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## Uniarts Helsinki's language policy

### Towards happy multilingualism

In Uniarts Helsinki's strategy for 2021–2030, we strive for international appeal and impact and promise to introduce a language policy to support our internationalisation efforts. We are a proudly trilingual university that fosters Finnish and Swedish as the languages used for the arts in the future, too, and that has a language environment that welcomes all the languages that our community speaks. In our strategy, we promise that “our community is characterised by its wellbeing, international appeal and lack of discrimination.” How we view flexible and approving multilingualism in meetings and teaching, for example, affects how included the members of our university community are able to feel themselves. Inclusion, in turn, leads to wellbeing. An open and genuinely multilingual university is a place of studies and work that supports and builds wellbeing and where everyone can feel that they are welcome and appreciated contributors.

Uniarts Helsinki's language policy establishes steps that we should take to reach these strategic goals. It encourages and challenges its readers to reflect on the following questions: What can I, personally, do to contribute to multilingualism? How could I arrange my teaching in a way that supports the position of Finland's national languages, which is protected by law, in the educational sector, and at the same time, teach the language of the arts also to those people who do not speak these languages? In our workplace community, how do we operate in meetings where we do not have a shared first language? If my first language is Swedish, would I have the courage to use my language in a meeting and offer small-scale language immersion to my colleagues? Could I help out a fellow student by interpreting a portion of a lesson if they have trouble understanding?

### An inclusive and diverse university

Our community has shared values and policies that support our wellbeing, prevent discrimination and boost the feeling that our work and studies are meaningful. We appreciate and embody diversity, strengthen unit-level and university-level inclusivity and create a culture of constructive interaction.

The university's language of administration is Finnish, which means that in principle, the primary language used in the preparation of the university's matters is Finnish. In accordance with the University Regulations (section 7), the university also promotes the opportunities of non-Finnish speakers to participate in the university's development and decision-making. The university bodies may decide to use another language alongside Finnish in meetings when it is appropriate.

The university uses Finnish, Swedish, and English in its work. The language that we use is inclusive, gender-neutral and as clear as possible. We strive for happy multilingualism, which can be defined through the following concepts:

- Parallel language use = besides Finnish, we use also other languages when it is possible and reasonable in practice.
- Receptive multilingualism = we use our own first language for communicating when participants understand but do not speak each other's language.



Our aim is that all members of the university have as extensive opportunities as possible to participate in and influence the university's activities. We enable the participation of those who do not speak Finnish or Swedish in the university's activities by offering information in English to a sufficient degree so that international members of the university community can participate in and influence the activities of bodies and working groups and so that it is possible for all participants in meetings to understand the contents and participate in the discussion. We encourage our international staff and students to boldly use Finnish and Swedish and our Finnish- and Swedish-speaking staff to support them in this.

In principle, preparatory materials are prepared also in English when the matter is being discussed by more than just individual members of the university community who do not understand Finnish or Swedish. People can use Finnish, Swedish and English side by side in meetings.

Central guidelines concerning staff are published at least in Finnish and English. Central guidelines concerning students are published in Finnish, Swedish and English.

We ensure that central festivities related to academic tradition and events aimed at all students are organised with consideration to various language groups, in whatever way is appropriate for the occasion. The same guideline concerns events aimed at all staff members.

We take the personnel's language skills in all three languages into consideration in recruitment situations in a reasonable, systematic and goal-oriented manner. Students' language skill level is ensured as part of student admissions.

### **Boosting the international pull and impact of our education – degrees offered in Finnish, Swedish and English**

We boost the international pull and impact of our education.

Uniarts Helsinki's Education Regulations (section 35) state that the languages of degrees and instruction are Finnish and Swedish. English may also be offered as a language used for degrees. In accordance with the Universities Act, Uniarts Helsinki is responsible for educating a sufficient number of persons proficient in Swedish for the needs of the country. (Sections 11 and 12 in the Universities Act, 29.6.2012/414)

#### **Languages of degrees and instruction**

The language of the degree is the language used for carrying out the degree programme. The curricula must clearly define the language or language options of each degree programme. Students must complete an essential part of their degrees, including the thesis, in the language that was defined as the language used for the degree in connection with student admissions. The right to use some other language than the language of the degree is determined by the dean. Degree programmes may be organised in Finnish or Swedish, English or multiple languages. (Section 35 in the Education Regulations)

In principle, the language of the degree is the choice of the programme provider (in accordance with Education Regulations), except when the university has unconditional



responsibility to provide education in Finnish or Swedish. At Uniarts Helsinki, these kinds of programmes include the Degree Programmes in Music Education, Church Music and Acting in Swedish. If a degree programme is newly established, the language of the degree is decided at the time of establishing the programme, and if not, the language is decided as part of the curriculum process.

The language used for instruction for a specific course unit is mentioned in the study guide. There may be one or several languages of instruction. A language other than Finnish and/or Swedish may be used if the appropriate provision of teaching or organising of studies so requires. When the primary language of instruction is Finnish, Swedish can also be used in teaching and study attainments. Regardless of the language of the degree, all degree programmes may have study units and study modules where English is the only possible language used for instruction and completing the studies. In principle, studies are completed in the language of instruction. The student has the right to be given study unit assignments and/or examination questions in Finnish or Swedish and to complete studies in Finnish or Swedish according to their choice during study units that are the programme's compulsory studies in accordance with the programme's language of the degree.

At the university's discretion, language versions of teaching may be provided, for example, with the help of recordings, subtitles or interpretation.

### **Language-related rights of students**

The student must receive both academic and other kind of supervision and guidance in Finnish and Swedish or in the language used for the degree in the programme in question. The student has the right to receive supervision for their thesis project principally in the language of their thesis project.

Central information concerning studies must be available in Finnish, Swedish and English in the information systems used for academic affairs administration.

The provision of the degree programme's language options is monitored based on the language details confirmed in the curriculum.

In accordance with the university's valid ethical guidelines for education and studies, the language of administrative decisions concerning students and the language of the minutes compiled in connection with misconduct is Finnish. In accordance with the service principle of administration, a student who is not proficient in Finnish will hear about the content and process progress of the decision and preparatory documents in Swedish or English. The student can submit their own documents in Swedish or English, and communication with them can be had in Swedish or English.

### **Communication aimed at applicants**

The degree programme's languages of degrees and primary language of instruction are communicated to applicants clearly in the application stage. We verify our students' sufficient language proficiency in the application stage and make sure that their language and communication skills are sufficient for operating in a higher education environment.

## **Support for internationally impactful art, research and teaching at Uniarts Helsinki**



We want to promote the internationalisation of our researchers and support our teaching and research staff's possibilities to operate and communicate in international contexts.

We recruit researchers and teachers who speak Finnish, Swedish and English. Language and communication skills is one of the pre-determined recruitment criteria mentioned in the job advertisement. Before the employment decision is made, the language proficiency stipulated in the Government Decree on Universities (770/2009) and other language skills required for the position shall be verified through application documents and, if deemed necessary, through interviews or a teaching demonstration. Foreign citizens, non-native Finnish citizens or Finnish citizens who have not received their general education in Finnish or Swedish may be exempted from the Finnish and Swedish language requirement stipulated in the Government Decree on Universities without a separate application when applying for a teaching or research position. (Section 3 in the Staff Regulations)

If deemed necessary, a foreign citizen or a non-native Finnish citizen appointed to a teaching or a research position is required to acquire a reasonable level of proficiency in Finnish or Swedish within a certain period of time, as is stated in the university's Staff Regulations. Employees should be encouraged to strengthen their language skills as it is a requirement for operating in the workplace community, and this expectation must be highlighted already in the recruitment stage by finding out what kind of motivation the applicant has to learn Finnish or Swedish. It is not reasonable to require a person who does not speak Finnish or Swedish to learn Finnish or Swedish if they have been selected for a short fixed-term position.

Teaching is based on research and/or artistic activities, which also generate continuously evolving vocabulary for teaching. Based on the researcher's discretion, we publish in Finnish, Swedish and English and, on a case-by-case basis, also in other languages that are relevant to the research in question. We acknowledge the relevance of publishing in English for a researcher's career. We make sure that Finnish and Swedish, too, remain academic languages of artistic research and make sure to have up-to-date arts- and research-related terminologies in Finnish and Swedish.

### **Communication**

Content concerning students and studies on Uniarts Helsinki's external website (uniarts.fi and Students' Uniarts) is available in Finnish, Swedish and English. News articles are published in Finnish and English. Information that is essential in terms of international activities is available at least in English. The primary languages that Uniarts Helsinki uses on its social media platforms are Finnish and English.

Staff's intranet uses two languages, Finnish and English. This concerns instructions/guidelines, news and announcements. Email communication that addresses the entire community of the university or an academy is written at least in Finnish and English. The primary language of external newsletters is chosen based on the target audience.

In principle, language choices for communication are made in accordance with the above-mentioned principles. However, the target audience of the message, announcement or piece of information and this specific target audience's languages may be taken into consideration in all communication on a case-by-case basis.



The university aims to provide signs as well as posters and campaigns aimed at the community in three languages.

The university-recommended, secure translation tools can be used for translating short or unofficial text content. These tools include, for example, the Translate function in Microsoft Word and MOT Translator. However, translation tools should not be used for translating the university's official documents. In principle, these texts are always translated or revised by the university's professional in-house translator or by one of the translation agencies that has been selected through a tendering process. The writer of the original text has the responsibility to check the translation.

### **Implementation and development of Uniarts Helsinki's language policy and related responsibilities**

All members of the community in their respective roles at Uniarts Helsinki have the possibility and duty to promote the linguistic diversity and inclusive teaching and learning culture that we appreciate and represent, as well as to foster inclusive participation within the academies and the university and to build a constructive culture of interaction.

The university's Education Regulations include decisions on the university's languages of instruction and degrees. The implementation of these decisions is monitored by the executive group for bachelor's and master's education under the leadership of the vice rector for education. With support from the academies' vice deans for education and the academic affairs team, the vice rector for education is responsible for the preparation of matters for the executive group for bachelor's and master's education and provides guidance concerning the implementation of guidelines for languages of instruction and degrees, if necessary. As regards doctoral education, the task is assigned to the vice rector for research and doctoral education, who is supported by the executive group for research and doctoral education.

At the academies, deans and vice deans for education are responsible for the implementation of the guidelines for languages of instruction and degrees and the necessary measures in resource planning. The academy boards are responsible for following the guidelines for languages of instruction and degrees in their decision-making. Recruitment panels are responsible for ensuring that applicants meet the language requirements when recruiting new employees. The service units are responsible for the guidelines for languages of instruction and degrees within their own areas and provide support for the implementation of the guidelines.

### **Available support**

Uniarts Helsinki supports the development of its staff's language and communication skills.

- We offer our staff language and communication coaching within our existing resources.
  - We guide our staff to improve their language and communication skills also through courses that are available outside of our university (selection of courses in Finnish and Swedish, SKAPA project in Swedish, KiViTa



- project carried out by the higher education institutions of the Helsinki region until the end of 2024).
- Matters related to the development of language and communication skills must be addressed in performance reviews, where the supervisor and the employee can agree on how the development of the employee's language and communication skills will be promoted.
- We support the opportunities of our students and our teaching and research staff to operate in international contexts.
  - Each degree student has the possibility to complete studies that support internationalisation (language studies offered by the university and language studies organised in cooperation with other universities, student exchange opportunities and studies related to the curriculum's cross-cutting theme of internationalisation).
  - Students and teaching and research staff are offered training and guidance related to international communication.

### **Entry into force of the language policy**

The language policy will enter into force on 1 August 2024. As regards the curriculum, the policy will be examined as part of the interim assessment of the curriculum.

The language policy is examined as part of strategy work, and a separate language working group may be appointed for the task.

### **Appendix 1: Central legislation and regulations governing the policy**

Åbo Akademi University, Hanken School of Economics, the University of Helsinki, the University of the Arts Helsinki and Aalto University are responsible for educating a sufficient number of persons proficient in Swedish for the needs of the country. (Sections 11 and 12 in the Universities Act, 29.6.2012/414)

The university's language of administration is Finnish. Everyone has the right to use either Finnish or Swedish in matters concerning them and to obtain official documents in the language they use. (section 35 in the Universities Act)

The languages of the student unions of the University of Helsinki, the University of the Arts Helsinki and Aalto University are Finnish and Swedish. (section 46 in the Universities Act)

In accordance with the Non-Discrimination Act (section 6), the education provider and the educational institution maintained by it shall evaluate the realisation of equality in their activities and take necessary measures to promote the realisation of equality. These measures shall be effective, expedient and proportionate, taking into account the educational institution's operating environment, resources and other circumstances. The education provider must ensure that the educational institution has a plan for the necessary measures for promotion of equality.



Uniarts Helsinki's Education Regulations (section 35) state that the languages of degrees and instruction are Finnish and Swedish. English may also be offered as a language used for degrees. Students have the right to use Finnish or Swedish both orally and in writing in connection with teaching and examinations, unless specified otherwise in the curriculum or required by the nature of teaching. Students have the right to use the language that they used when they were admitted to study for their degree in their study attainments as well as to receive assignments included in their studies in this language. However, students' studies may also include study units where the language of instruction is something else, if such arrangements are required by the study unit.

Uniarts Helsinki also promotes the opportunities of non-Finnish speakers to participate in the university's development and decision-making. The university bodies may decide to use another language alongside Finnish in meetings when it is appropriate. (section 7 in the University Regulations of Uniarts Helsinki)

Official minutes of the matters discussed at a meeting of a multi-member body shall be drawn up in the university's administrative language (section 36 in the University Regulations of Uniarts Helsinki).

As regards qualification requirements, the university's Staff Regulations state that "a person selected for a position at the university is required to have an appropriate education, experience, and language skills necessary for successfully holding the position in question, as well as other qualities, knowledge and skills, such as good cooperation and interaction skills, required in the position. The requirements for each position are defined prior to the selection process." (section 2 in the Staff Regulations)

As regards language skills, the university's Staff Regulations state that "before the employment decision is made, the language proficiency stipulated in the Government Decree on Universities (770/2009) and other language skills required for the position shall be verified through application documents and, if deemed necessary, through interviews or a teaching demonstration. Foreign citizens, non-native Finnish citizens or Finnish citizens who have not received their general education in Finnish or Swedish may be exempted from the Finnish and Swedish language requirement stipulated in the Government Decree on Universities without a separate application when applying for a teaching or research position. The exemption shall be granted by the administrative organ or the person in charge of making the employment decision. If deemed necessary, a foreign citizen or a non-native Finnish citizen appointed to a teaching or a research position shall be required to acquire a reasonable level of proficiency in Finnish or Swedish within a certain period of time. This requirement is mentioned in the call for applications." (section 3 in the Staff Regulations)