



RHODES UNIVERSITY  
Grahamstown • 6140 • South Africa

# Language Policy

<b>Policy Volume</b>	Academic Faculty & Students
<b>Policy Chapter</b>	Teaching and Learning Policies
<b>Responsible Committee/Unit/Division/Faculty</b>	Language Committee, Equity and Institutional Culture, Registrar's Division
<b>Responsible Chairperson/Director/Manager</b>	Chair: Language Policy Revision Task Team Chair: Language Committee
<b>Dates of First and Subsequent Council Approvals</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> revision 31 March 2003 2 <sup>nd</sup> revision 2 August 2005 3 <sup>rd</sup> revision 24 March 2014 4 <sup>th</sup> revision 12 September 2019
<b>Policy Approval Pathways (e.g. committee, Senex, Senate, Council)</b>	Language Committee, Equity and Institutional Culture, Senate, Council
<b>Revision History: Approved Reviews</b>	12 September 2019
<b>Review Cycle (e.g. every 2/5/7 years etc)</b>	3 years
<b>Next Review Date</b>	2021

## 1. Policy particulars

<p><b>1.1. Policy Title</b></p>	<p>Language Policy</p>
<p><b>1.2. Policy Statement</b></p>	<p>The Language Policy of Rhodes University is predicated on the following principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The University’s language of learning and teaching is English, and the University’s official business is conducted in English;</li> <li>• Creation of an environment where language is not a barrier to equity of access, opportunity and success;</li> <li>• Promotion of multilingualism and furthering the development of academic languages and literacies of the languages of South Africa where necessary and practicable;</li> <li>• Creation of conditions for the use of particularly isiXhosa as a language of learning and teaching.</li> </ul> <p>In light of historical conditions and contemporary realities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Other languages alongside English in a process of translanguaging may be used in teaching and learning e.g. in the tutorial system;</li> <li>• English may, or may not be the Language of Learning and Teaching in academic departments where languages other than English are taught as subjects;</li> <li>• University official business will be generally conducted in English except when other language needs arise, and where necessary and practicable;</li> <li>• The official language of record at Rhodes University will be English except when other language needs arise, and where necessary and practicable;</li> <li>• All signage and official documentation on campus will be trilingual in isiXhosa, Afrikaans and English in compliance with the Institutional Transformation Plan’s recommendation for the transformation of the institution’s identity (A. Work Area 1 Institutional Identity Recommendation 3).</li> </ul>
<p><b>1.3. Reason for Policy</b></p>	<p>This policy is aligned with Section 6 of the Constitution of 1996, with the Use of Official Languages Act 12 of 2012, and with the guidelines laid down by the Council on Higher Education (revised Language Policy for Higher Education, 2017).</p> <p>This policy develops and promotes respect for all languages used in South Africa, including foreign languages, and in particular, foster the use of the provincial languages at Rhodes University.</p> <p>This policy raises awareness that South Africa is a multilingual country and that Rhodes University reflects this multilingual diversity. The policy promotes multilingualism and sensitivity in language usage in a way that creates and fosters a supportive, inclusive and non-discriminatory environment.</p> <p>This policy recognises that language has the potential to contribute to transformation in various ways. Therefore the policy seeks to</p>

	<p>facilitate this recognition through dynamic, collaborative partnerships and approaches to language use.</p> <p>The policy supports the development of academic languages and literacies of African languages and creates the conditions for the use of isiXhosa as a language of learning and teaching, research and administration.</p>
<b>1.4. Policy Objective/s</b>	<p>The following objectives are recommended where necessary and practicable and subject to the University's resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote and support proficiency in isiXhosa, Afrikaans and English through vocation-specific and additional language courses for staff and students.</li> <li>• Requirements in professions should be addressed through the offering of courses such as conversational isiXhosa in order to produce graduates who can function in a multilingual professional environment.</li> <li>• Promote the development and literacies of academic languages, particularly of isiXhosa, through teaching, learning and research outputs as part of redressing the previous marginalisation of indigenous languages at departmental level.</li> <li>• Promote the study of foreign languages.</li> <li>• Establish through the creation and efforts of a Language Task Team a Language Services Centre.</li> <li>• Ensure that while the language of wider communication within the university community is English, translation and interpreting into isiXhosa and Afrikaans is provided for students and staff where necessary and feasible.</li> <li>• Support the use of isiXhosa as the second language of work for staff in lower occupational levels in compliance with the Institutional Transformation Plan (E. Work Area 5 Staff Matters Recommendation 9).</li> <li>• Ensure that the institution's website, stationery, signage, contractual documents and governance communication (such as policies) are multilingual, in compliance with the Institutional Transformation Plan's recommendation for the transformation of the institution's identity (A. Work Area 1 Institutional Identity Recommendation 3).</li> <li>• Ensure that the appropriate data regarding language use on the institution's website, in its stationery, signage, formal ceremonies, staff administration documents, and disciplinary and recruitment processes is gathered and utilised to determine percentage allocations for the next review of this policy.</li> </ul>
<b>1.5. People affected by this Policy</b>	All sectors of the University
<b>1.6. Who should read this Policy</b>	All staff and students of the University should read the policy or be informed of the policy through the heads of units, divisions, departments and organisations, and through specific events and fora.

<b>1.7. Implementers of this Policy</b>	Language Committee; Institutional Planning Unit; Equity and Institutional Culture; Registrar's Division; Infrastructure, Finance and Operations; Communications and Advancement; CHERTL; Human Resources Division; Deans and Heads of Departments, Schools, Centres, Institutes, Units and Administrative Divisions, Language Task Team.
<b>1.8. Website address/ link for this Policy</b>	<a href="https://www.ru.ac.za/institutionalplanningunit/policies/policiesa-z/">https://www.ru.ac.za/institutionalplanningunit/policies/policiesa-z/</a>

## 2. RELATED DOCUMENTS, FORMS AND TOOLS

Rhodes University Institutional Transformation Plan, 2019  
Rhodes University Transformation Summit Report, 2018  
The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Sections 6; 9; 29.2; 30; 31)  
Use of Official Languages Act, 12 of 2012  
Eastern Cape Use of Official Languages Act, of 2013  
Guidelines laid down by the Council on Higher Education  
DHET revised Language Policy for Higher Education, 2017

<b>Related Policies</b>
All policies (specifically Curriculum Development; Community Engagement; Equity; Naming; and all Recruitment Policies)
<b>Related Protocols</b>
Vision and Mission Statement
Rhodes University Institutional Transformation Plan, 2019

## 3. POLICY DEFINITIONS

No.	Term	Definition
3.1.	<b>Academic Literacy</b>	The ability to demonstrate membership of an academic community by reading, writing and thinking in ways that are congruent with and critical of the values and attitudes of that community.

<b>3.2.</b>	<b>Foreign Language</b>	A language which is not indigenous to South Africa, which is not official according to the Constitution, and which is not widely spoken in South Africa.
<b>3.3.</b>	<b>Multilingualism</b>	A linguistic capacity that extends across more than two languages. Within the context of Higher Education, implicit within the term multilingualism, is the awareness of the cognitive processes for a second or foreign language speaker in the learning process.
<b>3.4.</b>	<b>Translanguaging</b>	Occurs when bilingual or multilingual speakers draw on a wide range of languages and language varieties to create meaning and to communicate. For example, reading, speaking or writing simultaneously in multiple languages.

#### 4. PRINCIPLES GOVERNING THIS POLICY

<b>Overview</b>	
Rhodes University strives to carry out the following, as far as is reasonably practicable:	
<b>4.1</b>	Equity, social justice and redress
<b>4.2</b>	Epistemological access for all students
<b>4.3</b>	Social cohesion through the promotion of multilingualism and translanguaging
<b>4.4</b>	Respect for linguistic and cultural diversity
<b>4.5</b>	Increased levels of inclusion of staff who have proficiency in isiXhosa.
<b>4.6</b>	The above are underpinned by the provisions of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996.

## 5. DIRECTIVES FOR IMPLEMENTING THIS POLICY

(Actions and processes listed below by which the objectives of the policy will be achieved must take into account: a) equity; b) practicability; and c) the need to redress the results of past racially discriminatory laws and practices.)

<b>5.1</b>	All relevant stakeholders to disseminate the Language Policy to all Departments, Units, Divisions, Schools and Centres (including multilingualism awareness campaigns related to the policy). Heads and line managers to ensure that staff is familiar with the policy and that strategies are implemented to achieve the objectives of the policy.
<b>5.2</b>	CHERTL together with relevant Departments to provide necessary development of teaching and learning strategies and courses in order to implement translanguaging.
<b>5.3</b>	Institutional Planning Unit, Equity and Institutional Culture, Registrar's Division, Human Resources and Communications and Advancement, together with the Visual Representation and Language Task Teams to ensure that all official documentation, interviews, formal ceremonies, and other official communications are multilingual as specified in the objectives of the Language Policy and in the Institutional Transformation Plan.
<b>5.4</b>	Human Resources: to conduct disciplinary and recruitment processes in isiXhosa and English; to reward staff who learn isiXhosa to improve their leadership qualities; and to recruit more support staff supervisors and managers who are competent in isiXhosa.
<b>5.5</b>	Infrastructure, Operations and Finance, Communications and Advancement to work together with the Visual Representation and Language Task Teams to implement multilingual signage on campus and increase the visibility of isiXhosa and Afrikaans on campus.
<b>5.6</b>	Departments or Schools with specific disciplinary expertise to develop academic languages and literacies of isiXhosa, as part of redressing the previous marginalisation of indigenous languages.
<b>5.7</b>	A Language Task Team to be formed to establish a Language Services Centre.
<b>5.8</b>	All chairs of university committees to note and communicate to members that they are permitted to express themselves in languages other than English when other language needs arise, and where necessary and practicable, so as to promote equitable participation and decision-making.
<b>5.9</b>	Language Committee to oversee and monitor implementation of policy through representative reporting by members at Language Committee meetings.

## 6. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

<b>Role</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
<b>Role 1</b>	Heads of Departments and Schools and Line Managers: ensure familiarity with policy and that relevant implementation efforts are made as per the objectives and directives of this policy.
<b>Role 2</b>	CHERTL, together with relevant departments, to devise and facilitate the capacity of lecturers to use multilingual and translanguaging teaching and learning strategies, and to facilitate the dissemination of information related to these strategies.
<b>Role 3</b>	Institutional Planning Unit; Equity and Institutional Culture; Registrar's Division, Human Resources and Communications and Advancement together with relevant Task Teams to ensure that documentation, interviews, and other official communications are multilingual.
<b>Role 4</b>	Infrastructure, Operations, and Finance, and Communications and Advancement together with the relevant Task Teams to implement multilingual signage on campus.
<b>Role 5</b>	The proposed Language Services Centre together with Human Resources and the Institutional Planning Unit to provide translation and interpretation services.
<b>Role 6</b>	Departments or Schools e.g. School of Languages and Literatures to develop academic languages and literacies of isiXhosa.
<b>Role 7</b>	Language Committee to oversee the implementation of the Language Policy through regular reports from key persons/Divisions/Faculties/Departments and to raise awareness about multilingualism across all sectors of the university.
<b>Role 8</b>	All relevant stakeholders to disseminate the Language Policy across campus and Communications and Advancement and Registrar's Division to include it in appropriate form in the University Calendar and on the University website.
<b>Role 9</b>	Deans, and Heads of Departments, Schools, Centres, Institutes, Units and Administrative Divisions will be required to discuss the policy with their professional, administrative and support staff, and to develop strategies for the implementation of multilingualism.

## 7. CONTACTS

Area of Concern	Division/Faculty/ Department	Telephone	Email
General Implementation (Chair of Language Committee)	Chairperson: Language Committee		
Communications and Advancement (university communiques)	Here units/divisions can identify and indicate the contact they elect		
Registrar (student and administrative issues)			
Human Resources (staff and labour related issues)			
CHERTL (teaching and learning related issues)			
Infrastructure, Finance and Operations (signage and other infrastructure issues involving language)			
Head of Visual Representation Task Team			
Head of Language Task Team			
Chair of SRC (student issues)			

## 8. POLICY REVIEW PROCEDURE

1. The Language Committee set up a task team of Language Committee members who are familiar with the policy review procedure and who are experts in the area of multilingualism – March 2018.
2. Draft 1 was concerned with updating the original policy by incorporating findings of the Transformation Summit and by updating national tertiary education information.

3. Draft 1 was circulated to members of the Language Committee and comments were solicited. Comments and feedback were discussed at Committee Meeting 29 May 2018. Task Team then incorporated comments and edited Draft 1.
4. Draft 2 completed 03 August 2018 and circulated to Faculty Boards as well as to specific Departments/Units/Divisions responsible for implementation. Comments and feedback solicited by 23 September 2018.
5. Task Team then incorporated comments and edited Draft 2 to create Draft 3.
6. Draft 3 completed 03 October 2018.
7. Draft 3 disseminated campus-wide using various media such as Toplist. Comments and feedback solicited by 31 October 2018
8. Task team then incorporated comments and edited Draft 3. Draft 4 completed 01 November 2018.
9. Draft 4 of reviewed Language Policy submitted to the Director of Equity and Institutional Culture on 01 November 2018. Comments received on 08 February 2019 and Draft 5 produced in alignment with Institutional Transformation Plan.
10. Draft 5 completed 01 March 2019.
11. Draft 5 was presented to the Equity and Institutional Culture Committee meeting on 25 April 2019 for their approval.
12. Currently, the Draft 5 is being submitted to Faculty Board meetings which take place in May 2019, with the aim of submitting Draft 5 to the Senate meeting on 07 June.
13. Feedback from Senate was used to edit and create Draft 6 which will be submitted to the Senex meeting on 13 Aug 2019.
<b>Communication of the review process:</b> The draft reviewed policy was circulated to members of the Language Committee, Faculty Boards and all relevant Departments/ Units/Divisions responsible for implementation, to the entire campus community, and to the Equity and Institutional Culture Committee, using meetings, email and Toplist.

## 9. POLICY CONTEXT: RELEVANT DOCUMENTS CITED/CONSULTED/ADOPTED

1.	Transformation Summit Report, Rhodes University, 2018.
2.	The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Sections 6; 9; 29.2; 30; 31).
3.	Use of Official Languages Act, 12 of 2012.
4.	Eastern Cape Use of Official Languages Act, of 2013.
5.	DHET revised Language Policy for Higher Education, 2017.