



LANGUAGE POLICY

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1 INTRODUCTION

The Da Vinci Institute is a registered private higher distance education provider (Registration No. 2004/HE07/003) offering accredited qualifications on NQF levels five to ten, which are registered on the Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework (HEQSF). This policy forms part of the institutional Integrated Quality Management System and details the principles for ensuring that programme offerings adhere to the required academic regulatory standards and empower students to contribute to the transformation of their communities, society, and the economy of the future. This approach is underpinned by the Business- and Community-based Action Learning discourse on the co-creation and distribution of relevant knowledge.

The Institute acknowledges the diversity and equality of the eleven official languages in use by the population groups in South Africa as embedded in the Constitution of the country, and takes cognisance that English is regarded and generally accepted as an international medium for business communication. The Institute further acknowledges that languages are critical resources in the transmission of knowledge, cognitive development, and effective participation in the knowledge economy. There is further a need to address the interests, needs and aspirations of a wide range of language communities through ongoing dialogue and debate.

2 DEFINITIONS

| Term | Definition |
|-------------------|---|
| Academic Language | The language used in teaching and learning, knowledge production and dissemination. It includes, inter alia, discipline specific vocabulary, grammar and punctuation, argumentation and discourse, and the applications of rhetorical conventions and devices (Government Gazette 43860, October 2020). |
| Access | Affordance, by a higher education institution, of the opportunity to students to register for, and pursue education and training (Government Gazette 43860, October 2020). |
| Code switching | The process of shifting from one linguistic code or language to another, depending on the social context or conversational setting. It is a communicative practice where the communicator skilfully switches between languages without disturbing the flow of ideas. |
| Communication | The imparting or exchanging of information or ideas by speaking, writing, or using some other medium, to create shared meaning between participants (senders and receivers) |
| Epistemic access | The successful process of knowledge acquisition and dissemination through enabling teaching and learning pedagogies (Government Gazette 43860, October 2020). |

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|-----------------------------------|---|
| Inclusivity | An expressed policy intent on, or practice of, embracing diversity and bringing people from various backgrounds into the fold at different levels institutionally, into groups and individually (Government Gazette 43860, October 2020). |
| Indigenous Language | A language that has its heritage roots in Africa that is native to a region and spoken by indigenous people (Government Gazette 43860, October 2020). |
| Instruction | The transfer of learning from one person to another |
| Language | The method of human communication, either spoken or written, consisting of the use of words in a structured and conventional way. |
| Language of Learning and Teaching | A language used to teach or instruct students in an educational environment. |
| Language of Scholarship | A language used in an academic setting for knowledge production and dissemination (Government Gazette 43860, October 2020) |
| Multilingualism | The effective use of multiple languages either by an individual or by a community. |
| Scientific Language | The language used by scientists to communicate their scholarly work or research findings (Government Gazette 43860, October 2020). |
| Social Cohesion | The degree or extent to which a society is integrated, united and functional, providing an environment in which is citizens can live harmoniously and flourish (Government Gazette 43860, October 2020). |

3 REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

This policy is benchmarked against and should be read in the context of the relevant legislation underpinning the principles against which institutional policies and operational procedures are developed, implemented, and maintained. These include:

A. Relevant legislation:

- i. Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 1996
- i. Higher Education Act (No.101 of 1997) as amended Act (No.39 of 2008)
- ii. Language Policy Framework for Public Higher Education Institutions determined in terms of section 27(2) of the Higher Education Act (No.101 of 1997) as amended (Government Gazette 43860, October 2020)
- iii. National Development Plan 2030
- iv. National Education Policy Act (No.27 of 1996) as amended 2007
- v. National Qualifications Framework Act (No.67 of 2008)

- B. Applicable Institutional documents:
 - i. All the relevant Da Vinci Policies
 - ii. All other material and correspondence of The Institute

4 SCOPE

The Language policy is applicable to all staff and students of The Institute, as well as any relevant third parties and its purpose is to describe the conditions governing communication, instruction and record-keeping within the context of English as the language of:

- a. Administration
- b. Documentation
- c. Information Technology
- d. Instruction, assessment, and moderation
- e. Internal and external written and verbal communication
- f. Library and information services
- g. Record keeping.

5 PURPOSE

The aim of the language policy is to provide appropriate guidance to staff and students of The Institute regarding the official business language of The Institute. The policy aims to ensure that constitutional imperatives such as access, equity and inclusivity are upheld to avoid racial discrimination and unjust exclusion to promote the goals of the National Development Plan of promoting social cohesion and nation building.

6 LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION

English is used as the medium of instruction and administration as well as the preferred business language at The Institute. However, conditions must be created for the development of indigenous languages as languages of meaningful academic discourse, especially at postgraduate level. In this regard, students can write their dissertation or thesis in one of the South African official languages, provided that the work is translated into English for assessment purposes. It will be the responsibility of the student to have the work translated and the cost for the translation will be carried by the student or their sponsor. Students are also encouraged to translate the abstract of their thesis or dissertation, if written in English, into one of the official South African languages.

All the modules offered at The Institute are delivered in English as the medium of instruction. Students are therefore expected to be proficient in English since English is used as the language for both learning and teaching. None of the other official languages are used as a medium of instruction, however, all indigenous languages must be valued as sources of knowledge, capable of informing learning of different disciplines. The Institute is further committed to nurturing an environment of multilingualism as a resource to facilitate cognitive development, epistemic access, inclusiveness, transformation, social cohesion, and respect for all languages. Students and lecturers should therefore consider all reasonable educational alternatives, including code-switching, taking into account equity and practicability and ensuring that it does not serve as a barrier of access to speakers of other languages. Moreover, support must be provided to students for whom English is not their first language or mother tongue, in order to ensure academic success.

7 REVIEW OF POLICY

Regular review and amendments of this policy will be done in line with the approved institutional policies. This will take place in consultation with the relevant quality assurance structures at departmental and institutional level, under the auspices of the official custodians of this policy, namely the Executive Dean: Academic.