

30.3.2026

**Author**

AIREY, John

**Title**

The expansion of English-medium instruction in the Nordic countries : can top-down university language policies encourage bottom-up disciplinary literacy goals? / John Airy ...

**Publication year**

2017

**Source/Footnote**

In: Higher education. - 73 (2017) 4, S. 561 - 576

**Inventory number**

45326

**Keywords**

Fremdsprachen ; Ausland : Dänemark : allgemein ; Ausland : Finnland : allgemein ; Ausland : Norwegen : allgemein ; Ausland : Schweden : allgemein

**Abstract**

Recently, in the wake of the Bologna Declaration and similar international initiatives, there has been a rapid increase in the number of university courses and programmes taught through the medium of English. Surveys have consistently shown the Nordic countries to be at the forefront of this trend towards English-medium instruction (EMI). In this paper, we discuss the introduction of EMI in four Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden). We present the educational setting and the EMI debate in each of these countries and summarize relevant research findings. We then make some tentative suggestions for the introduction of EMI in higher education in other countries. In particular, we are interested in university language policies and their relevance for the day-to-day work of faculty. We problematize one-size-fits-all university language policies, suggesting that in order for policies to be seen as relevant they need to be flexible enough to take into account disciplinary differences. In this respect, we make some specific suggestions about the content of

**30.3.2026**

university language policies and EMI course syllabuses. Here we recommend that university language policies should encourage the discussion of disciplinary literacy goals and require course syllabuses to detail disciplinary-specific language-learning outcomes.(HRK / Abstract übernommen) Airy, John,  
E-Mail: john.airy@physics.uu.se