

**LANGUAGE POLICY
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI**

**From Guidelines to Practice:
towards Functional Multilingualism**



Developing institutional language policies in
higher education
HRK German Rectors' Conference

Supervisors
- Director of the Research Management
- Director of the Language Policy, Planning and
- Deputy Director of the Language Management
- Teaching and Learning

Language solutions partners:
Innovator for e-learning solutions
Actors for the best for the world

SOLUTIONS
Language Buddy Programme
CASE HE: templates, mini-dictionaries
Internal communication vs. external communication

"It is a nice thought of course
- but there really are more important
things than that generally
- what is often more important than justifying time and
money in the institutional language policy"

**University of Helsinki
Language Policy:
the Framework**
- As an educational institution, University
safeguards the national languages
→ Finnish, Swedish
- As a research institution, University bears
responsibility for internationalisation
→ English

**Languages in the
University's everyday
operations and services**
→
- Available in Finnish, Swedish or English
- Available for those students and staff
who do not speak either of these languages
- Availability of language services

**POLICY
CHALLENGES**
1. Debate within the University: the role of
national languages in the academia vs. the use
of English as lingua franca in the academia
2. Debate outside the University: members of
the national party seeking to put an end to
University making the learning of Swedish in public
schools the gateway

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Languages in the University's everyday operations and services

→

- For all use of Finnish, Swedish or English
- Guidelines for official events and when designating main or secondary language
- Examples of language practice

University of Helsinki Language Policy: the Framework

- As an educational institution, University safeguards the national languages
 - Finnish, Swedish
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 - English

POLICY CHALLENGES

1. Debate within the University: the role of national languages in the academic use of English as lingua franca in the academia
2. Debate outside the University: members of the national party seeking to put an end to University's learning of Swedish in public schools and the gallery

SOLUTIONS

- Language Buddy Programme
- CASE HE: templates, mini-dictionaries
- Internal communication vs. external communication

It's a nice thought of course, but there really are more important things than trying to get everyone to use the national language policy.

Supervisory Committee

- National Office for Research Management
- University of Applied Sciences
- Finnish University of Applied Sciences
- Finnish University of Applied Sciences
- Finnish University of Applied Sciences

Language solutions part 2

Insights for all stakeholders

Actions for the best for the world

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International Affairs
University Services

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Background & expertise

- International Human Resources Management
- Internationalisation Strategy, Processes and Implementation
- Change Facilitation and Change Management
- Coaching and Training

UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI in a nutshell

- Established 1640
- Subjects 300
- Staff 7300
- Degree students 32000
- Ranking <100



INTERNATIONAL CLOSE-UP

ACADEMIC STAFF: 25 % international

DOCTORAL STUDENTS: 33 % international

MASTER DEGREE STUDENTS: 9,5 %
international

NON-ACADEMIC STAFF: 5 % international



FINNISH

RENNOSTI KOLMIKIELINEN
BEKVÄM PÅ TRE SPRÅK
SIMPLY TRILINGUAL

KIELIPERIAATTEET
SPRÅKPRINCIPER
LANGUAGE POLICY

SWEDISH

ENGLISH

University of Helsinki Language Policy: the Framework

- As an **educational institution**, University safeguards the national languages

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2. COMMUNICATIONS
AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS
The terms of the policies, rules,
and procedures regarding the
language
The language used in the
publications
Signs in Finnish, Swedish and
English

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3. MONITORING
The implementation of the
language policy is monitored
The results of the monitoring
are used for the improvement
of the language policy

Languages in the University's everyday operations and services



- Parallel use of Finnish, Swedish, or English
- Guidelines for official contexts and when decisions are made in meetings or workgroups
- Examples of best practices

1. LANGUAGE SKILLS OF THE STAFF

- language and communication skills related to job duties
- the required skill level determined on a job-specific basis when recruiting new staff
- developing language skills considered in work hour planning

2. COMMUNICATIONS AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS

- The names of the faculties, units, and independent institutes in Finnish, Swedish and English
- The strategic and other key documents published in Finnish, Swedish and English
- Signs in Finnish, Swedish and English

3. MONITORING

- Implementation of the language policy is part of the University's operations management process; monitoring of
 - languages of publications
 - the number of credits in different languages
 - staff participation in language training

BUT DOES IT WORK?





POLICY CHALLENGES

1. Debate within the University: the role of national languages in the academia vs. the role of English as lingua franca in the academia

2. Debate outside the University: members of the nationalist party seeking to put an end to laws making the learning of Swedish in public schools obligatory.

OPERATIONAL CHALLENGES

1. Everyday communication: delays in English (and Swedish) versions
2. CASE Research Services: using English only raised protests among national disciplines
3. CASE Christmas Party: inclusion - exclusion in social events





SOLUTIONS

Language Buddy Programme

CASE HR: Templates, mini-dictionaries

Internal communication vs. external communication



BUT IS IT WORTH IT?





*"It is a nice thought, of course
- but there really are more important
money holes in the university
administration than investing time and
money in the implementation of the
language policy."*

PERSONAL ENERGY PIE

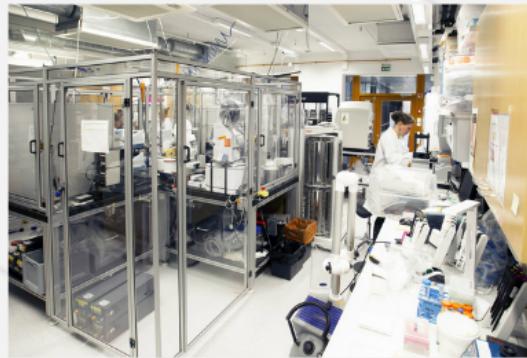




Tekoja maailman parhaaksi

Insatser för världens bästa

Actions for the best for the world



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POLICY CHALLENGES

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Language solutions part 1: Academic for all Helsinki

Actions for the best for the world

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Language solutions part 2: The Finnish Language Centre

- National Office for Language Management
- University Language Centre, Finnish and Swedish
- Language Centre and Foreign Language Centre
- Teaching and Learning

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