



Higher Education Language Policy ELC Working Group 2011-12

ELC Forum

Rethinking Multilingualism: Challenges and Opportunities

Bruxelles 1.12.2012

Higher Education Language Policy



- Working Group under the ELC 2011-2012
 - Draft document - December 2012
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- HELP – Why? What? How?

Why HELP?



- Globalisation & migration
 - EHEA: Increase in mobility (students & staff)
 - Graduate employability
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- Languages more important than ever &
 - English is not enough!
 - L1+2 is outdated!

What is HELP?



- HEI language(s): Language(s) of administration and communication
- Language degree programmes
- Languages for non-language students; languages for mobility and employability
- The language(s) of instruction
- Language support for lecturers and researchers
- Language support for librarians, technicians and administrative staff
- Languages for the wider community

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Diversity (1)



Student audiences are more diverse than ever before:

- Local students whose L1 coincides with the language of the country or region in which they live & where the HEI is situated (the home students).
- Students of migrant families whose L1 is considered a heritage language and for whom the language of the country and HEI is a second or other language.
- Exchange students.
- International students on full degree programmes.

Diversity (2)



- Diversity of students (all three cycles); increase in numbers of international students;
- Increase in international academic staff.
- International programmes > more and more academic staff and students teach and learn through the medium of a language other than their L1.

Languages for non-Ing students



- Languages for non-language students
 - Languages for mobility and employability
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- Combined programmes of a subject + language(s)
 - +/- CLIL
 - Additional language programmes or modules
 - Mandatory
 - Typically + ECTS
 - +/- LSP component
 - Optional
 - +/- ECTS
 - +/- LSP component
 - +/- fee for students

Learning through L2, L3, ...



- Students who choose to study abroad (full degree or exchange)
- Home students studying through their L2, L3, ...
 - A positive choice
 - The only option
- Students whose L1 is not the L1 in the country where they live
- Students enrolling in programmes in their heritage language

HELP Recommendations (1)



As the first step in a Higher Education Language Policy, HEIs should determine the relative status and use of the languages employed in the institution, taking into consideration the answers to the following questions:

- What is/are the official language(s) of the HEI?
- What is/are the language(s) of communication at institutional / departmental / research group / administrative unit, etc. levels?
- What is/are the language(s) of instruction?
- Who are the HEI stakeholders / targets audiences, and which language(s) is / are used in communication with these audiences?

HELP Recommendations (2)



- Given the programmes and the level of internationalisation the HEI has or wants to have, and as a direct implication of that, what are the language proficiency levels required by students who apply to its programmes?
- Given the programmes and the level of internationalisation the HEI has or wants to have, and as a direct implication of that, what are the language proficiency levels expected from the graduates of these programme?
- Given the profile of the HEI and its educational strategies, which language components are to be offered within and without the (non-language) degree programmes?
- Students may need support for all four language skills (receptive/productive; oral and written); and in addition to that, they may need special support in academic reading and writing both in their first and their foreign languages.

HELP Recommendations (3)



As regards academic staff, HEIs should consider measures to validate formal as well as non-formal learning of the language of instruction.

Moreover, HEIs should consider the need for and their provision of

- Language courses for academic and non-academic staff in the language(s) of communication.
- Language courses for researchers and lecturers in the language(s) of instruction.
- Language revision.
- Translation