

## INSTITUTIONAL REGULATORY CODE

<b>Policy Framework</b>		<b>Regulations/rules</b>	
<b>Policy</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>Constitution</b>	
<b>Procedure (Manual)</b>		<b>Local document</b>	
<b>Guidelines</b>		<b>Other (name)</b>	

**Title:** Central University of Technology, Free State (CUT) Language Policy

**Category:** Governance    **X**  
                   Academic  
                   Management

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                                   Management Committee (Mancom)  
                                   Relevant executive manager

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Council

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## CENTRAL UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY, FREE STATE (CUT) LANGUAGE POLICY

### 1. POLICY STATEMENT

- 1.1 CUT is committed to creating an inclusive environment advancing respect for diversity. Furthermore, CUT is committed to enabling a language-rich environment by promoting multilingualism in institutional practices, and in day-to-day institutional life, including core academic activities. The implementation of functional multilingualism must take place purposefully and systematically. In alignment with the Language Policy Framework for Public Higher Education Institutions, and Section 29(2) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa in relation to language usage in its academic, professional, administrative and social contexts, CUT acknowledges the crucial role of language and access to language skills as critical in enabling individuals to realise their full potential to participate in, and contribute to, society.
- 1.2 The CUT Language Policy (“**this/the policy**”) therefore acknowledges and takes cognisance of the constitutional, legislative, statutory and national contexts of CUT. Therefore, it aims to increase reasonable access for all CUT students and staff, and to facilitate pedagogically sound teaching and learning. Language at CUT should therefore promote access to, and success in, academic, administrative, social and professional contexts, and should not create a barrier to the university’s staff or students. This is of particular importance in respect of redressing the results of past racial discrimination, and to ensure no direct or indirect discrimination against any present or prospective CUT staff member or student. As our campuses are situated in the Free State province, we commit ourselves to multilingualism by choosing to promote three predominant languages in the Free State province, namely English, Afrikaans and Sesotho. However, the implementation of the CUT Language Policy will adapt to the changing language demographics and language preferences of its staff and students.
- 1.3 This policy, whilst determining the academic language, and promoting inclusivity, social justice, reconciliation, multilingualism and translanguaging, is founded on

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the principles of *ubuntu* embedded in the core values of CUT. This includes mutual respect and tolerance amongst all cultural, linguistic and religious groups, and therefore this policy should be free from political influences.

- 1.4 CUT will continue in its endeavours to empower its students and staff in English, Afrikaans and Sesotho proficiency. South African Sign Language will also be promoted. The contextual considerations for using these languages are as follows:

#### 1.4.1 Afrikaans

Afrikaans has developed an academic repertoire over decades, and is spoken by many residents in the Free State province. Applying and enhancing the academic potential of Afrikaans is a means of empowering a large and diverse community in South Africa.

#### 1.4.2 English

English is widely used in communication worldwide, and therefore provides a common code that facilitates communication amongst speakers of different mother tongues. Therefore, English has significant business, academic and international value. In the South African context, speakers of the various official South African languages also use English to communicate with each other. Therefore, CUT uses English routinely, but not exclusively, in its academic, professional, administrative and social contexts.

#### 1.4.3 Sesotho

Sesotho is used by most African language speakers in the Free State province. By means of specific initiatives, such as the development of lexicons in identified academic programmes, and expanding Sesotho as an internal language of communication, CUT contributes to the advancement of Sesotho as a developing academic language. The university has also embarked on implementing a Conversational Sesotho module for all first-year students whose mother tongue is not Sesotho.

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#### 1.4.4 South African Sign Language

South African Sign Language entails employing a system of hand gestures, and their placement relative to the upper body, facial expressions, body postures and finger spelling, especially for communication by and with deaf people via a qualified South African Sign Language interpreter. CUT is committed to the promotion of South African Sign Language. This will be implemented gradually at university flagship events.

- 1.5 CUT is committed to develop regional partnerships and collaborative language developments with other universities and language bodies.
- 1.6 The CUT Language Policy Implementation Plan contains details of the implementation of this policy, and should be read in conjunction with this policy.
- 1.7 The implementation of this policy will be monitored closely via the CUT Language Policy Implementation Plan, which will be submitted to the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) on an annual basis.

## 2. DEFINITIONS AND ABBREVIATIONS

The meanings of the terminology used in the policy are as follows:

**Academic language:** This denotes the language to be used in academic transactions, including all teaching and learning endeavours of CUT, such as facilitation, assessment, study guides, curricula, syllabi, and class notes. It includes, for example, discipline-specific vocabulary, grammar and punctuation, argumentation and discourse, and applications of rhetorical conventions and devices that are typical for a content area. If a particular language is a subject, it should be taught according to the scholarly prescriptions of that language.

**Academic literacy:** Understanding a range of academic vocabulary in context; demonstrating membership of an academic (disciplinary) community by reading, writing and thinking in ways that are congruent with the values and attitudes of that community; strengthening development and proficiency in the language needed for career and academic advancement.

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**Access:** The opportunity afforded by a higher education institution to students to register for, and pursue, education and training; or the opportunity of staff members to work for the institution.

**African languages:** Languages indigenous to the African continent.

**Collaborative partnerships:** Two or more people or institutions working together to reach a specific goal.

**CUT:** The Central University of Technology, Free State.

**Differently abled:** The presence of a limitation in the ability to pursue studies in the usual way because of a change in bodily function (physical or mental).

**Epistemic access:** Successful knowledge acquisition and dissemination by enabling teaching and learning pedagogies.

**Higher education:** All learning programmes resulting in a qualification that meets all the requirements of the Higher Education Qualifications Framework (HEQF).

**Higher education institutions:** Institutions providing higher education on a full-time, part-time or distance basis, and that are, in terms of the Higher Education Act (Act No. 101 of 1997) established and declared as public higher education institutions.

**Inclusivity:** Embracing diversity, and bringing people from diverse backgrounds at different institutional levels together.

**Indigenous languages:** Languages with their heritage roots in Africa (also referred to as “African languages”); languages that are native to a country, and that are spoken by indigenous people.

**Institutional transaction(s):** This denotes all forms of interaction and communication – written or otherwise – amongst the members of the university community, and between the university and the public.

**Language(s) of Learning and Teaching (LoLT):** A language or languages used in the teaching/instruction of students within an educational context.

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**Language of scholarship:** A language used in an academic context for purposes of knowledge creation and dissemination, and for purposes of technology transfer.

**Multilingualism:** The ability of societies, communities, institutions, groups and individuals to engage, on a regular basis, with multiple languages in their daily lives.

**Official South African languages:** The 11 official languages of South Africa as stipulated in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, namely Sepedi, Sesotho, Setswana, siSwati, Tshivenda, Xitsonga, Afrikaans, isiNdebele, isiXhosa, isiZulu and English.

**Scientific language:** Language of, relating to, derived from, or used in science, scholarly work, or research findings, and that conforms with the principles or methods used in science.

**Social cohesion:** The degree to which a society is integrated, united and functional, providing an environment to its citizens in which they can flourish, and live together in harmony.

**The/this policy:** The CUT Language Policy.

**Translanguaging:** The process whereby multilingual speakers use multiple languages as an integrated communication system, often simultaneously.

**Ubuntu:** A spirit of fellowship, humanity and compassion (South African Concise Oxford Dictionary 2002:1272). It is often translated as “I am because you are”, meaning that a person is a person through other people (Ifejika 2006). It emphasises sharing, solidarity, compassion, brotherhood and collective morality (Hendriks n.d:5)<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Dictionary Unit for South African English. 2002. *South African Concise Oxford Dictionary*.

Hendriks, C. n.d. Ethics and Governance. (Unpublished study guide.) University of the Free State, Bloemfontein.

Ifejika, N. 2006. *What does ubuntu really mean?*  
(<https://www.theguardian.com/theguardian/2006/sep/29/features11.g>)  
Accessed 06 August 2020.

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### **3. PURPOSE OF THE POLICY**

- 3.1 The purpose of the CUT Language Policy is to guide the planning, management and use of language at CUT, and in so doing, ensuring that language does not create a barrier for social inclusion, equity of access, opportunity or effective communication, or impede the success of our students.
- 3.2 The policy serves to facilitate effective teaching and learning, research, and service delivery at CUT.
- 3.3 Furthermore, this policy serves to promote and create opportunities for multilingualism in all spheres of university life by accommodating linguistic diversity within CUT's regional, national and international contexts. To this effect, CUT is committed to:
  - 3.3.1 the development of indigenous African languages as academic and scientific languages;
  - 3.3.2 the continuous development of Afrikaans as an academic language; and
  - 3.3.3 the promotion of the three chosen regional languages of the Free State province, namely English, Sesotho and Afrikaans, in all spheres of university life.
- 3.4 The policy serves to promote the academic literacy of all our students.
- 3.5 Finally, the CUT Language Policy will ensure access, equity and inclusivity by incrementally phasing in South African Sign Language to accommodate students who require instruction in South African Sign Language.
- 3.6 The following principles must be considered in interpreting and guiding the implementation of the CUT Language Policy:
  - 3.6.1 CUT recognises the complex role of language in society, and regards all languages as resources for the construction of knowledge.
  - 3.6.2 CUT acknowledges and respects the linguistic diversity, language preferences, and levels of language proficiency of its staff and students.

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- 3.6.3 CUT acknowledges the role of academic literacy in knowledge creation in different subject disciplines.
- 3.6.4 CUT recognises the importance of establishing suitable and sufficiently staffed language services and academic staff development services to support the implementation of this policy, and to coordinate all language development and promotional activities related to the CUT Language Policy.
- 3.6.5 The implementation of CUT's Language Policy adapts to the changing language demographics and language preferences of its students and staff.
- 3.6.6 To give effect to the stipulations contained in the Language Policy Framework for Public Higher Education Institutions pertaining to the development of indigenous languages, and for purposes of undertaking relevant steps required with respect to the development of official languages, a Centre for Language Development should be established at CUT.

#### **4. SCOPE AND APPLICATION**

- 4.1 This policy must be interpreted and applied in a manner consistent with:
- 4.1.1 the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996);
  - 4.1.2 the Higher Education Act (Act No. 101 of 1997), as amended;
  - 4.1.3 the White Paper for Post-School Education and Training (2013);
  - 4.1.4 Language Policy Framework for Public Higher Education Institutions (2020);
  - 4.1.5 the National Curriculum Statement: Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement Grade R to 12 (2010);
  - 4.1.6 the Pan South African Language Board (PanSALB) Act (Act No. 59 of 1995);
  - 4.1.7 the National Development Plan;
  - 4.1.8 4.1.8 the CUT Statute;
  - 4.1.9 CUT's Language Policy Implementation Plan;

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- 4.1.10 CUT's Vision 2030;
- 4.1.11 CUT's Strategic Plan 2021 – 2025; and
- 4.1.12 CUT's Transformation Plan.

4.2 This policy impacts upon CUT's staff, students, stakeholders and the community we serve.

## **5. APPROACH AND PHILOSOPHY**

### **5.1 Language of teaching, learning and assessment**

5.1.1 Where demonstrable competencies have been established in one or more languages (Afrikaans and Sesotho) other than English, such competencies and initiatives will be allowed and encouraged in all learning environments, such as the classroom, laboratories, etc. Where such competencies, initiatives, lexicons, or other resources are lacking, investments will be made to ensure the development of Afrikaans and Sesotho into languages of teaching and learning, scholarship and research. The CŪT Language Policy Implementation Plan contains details of how this should be implemented.

5.1.2 Translanguaging, or code switching, can be used in all learning environments to ensure the attainment of specific educational outcomes, provided that it does not exclude others in terms of facilitating understanding. Caution should be exercised using a certain language if it would have negative implications in terms of students' academic achievement.

5.1.3 Assessments will be conducted in English, Afrikaans and Sesotho. Qualifiers for assessments in Afrikaans and Sesotho are contained in CUT's Language Policy Implementation Plan.

5.1.4 Students may submit dissertations or theses in English, Afrikaans or Sesotho. In terms of publications, the choice of language of publication is the prerogative of the researcher. However, researchers should consider variables such as the purpose of the research report and the target audience. Should the dissertation or thesis be written in Sesotho or Afrikaans, it could be translated into English to

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reach a broader audience. This will take place in accordance with the qualifiers stipulated in CUT's Language Policy Implementation Plan.

## **5.2 Individual consultations with students**

5.2.1 Notwithstanding Paragraphs 5.1.1 to 5.1.2 above, where facilitators of students identify a need for further facilitation in another language, such a need may be accommodated in individual sessions outside of the ordinary learning environment.

5.2.2 Pursuant to Paragraph 5.2.1 above, this policy does not prescribe the language of communication between the academic employee and student in the settings described in the preceding paragraphs, but assumes that the choice of language is determined by mutual agreement. It is recommended that where a student's competency in a language other than his/her home language constitutes a serious communication barrier that can be remedied by reverting to a student's home language, the use of the student's home language is to be encouraged.

5.2.3 In cases where an academic employee does not have the instructional competency in the student's home language, he/she should refer the student to an academic employee or senior student who is competent in the applicable language, and who is willing and able to assist the student.

## **5.3 Provisions for differently abled students**

5.3.1 Dealings with differently abled students (including the presence of deaf, partially sighted, or blind persons) should be dealt with in a flexible and sensitive manner that is consistent with the spirit, framework, objectives and values of this policy, as read in conjunction with CUT's Policy on Provision for Students with Disabilities ("disability policy").

5.3.2 In exceptional circumstances, teaching and learning situations will be provided to differently abled students to address their specific language requirements related to their specific disability. For example, provision can be made to offer translation services in South African Sign Language to students who qualify in terms of CUT's disability policy, should it be within the limits of CUT's resources, and subject to approval in terms of the Language Policy.

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- 5.3.3 The university may provide special communication aids required by students with sensory disabilities on request and where feasible, such as the use of qualified South African Sign Language interpreters.
- 5.3.4 The university will develop a short course in South African Sign Language for staff and students who are interested and have a passion for sign language.
- 5.3.5 In line with the restructuring and implementation of an African Languages Department, the CUT will endeavour to develop a South African Sign Language course for students who are interested and have the desire to learn South African Sign Language.

#### **5.4 Language of oral and written correspondence**

- 5.4.1 Official correspondence at CUT will be conducted in English, Afrikaans and Sesotho, provided that it is reasonably feasible to do so. The determination of language choice for internal and external communication will consider the situation and context of communication, the purpose and future pathway of the communication, and the language needs and levels of language proficiency of the target audience. Such official correspondence includes, but is not limited to, communiqués and documentation addressed to all stakeholders.
- 5.4.2 Multilingualism will be accommodated in oral and written correspondence, to the extent that stakeholders of CUT can correspond with one another in their language of preference.

#### **5.5 Language of general communication**

- 5.5.1 English will be used as the language of general communication in all CUT endeavours, including meetings and meeting documentation, workshops, seminars, and training sessions. However, depending on the target audience, Sesotho and Afrikaans may also be used.
- 5.5.2 English, Afrikaans and Sesotho will be used parallel in university documentation, including, but not limited to, university publications, communiqués, magazines, documentation related to staff and students, etc.

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5.5.3 The university logo should include English, Sesotho and Afrikaans.

## **5.6 Language of institutional transactions**

5.6.1 English, Sesotho and Afrikaans will be the primary languages used for both internal and external transactions, such as telephone responses and face-to-face enquiries, based on mutual agreement between/amongst staff members, students and/or another person, provided that no other party or third person is linguistically excluded from such an institutional transaction.

5.6.2 University statutory and other high-level meetings will be conducted in English. However, depending on the target audience, meetings within departments, sections and units may be conducted in English, Afrikaans or Sesotho, or these languages may be used interchangeably, based on the target audience.

5.6.3 Official university ceremonial or commemorative events such as graduation ceremonies, official openings, bereavement ceremonies and public lectures should reflect the use of the three chosen languages of the university (English, Sesotho and Afrikaans). Cultural events will be presented in any applicable language to reflect the linguistic diversity of the university. All forms of entertainment and sport will be conducted in any of the university's chosen languages, depending on the target audience, and provided that no other third party or person is linguistically excluded.

## **5.7 Language of record**

5.7.1 English will be used as the language of record in agendas, minutes of statutory and high-level meetings, policies, procedures, manuals, official e-mails and all records of CUT.

5.7.2 English, Sesotho and Afrikaans will be used in communiqués to staff and students, university advertisements, and e-mail communication between staff members who wish to communicate with one another in their mother tongue.

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## **5.8 Employee or student relations**

- 5.8.1 All participants in employee or student relations matters have the right to make use of the services of an interpreter to interpret the proceedings in any of the official South African languages of their choice, or to make use of the services of a qualified South African Sign Language Interpreter.
- 5.8.2 A participant, employee or student at a disciplinary hearing must notify the university at least seven days prior to commencement of the hearing that he/she will be using a language other than English, to enable CUT to provide interpreting services; or that he/she requires a qualified South African Sign Language Interpreter.

## **6. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

- 6.1 All employees and stakeholders have a responsibility to adhere to the CUT Language Policy.
- 6.2 Each faculty and support department of the university must adopt and implement a language plan, in consultation with the applicable executive manager, the Management Committee (Mancom), and Senate. Such language plans should be consistent with this policy. CUT's Language Policy Implementation Plan provides more details in terms of all the respective roles, responsibilities and timelines, and how the policy is to be implemented.
- 6.3 PanSALB will assist CUT in monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the university's language policy.

## **7. DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY**

CUT's Delegations Register identifies the delegations related to the implementation of this policy.

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## **8. REVIEW OF THE POLICY**

- 8.1 The CUT Language Policy will be reviewed every three years, and in consideration of developments in the Language Policy Framework for Public Higher Education Institutions and CUT's own language dynamics amongst its students, staff and stakeholders.
- 8.2 The reviews mentioned in Paragraph 8.1 will not exclude any intermittent amendments made during any three-year period, should they be required in terms of legislation, or demanded by a changing policy framework.

## **9. RELATED DOCUMENTS**

The CUT Language Policy should be read in conjunction with the following documents:

- Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996;
- Higher Education Act (Act No. 101 of 1997), and amendments thereto;
- the White Paper for Post-School Education and Training (2013);
- Language Policy Framework for Public Higher Education Institutions (2020);
- the National Curriculum Statement: Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement Grade R to 12 (2010);
- PanSALB Act (Act No. 59 of 1995);
- the National Development Plan;
- the CUT Statute;
- CUT's Language Policy Implementation Plan;
- CUT's Vision 2030;
- CUT's Strategic Plan 2021 – 2025; and
- CUT's Transformation Plan.

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### **Acknowledgement**

CUT acknowledges that some of the wording from the following sources have been used/adapted in this policy:

- Language Policy Framework for Public Higher Education Institutions
- Stellenbosch University Language Policy (2016); and
- North-West University Language Policy (2018).

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