the members of the University community to integrate smoothly into the international environment of studies and science and to operate successfully in it, strengthening the University's visibility in the

international area of education and science.

3.3. The use of other languages

Multilingualism is considered an important factor in a country's development and success, which provides society and each of its members with a wider range of opportunities to work and realise themselves in global conditions. Proficiency in more than one language is considered an important element of higher education, it stimulates creativity, self-expression, and provides a wider range of career opportunities.

Knowledge of languages has inherent value in that it motivates people to get to know and understand foreign cultures; therefore, the University provides its community with the opportunity to learn various languages and use them in a social and academic environment.

Good foreign language skills allow members of the University community to integrate into multilingual academic discourses more efficiently. Multilingualism strengthens international cooperation and increases the University's influence and visibility worldwide.

4. Studies

Studies at the University are carried out in the state language – Lithuanian; certain study programmes are carried out in other languages.

The study process ensures the consistent development of subject-specific professional and standard Lithuanian in the study programmes that are conducted in Lithuanian. Study programme committees select and apply the most appropriate methods to develop the students' abilities to use subject-specific professional Lithuanian during the teaching and learning process and to ensure the quality of the language used throughout the course of studies and in written assignments.

Academic literacy in Lithuanian is developed in all study programmes that are taught in Lithuanian.

The University also provides the opportunity to learn Lithuanian Sign Language.

To ensure the smoother integration of foreign students into the life of the University community and Lithuanian society, the University provides courses of Lithuanian as a foreign language to its students.

The University develops the intercultural competencies of its students and provides opportunities for both Lithuanian and foreign citizens to study in an international group in English.

The rules of admission to study programmes taught at the University and the descriptions of specific study programmes and (or) study subjects (modules) outline the particular pre-requisite language proficiency requirements for those intending to study at the University in a particular course taught in a foreign language.

With the aim of developing the foreign language communication and intercultural competencies of its students, the University provides opportunities to learn foreign languages for subject-specific professional and general purposes.

The first cycle and integrated study programmes at the University provide an opportunity to learn at least one professional foreign language and reach C1 level according to the CEFR. The specific form of learning a subject-specific professional foreign language is set by each study programme committee. If a student has already reached C1 level of a foreign language according to the CEFR and has a certificate proving this, they may choose another foreign language that the University offers.

The University also provides an opportunity to learn at least one additional foreign language at the preferred level (A1–B2) according to the CEFR or another, non-European, language standard.

The University promotes the study of the languages of neighbouring countries, as well as historically significant languages.

5. Science

At the University, scientific publications are produced in Lithuanian, English, or other languages, depending on the field of science, the objective, and target audience.

Dissertations are prepared and defended in Lithuanian, English, or other languages in accordance with Vilnius University Regulation of Doctoral Studies.

The main language for Lithuanian research and Lithuanian studies is Lithuanian. The University also promotes the dissemination of Lithuanian studies in other languages.

The University develops scientific Lithuanian and creates terminology in various fields of science.

The University encourages research promotion publications in Lithuanian, English, and other languages used for the popularisation of science by ensuring the dissemination of scientific knowledge to the public both nationally and internationally.

The University promotes the preparation and publication of learning tools in Lithuanian as well as the translation of such tools into Lithuanian.

The University develops and ensures the sustainability of research on languages and cultures that are of historical significance to Lithuania.

6. The community and the dissemination of information

The official language of the dissemination of information within the University is Lithuanian, whereas the main language of international communication is English. The latest information on the activities, scientific research areas, and study programmes on the websites of the University and its core academic units is published in Lithuanian and English, in order to strengthen the University's name and visibility in the international arena, as well as to involve community members who are foreign language speakers in University life.

Communication with future and current students and graduates is carried out in Lithuanian, whereas in cases when current and future students and graduates are foreigners, English or another of their study programme languages is used. When possible, students are encouraged to communicate in their native language.

Meetings of the governing bodies and administration of the University are conducted in Lithuanian; if necessary, they can also be held in English or another language as well.

Document management, accounting, financial, and technical information is handled in Lithuanian at the University. The main normative documents relating to internationalisation that regulate the execution study processes, competitions for job positions, certification, employment, accommodation, support and the performance of duties related to internationalisation should be prepared and announced in Lithuanian, accompanied by an English translation.

The University's information and communication systems as well as the services required by foreign students, member of the teaching staff, or other employees are provided in both Lithuanian and English.

Events (academic, scientific, cultural) organised by the University are held in Lithuanian, English, or other languages, and, when needed, interpreting services are provided into Lithuanian or other languages, including Lithuanian Sign Language.

The level of language proficiency that is required of the University's academic and non-academic staff is defined in the job description. Employees enter the information themselves about their level of foreign language proficiency on one of the University's information systems and shall be held responsible for the accuracy of the data submitted.

The University's goal is that the language skill level of academic staff that teach in English, Lithuanian as a foreign language, or other languages would be no lower than C1 according to the CEFR or another, non-European, language standard; the University provides the means to reach that goal.

To facilitate the integration of foreign staff into the life of the University community and Lithuanian society, the University offers them a course of Lithuanian as a foreign language.

The University provides opportunities and encourages its employees to improve their communication competencies in subject-specific professional and/or standard Lithuanian and the

necessary foreign language.

The University provides a wide selection of languages to teach and learn.
