

## NATIONAL REPORT ON QUALITY ENHANCEMENT IN LANGUAGE STUDIES POLAND

### *I. General introduction*

According to the Constitution of the Republic of Poland (Chapter I, Art. 27) "Polish shall be the official language in the Republic of Poland. The provision shall not infringe upon national minority rights resulting from ratified international agreements".

Art. 35 of Chapter II on "The Freedoms, Rights and Obligations of Persons and Citizens" provides that "The Republic of Poland shall ensure Polish citizens belonging to national or ethnic minorities the freedom to maintain and develop their own language, to maintain customs and traditions, and to develop their own culture" and "national and ethnic minorities shall have the right to establish educational and cultural institutions designed to protect religious identity, as well as to participate in the resolution of matters connected with their cultural identity". The languages of ethnic minorities in Poland are as follows: Belorussian, Czech, German, Hebrew, Lithuanian, Slovak, and Ukrainian, but they are not recognised as official languages.

During the post-war period the education system paid little attention to minority languages and it was not till the 1990s that their use as media of instruction increased significantly. Minority languages are taught as second languages in respective regions in schools and also they constitute languages of instruction in schools in the regions inhabited by ethnic minorities.

The teaching of and the teaching in the minority languages is regulated by the Act on the Education System of 1991. The introduction of a minority language as a teaching medium depends on parental or student demand. On receipt of at least 7 applications from the minority community any given primary school is under obligation to establish a separate minority language class for the pupils concerned. Pupils at secondary schools may submit their own applications for instruction in the minority language. The minimum number of participants required is carried to 14.

Due to the size of the relevant community the three minority languages enjoying the biggest support within the Polish education system are German, Belorussian and Ukrainian. All three are offered as media of instruction at selected schools in the area concerned from pre-primary through to upper secondary level. In some schools the minority language is the sole vehicle of instruction and Polish is taught as a subject. In others the minority language is used for certain subjects only while the rest of the instruction is in Polish. All education given in minority schools is free of charge.

Teachers at minority language schools receive the same training and are employed under the same conditions as their colleagues at Polish-medium schools.

### *Modern languages in pre-primary, primary and secondary education*

Foreign language teaching has been part of the curricula of Polish schools since the end of the First World War. Starting in 1918, one compulsory foreign language has been taught to all pupils from age 10 upwards. Pupils could choose between 3 western languages, German, French and English. At the start of the 40s and during the period immediately after the Second World War (before the imposition of the Communists' political, economic and educational reforms) interest for English increased. The post-war political and economic changes affected educational systems in all eastern European countries. From 1948 onwards great importance

was placed on the learning of Russian, which was introduced into the curricula as a compulsory subject as the symbol of Soviet domination of the Communist bloc countries.

The priority of educational policy following the fall of Communism was to abolish the State's monopoly on education, to change curricula and textbooks and to modernise the system of teacher training. The 1990 reform of foreign language teaching gave equal status to all foreign languages. In this way, Russian lost its status of sole language in primary education. Since then pupils have been able to choose one of four foreign languages (Russian, English, French, or German) at the primary level and one of six at the upper secondary level (the above mentioned languages and Italian and Spanish), subject to the school being able to find a teacher.

Among foreign languages English has assumed a dominant position and is the most widely taught foreign language in schools. Relatively smaller numbers of school population learn German, French, Spanish, and Italian. Russian is also taught and recently has started to resume popularity.

In 2001 English was learnt by 48.8% of school population

German	30.3%
Russian	15.1%
French	4.1%
Spanish	0.1%
Italian	0.1%
Other	0.8%

Latin and Greek are not considered foreign languages and are taken by ca 0.8% of learners often as an optional subject.

The first foreign language is introduced as a compulsory subject in the fourth form of the primary school (10-year old learners). Efforts are being made to encourage schools to introduce teaching of two foreign languages as early as possible, financial and organisational situation permitting. The present government is considering introduction of a first foreign language into the curriculum of the first form of primary schools. The primary school curriculum provides for 8 hours of languages per week for 3 years and 2 hours per week for 2 years

The second foreign language is introduced as a compulsory subject in the first form of gymnasium (learners of 13-years of age). The curriculum provides for 9 hours per week for 3 years.

The teaching of foreign languages is continued through the stage of lyceum and in higher education. The lyceum curriculum provides for 5 hours of language instruction a week for four years.

In higher education institutions the number of languages and the length of the courses depends on the autonomous decisions of individual university resulting from needs analysis and/or financial-organisational possibilities. The prevailing model is a course of 240 hours (4 semesters x 4 hours a week) of one or two languages at intermediate or upper-intermediate level, although many universities (especially academies of economy) offer even 480- hour courses.

The core curricula for all types of schools are defined by the Ministry of National Education, and their realisations are then adopted by individual institutions.

Pursuant to the Act on School Education in force, primary schools, gymnasiums and post-gymnasium schools may all be public or non-public. The turn of the 80-ties and 90-ties saw the establishment of a considerable number of non-public schools; hardly known in Poland previously (with few schools of this type run by religious orders), these schools were set up by various associations and private persons.

Non-public schools are established and administered by legal or natural persons, and public schools by public administration and local government agencies.

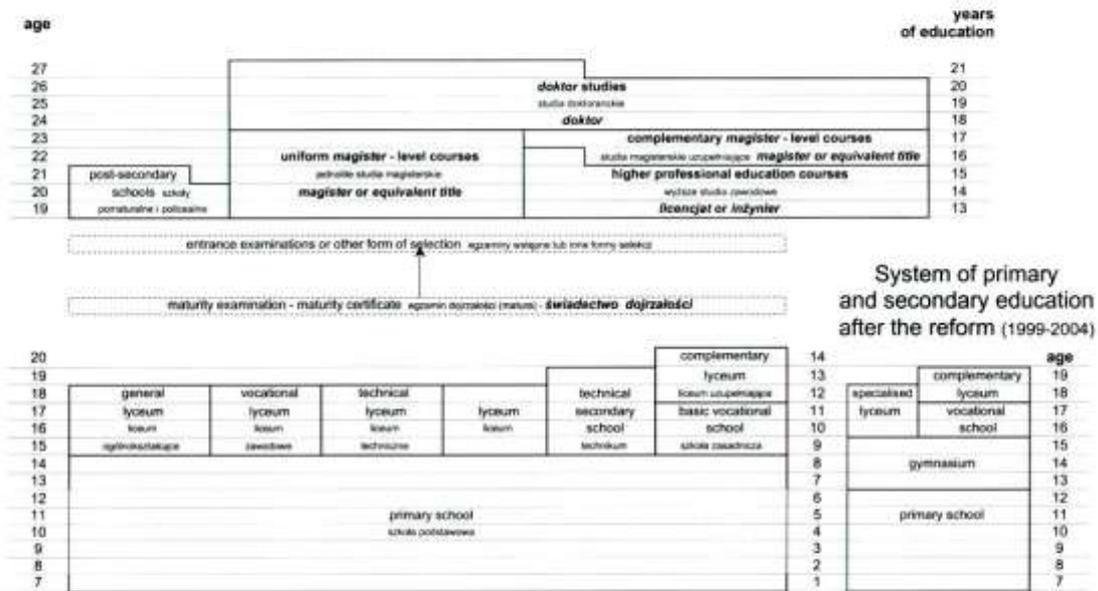
### *The system of education in Poland*

The system of education in Poland is currently undergoing a reform. Whatever the final shape of the education system will be, after the implementation of all the provisions of the new legislation, it is centralised with vast majority of state – owned schools. At all levels of education there are private schools run by social organisations, associations, and religious organisations.

Since 1999, a reform of the system of education has been implemented and new types of schools are being introduced, i.e. 6-year primary school, 3-year gymnasium, and the following types of post-gymnasium schools: 3-year specialized lyceum, 3-year general lyceum, 4-years technical secondary school, 2 or 3-year vocational school, 2-year complementary lyceum, and 3-year complementary technical secondary school. During the transitional period, both the old and the new systems will continue to coexist. In the year 2004, maturity certificates will be awarded for the last time on the basis of the system functioning prior to the reform.

The total number of years of primary and secondary education is 12 or 13. At the end of the secondary education cycle students can take the maturity examination - *egzamin dojrzalosci (matura)*, i.e. standardised national secondary school achievement examination, and receive the maturity certificate - *swiadectwo dojrzalosci*.

## The education system in Poland - structure



### The Higher Education system

Both state and private institutions of higher education exist in Poland. The latter began to appear after 1990. A private school of higher education must receive permission to operate from the Ministry of National Education. It acquires a legal status when registered by the Minister of National Education.

In 1998 the first state and private higher professional (vocational) education schools began to appear. These schools train students in professional specializations and prepare them for specific professions by including 15-week internships and school practice in the mandatory curriculum.

Study programs can take the form of day, evening or extramural studies and distant learning courses. Day studies is the prevalent form.

To qualify for admission to an institution of higher education, the applicant must hold the maturity certificate - *swiadectwo dojrzalosci*. The rules of admission to the first year of study are determined autonomously by each institution. Some organize competitive entrance examinations, others use ranking procedures based on the final grades listed in the maturity certificate, still others admit all who apply.

### Higher education institutions before the year 1990

Higher education schools were not self-governing institutions. All spheres of their activity (statutes, finance, curricula, teaching, scientific research, and personnel) were fully controlled by the Ministry of Higher Education and other Ministries responsible for higher education institutions which they supervised.

The higher education sector comprised only state institutions, the sole exception being the Catholic University of Lublin.

All higher education institutions were engaged in two types of activities:

1. teaching activities: providing undergraduate and postgraduate courses as well as those leading to academic degrees for young people and adults;
2. scientific activities: carrying out scientific research in a given area.

#### *Higher education institutions after 1990*

In 1990 the New Act on Schools of Higher Education laid down rules for establishing non-state institutions of higher education, whose number has been steadily growing since then. In the academic year 1999/2000, there were 119 state and 165 non-state schools of higher education in Poland. They all, having fulfilled certain prerequisites (e.g. a sufficient number of full professors), can offer the following types of studies:

- 3-year vocational studies - graduates are granted vocational (bachelor level) titles of *licencjat* or *inżynier*;
- 2-year supplementary master level studies for holders of the above mentioned vocational titles; the graduates obtain *magister* (master) title or equivalent;
- 5-year uniform master level studies - graduates are granted master level title of *magister*;
- 4-year doctoral studies for master level graduates;
- post-graduate studies.

Higher education courses are provided in various modes of study, including regular day studies as the predominant arrangement as well as evening or extramural studies, and those offered in the distance learning system.

At present the following two types of HE institutions may be distinguished:

- HE institutions operating under the Higher Education Act of 12 September 1990 and the Act on Academic Titles and Degrees of 12 September 1990, which offer both university-type and vocational education. Most of these institutions besides teaching carry out scientific research and have the right to award both professional titles and academic degrees.
- Schools of higher vocational education, established on the basis of the Act on Schools of Higher Vocational Education of 26 June 1997, which provide only vocational education and have the right to award only the titles of *licencjat* and *inżynier*. Those graduating from these schools may continue their studies towards master's degree in the university-type institutions.

Until 1990, the number of places to be available in the first year of study was fixed by the ministers responsible for individual types of higher education institutions. Higher education institutions throughout the country were also enrolling students in accordance with a uniform system.

While the minimum requirement for gaining access to higher education was the maturity certificate, applicants were qualified on the basis of marks obtained in an entrance examination. However, the chances for admission were ultimately determined by the limit of places available in the first year of study.

#### *Legal basis*

The legal framework for the present higher education system is provided by the following legislation:

- the Higher Education Act of the 12<sup>th</sup> of September 1990,
- the Act on the Academic Title and Degrees of the 12<sup>th</sup> of September 1990, and
- the Act on Schools of Higher Vocational Education of the 26<sup>th</sup> of June 1997.

The above-mentioned laws have changed substantially the previously existing higher education system, particularly as regards management, types of higher education institutions and the structure of studies.

#### *Management of higher education institutions*

The Act of 1990 limited the competencies of the Minister of National Education in the area of school management by granting autonomy to both individual higher education institutions and faculties within an institution. The responsibilities of the Minister of National Education include, among other things, the following: exercising general supervision over the higher education sector, controlling whether activities carried out by individual institutions comply with the legislation in force, and establishing new institutions.

In addition to the Minister of National Education and the competent ministers responsible for higher education institutions accountable to them, the process of higher education management at the central level involves the Committee for Scientific Research (*Komitet Badan Naukowych*) and the Central Council of Higher Education (*Rada Glowna Szkolnictwa Wyzszego*).

The Committee for Scientific Research is responsible for scientific and scientific-and-technological policy. It also acts as a research council which grants, according to competition-based procedures, funds for the implementation of research projects.

As a representative body of the academic community, the Central Council of Higher Education performs opinion-giving functions for the Minister of Education, among other things, delivering opinions on drafts of legislation concerning higher education.

The autonomy of higher education institutions is expressed through their competences in the following areas: adopting independently institutional statutes, establishing and abolishing higher education courses in fields of study, laying down rules and procedures for student enrolment, defining the scope of entrance examinations, adopting study regulations. In turn, the autonomy granted to faculties within an institution covers issues such as enrolment rules and the number of students to be enrolled, curricula, and employment of research and teaching staff.

#### *Non-state higher education institutions*

The Higher Education Act of 1999 also provides for the establishment of non-state higher education institutions. A non-state higher education institution may be set up upon a permit granted by the Minister of National Education on the basis of an opinion of the Central Council for Higher Education. The school which has been granted such a permit is entered in the register kept by the Minister. Schools which have followed this procedure are granted the right to issue state diplomas. State higher education institutions are not, however, entitled to receive subsidies from the state budget.

#### *Admission requirements*

Those applying for admission to higher education courses are required to:

hold the maturity certificate or, in the case of foreigners wishing to undertake studies in Poland, an equivalent document which may be recognised in this country; and pass an entrance examination, often organised as a competition.

Admission to the first year of study is most often determined by results obtained in an entrance examination. However, benefiting from their autonomy, higher education institutions apply their own selection criteria and procedures. Depending on the attractiveness of a higher education institution or a field of study, admission requirements are made easier or more difficult to meet, and entrance tests are sometimes abandoned in favour of selection to be carried out during a course of study. Some institutions adjust their arrangements every year. The scope of an entrance examination covers in most cases the curriculum followed in a secondary school. Winners of national subject-based competitions, organised for secondary school pupils, are not required to take entrance examinations.

### *Study programmes (fields of study and curricula)*

In accordance with the statutory powers, a list of fields of study is drawn up by the Central Council of Higher Education. The freedom in the area of drawing up curricula and timetables has been granted to those higher education institutions where boards of faculties issuing diplomas have the required number of professors. The Central Council of Higher Education also establishes the minimum curricular requirements or, in other words, core curricula for individual fields of study. These cover from 30% to 60% of the curriculum, depending on the field of study.

The language of instruction is Polish. However, courses in some fields of study are also offered in foreign languages (English, French, German), whereas courses in modern languages faculties or philology or applied linguistics faculties are offered almost exclusively in target languages.

Higher education courses in university-type institutions may be divided into two stages. The first stage, lasting 3 or 4 years, covers general theoretical and practical knowledge; the second one, lasting ca. 2 years, helps students to familiarize themselves with specialist knowledge and scientific practices. The latter ends with a master thesis or a project paper.

The diploma of completion of a higher education course is awarded to those who have passed all compulsory examinations and defended a master's thesis or a project equivalent to a master's thesis.

### Higher education. Statistical data

	Total number of institutions	Total number of students	Total number of academic teachers
Higher education institutions, incl.:	298**	1 415 286	75 194
state and church institutions	116**	1 012 536	67 446
students enrolled in day studies	---	629 660	---

\*\* The above data refer to the last quarter of 1999 (source: *Szkolnictwo wyższe. Dane podstawowe*, 2000).

#### *Implementation of the Bologna Declaration*

In May 2000 the conference for the representatives of all HE institutions in Poland (State and non-State HE institutions) was held under the auspices of the Minister of National Education concerning the issue of "Diploma Supplement". During the Conference the Polish version of the Bologna Declaration was presented to the participants together with an appropriate letter of the Deputy Minister of National Education responsible for international cooperation.

From the academic year of 2000/2001 the pilot programme of the Diploma Supplement implemented by the Bureau for Academic Recognition and International Exchange in collaboration with the Department of Science and Higher Education of the Ministry of National Education and the Central Council of Higher Education was started.

The new draft law on Higher education providing for a uniform three-tier system of higher education is still waiting for approval of the Parliament.

There is no national system of transfers and credit accumulation. Almost all HE institutions have initiated works on the development of the credit system based on ECTS. The works have been enforced and stimulated by the participation of Polish HE institutions first in the Tempus/Phare and then Socrates/Erasmus programmes. In the academic year 13 Polish HE institutions started works on it, whereas in 2000/2001 there were over 100 involved in it.

The students' and staff mobility increased in the last few years due to participation of Polish universities in the Socrates/Erasmus programme.

The increase in the participation in the Programme is depicted in the table below:

Academic year	No of HE institutions that concluded IC	No of universities introducing ECTS	academic teachers' mobility	Students' mobility
1998/1999	46	22	Ca 400	Ca 1.500
1999/2000	74	37	Ca 650	Ca 2.800
2000/2001	98	52	Ca 700	Ca 3.700

*Verification of the quality of teaching  
Accreditation at Polish Universities*

The Law on Higher Education of 1990, as amended in 2001, and neighbouring legislation provides for the autonomy of HE institutions, in all their activities, ie. teaching and research. Public universities are financed from the subsidy from the Ministry of Education which is allocated according to an algorithm depending on, among the others, number of students, doctors and professors. Another source of financial means at the disposal of universities are students' fees (from the so called evening and extra-mural students), which are the basic source of income for private tertiary education institutions.

Polish universities have always been seen as a special part of the Polish higher education sector. The university education has traditionally been strongly related to research, and academic excellence was the most important factor for assessment of both the faculty and the students. For many years, due to limited enrolment (numerus clausus set by the Ministry of Education) and the system of entry examinations, the students represented the top group of the school leavers and were additionally subject to strong selection during the two first years of their university career.

The situation started to change dramatically in the nineties. Despite a decrease in funding of the higher education sector there has been an explosive increase of the number of students which has since then at least tripled. A growing demand for higher education was accompanied by a development of the private education sector and by a rapid expansion of the system of fee based extramural studies at state-supported and private schools. Such revolutionary changes have put the Polish educational system into a qualitatively new situation which can be characterised by the following points:

- Massification of education, which resulted in a generally lower level of knowledge presented by people enrolling in HE institutions;
- A general shortage of qualified faculty forcing many academics to teach in two, three or even more schools with all the negative consequences inevitably resulting from such a situation;
- Continuous underfunding, lack of investment and an increase in sheer numbers of students leading to deterioration of physical plant and equipment;
- A change in students' attitudes, from 'knowledge seekers' to business oriented fee paying customers, who often look for a formal certificate of their education rather than education as such;
- Schools are often subject to pressures from potential employers to teach practical skills rather than more comprehensive courses;
- Private schools, typically teaching only to a level of a Bachelor's degree constitute a 20% share of the higher education market and while generally are left without supervision in terms of quality and the content of their curricula, they produce graduates who then enter state schools in order to continue their education towards Master's degree.

The legislation concerning HE adopted after 1989 supported quantitative development of higher education (the rules of granting state funding providing that the total subsidy would largely depend on the number of students studying at each individual HE institution). The qualitative results have not been considered. A few years after the adoption of the 1990 Law on Higher education it became obvious that the dramatic increase in the numbers caused equally

dramatic drop in quality. Quality control mechanisms were not provided for by the system. The Central Council for Higher Education deprived of the organisational support and adequate financial means has not been able to conduct systematic quality evaluation of provision in the hitherto existing and newly established institutions of tertiary education.

The situation has not changed even after the Accreditation Commission for Higher Vocational education was established in 1997 upon the Act on Schools of Higher Vocational Education of 26 June 1997. The commission evaluates the quality of teaching in the schools of HVE, programmes of teaching and determines the conditions and personnel requirements indispensable for creation of a specialisation of studies.

In relation to the schools of HE some accreditation functions are performed by the Central Council of Higher Education and they consist in determination of the list of specialisation of studies, determination of requirements indispensable for creating a new specialisation of study, specification of the minimum personnel requirements for particular specialisations, issuance of opinions on the applications for foundation of a school of HE, both State and non-State, issuance of the opinions on the applications for establishment of fields of studies in the non-State HE institutions and for the establishment of specialisations in the State and non-State schools of HVE. The Higher Education Council pointed out that the Polish higher education needed a new approach to quality assurance and started feasibility studies on implementing an accreditation system. The need to create an accreditation agency able to control quality standards in HE was also noticed by legislators working on the new education law.

In mid nineties, faced with massification (democratisation) of university studies and increasing competition on the part of mushrooming private tertiary education institutions, as well as due to the fact that ca half of the population of students studying therein pay tuition fees (evening and extra-mural programmes), and also due to lack of relevant legislation, Senates of all state-owned universities and majority of other state-owned higher education establishments adopted resolutions on the introduction of quality assurance systems aiming at evaluation of programmes of study. Institutions of higher education are themselves responsible for the quality measures and evaluation procedures of teaching, which would allow to differentiate between universities (programmes) and to tell the difference between those which satisfy certain standards and those which do not.

Thus a number of academic accreditation commission, committed to the promotion of excellence, belonging to the academic circles, have been established on the bases of agreements concluded between universities of one kind eg. University Accreditation Commission, Technical University Accreditation Commission, Medical Academy Accreditation Commission etc.

Classical universities still hold their special position among all higher education institutions in Poland. There are currently 16 of them and they provide education for more than 30% of all students in our country. Although subject to pressures resulting from the economic situation and increasing number of students, they still cultivate the old academic culture and try to evolve in order to respond to challenges of the new socio-economic situation, needs of the society and more generally of their external environment.

Universities were determined to make the most of the opportunity given by the Socrates programme. However while preparing to introduce the ECTS points, universities realised that what was really needed was a more general solution ensuring compatible and agreed quality

standards, thus allowing for the mobility of students, and for a general solution to assurance and the management of quality of higher education. It became clear that the only way to achieve those goals was to create a system of accreditation of universities. Since neither the Ministry of Education nor Central Council of Higher Education were prepared to provide a solution in a foreseeable future it was decided to found an organisation which would help familiarise academic community with the idea of accreditation. A formal decision was made during the meeting of the Conference of Rectors of Polish Universities. The decision established four basic principles of the university accreditation:

- Accreditation is voluntary
- Evaluation concerns fields of study (study programmes, curricula) and not institutions or their departments,
- Evaluation criteria are developed by representatives of faculty from units involved separately for different fields of study
- The final outcome of evaluation is of a yes-no character and not a multi-grade classification.
- The necessary condition for applying for accreditation is implementation of an internal system of quality management and the ECTS.

As the first, the University Accreditation Commission was eventually established in January 1998 by the Conference of Rectors of Polish Universities following a motion from the Association of Polish Universities acting on Quality Assurance in HE. Universities - members of the Association are bound to create quality assurance procedures compatible with those used in the EU universities, systematically enhance quality of education and promote quality curricula, programmes of study and universities offering them. The Commission, consisting of Rectors of Universities, signatories to the agreement, grant accreditations to the programme of studies thus administering an evaluation procedure to the institution (faculty or institute) running the programme.

In order to successfully undergo accreditation procedure, university unit running a programme has to prove that it has introduced a system of internal quality assurance (self-evaluation) and a system of quality enhancement as well as that it has implemented *ECTS (European Credit Transfer System)*. The latter requirement is an expression of the strategy adopted by Conference of the Rectors of Polish Universities aiming at speedy and complete preparation of Polish universities to integrate with the European education systems, in order to create conditions promoting students' mobility to not only European but first and foremost between Polish higher education institutions.

The accreditation procedure includes a self-evaluation report, site visit, peer review and a final evaluation report.

So far accreditation standards have been elaborated, among others, for English, German and French Philology. Standards for other language programmes are being prepared.

The following university units have received 5-year accreditation for their programmes of study:

1. Institute of English Studies, Jagiellonian University, Cracow
2. Institute of English Studies, Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań
3. Institute of English Studies, Maria Curie-Skłodowska University, Lublin,
4. Institute of English Studies, University of Lodz,
5. Faculty of Philology, Śląsk University

6. Institute of German Studies, Jagiellonian University,
7. Institute of German Studies, Wroclaw University,
8. Institute of German Studies, Szczecin University,
9. Faculty of Humanities, Maria Curie-Sklodowska, Lublin,
10. Faculty of Philology, University of Lodz.

Applications for accreditation have been submitted for further 39 programmes of study ranging from Arab studies, Baltic Studies, to Japanese Studies, Slavonic Studies at ten universities.

In order to be awarded accreditation an applicant (a university unit conducting a certain programme of study) must satisfy the following prerequisites:

1. elaborate and implement credit-point system compatible with ECTS
2. have minimum staff of 5 senior academics and 10 academic teachers possessing doctor's degree,
3. satisfy the ratio of maximum 15 students to one academic teacher and maximum 50 students to one senior academic,
4. conduct student surveys on the quality of teaching on regular basis.

Also the following (among other) standards in the accreditation procedure must be met:

1. the evaluation of quality of teaching should be based on
  - compatibility of the delivered classes (seminars, lectures, etc) with the specialisation of teachers and their research activities
  - analysis of student questionnaires,
  - analysis of other surveys concerning the quality of teaching,
  - number and kind of student research grants,
  - character and quality of students' master's theses,
  - number of students graduating in time (in the last three years),
2. participation of professors in realisation of curricula must be based on the teaching load adopted for the unit,
3. master's seminars must be conducted by senior academics,
4. specialisation programmes may be created and conducted by specialists in the field subject to evaluation by means of the analysis of programme content and adequacy of the teaching staff.
5. all units must satisfy the requirements of the core curricula adopted by the Central Council of Higher Education.
6. the graduate, his knowledge and competencies, should reflect the graduate profile provided for by the Central Council of Higher education completed by specificities characteristic for any type of concrete programme of study.
7. each teaching unit should provide for the possibility of acquisition of master's degree and doctor's either internally or by way of agreements with neighbouring units offering master programmes.
8. each teaching unit should engage students into the research conducted therein,
9. each unit should update and upgrade the resources and teaching methodology, incl. of ICT,
10. information on master's and doctor's theses concluded in the unit must be publicised,
11. the unit is obliged to carry out international cooperation with renown didactic and research centres.

The Law on Higher Education, as amended in 2001, provides for another accrediting body, i.e. State Accreditation Commission whose role is accreditation and evaluation of teaching in all state and non-state HE institutions. The State Accreditation Commission is created and financed by the Ministry of Education. It is composed of ca 70 members, proposed by the Central Council of Higher Education, academic senates, professional and academic associations and other stakeholders' organisations. Its main function is to provide certain minimum standards of quality in all types of higher education institutions. The Commission expresses opinion on establishment of HE institutions, creation of curricula and quality of study programmes offered at HE institutions. The accreditation awarded by the body shall grant the right to offer study programmes. The ministerial decision to establish a new HE institution or suspend or withdraw the right to run such institution also depends on the opinion of the State Accreditation Commission.

In January 2002 Accreditation Commission of the Conference of Rectors of Academic Schools in Poland was established which shall coordinate all activities of accreditation commissions belonging to the academic circles, cater for adequacy and comparability of standards and accreditation procedures carried out in different universities for the same or similar programmes of study. It will also be committed to information on and promotion of the rules and philosophy of accreditation and ranking of HE institutions.

Thus the external quality assurance of teaching belongs to the Ministry of Education through the Central Council of Higher education, State Accreditation Commission, University Accreditation Commission, and also to different professional bodies.

Internal quality assurance rests within the faculties and institutes conducting study programmes which are autonomous units of autonomous universities.

The main criterion of the evaluation of teaching is the efficiency of teaching assessed by the number of students completing their study programme in time.

Also the nature and quality of the theses defended in any teaching unit constitutes another criterion: whether they are experimental or theoretical.

The quality of research is evaluated by the Committee for Scientific Research which is the source of funding for research activities carried out in the HE institutions.

There is no official ranking of departments or study programmes although the newly established Accreditation Commission of the Conference of Rectors of Academic Schools in Poland has been contemplating such a concept.

Several rankings are prepared annually by different national quality weekly magazines and are treated very seriously as reliable source of information by groups of stakeholders, especially potential students. Typically the first places in the rankings are occupied by major state-owned universities, like Warsaw University and Jagiellonian University.

In order to be admitted to university candidates are required to present their matriculation certificate (*swiadectwo dojrzalosci*) or its foreign equivalent recognised in Poland.

It is the only document issued by the secondary school which provides access to higher education in Poland. Any type of secondary school in Poland may be completed without taking a matriculation examination. In this case, the school awards a certificate of completion of education in the secondary school (*swiadectwo ukonczenia szkoly sredniej*) which does not entitle its holder to enroll in a higher education institution in Poland.

However, the matriculation examination is only a prerequisite for admission to higher education. Each year higher education institutions define their own requirements for candidates. They must pass an entrance examination or obtain a passing mark in the admission procedure. In most institutions, the prospective student is required to gain a certain minimum number of points. Points are awarded for results in a competitive entrance examination as well as for secondary school matriculation grades or other requirements, some of which are listed below.

The entrance examination (i.e. a test, written or oral examination) is based on the material covered by secondary school curricula.

The Senate of a higher education institution sets the maximum enrolment limit and determines in advance the number of candidates to be admitted finally to each department (faculty).

Winners of national “Olympics”, held in various subjects (related to the chosen field of future studies), are freely admitted to higher education institutions or are not required to take entrance examination in some subjects. All examinations are organised according to a competition-based procedure.

The study in day programmes is free of charge whereas evening or extra-mural programmes are fee-paying studies. The fees vary and depend on the on the cost of study programme (experimental study programmes are more expensive) and also on its competitiveness on the market of educational services (eg. Law or business administration). The fee is usually from 3000 PLN to 8000 PLN a year (between 750 and 1000 EURO).

Students who are relatively worse off (but only those doing their day programmes) are entitled to the so called social grant (ca 50 EURO a month) from the University (financed from the ministerial subsidy).

Students doing very well in their studies (average yearly grade over 4, i.e. ECTS grade B) are entitled to receive the so called student academic grant of, depending on the financial standing of the department, 50 to 100 EUROs a month.

Universities offer a wide variety of language programmes and language courses.

- Modern languages degree programmes degree programmes (MA) in faculties of philology or modern languages;
- Combined degree programmes (European studies, Culture and communication studies) at respective European Studies Departments or Culture and Communication departments;
- Language teacher education programmes at Teacher Training Colleges, faculties of philology, faculties of modern languages, institutes of applied linguistics
- degree programmes for translators and interpreters at faculties of philology, faculties of modern languages, or institutes of applied linguistics
- language provision (obligatory credit courses or optional credit courses) for students of all disciplines (LAP and LSP) at language centres

There are philology faculties (or modern languages faculties) in all 16 state-owned Polish universities; language centres providing language courses for all students operate in practically all Polish higher education establishments (both private and state-owned).

## ***2. Description and analysis of quality measures relating to defining and designing courses and programmes in the area of language***

In accordance with the Act on Schools of Higher Education the Central Council of Higher Education has the power to define conditions under which a university can establish and run a

programme, a list of official names of study fields is drawn up by the Central Council of Higher Education. The Central Council of Higher Education also establishes the minimum curricular requirements (core curricula) for individual fields of study. Formally, curricula are adopted by faculty councils. Under the amended Law on Higher Education the Council shall act on advice from the State Accreditation Commission and shall grant the right to run a programme or shall withdraw such right.

The Resolution of the Central Council of Higher Education of 1997 concerning minimum curriculum requirements states that: “The process of modernising and enriching programmes of higher education has led to the development of interesting solutions in many academic centres in Poland, some of them including even proposals for fundamental changes to be made to the system of study. At the same time, in view of the diversity of schools, programmes, and concepts of education, it is becoming more and more imperative to develop methods for the straightforward evaluation of programmes and for establishing the equivalence of diplomas. One of the elements of the evaluation system currently under discussion is a set of minimum curriculum requirements, which are to be established on the basis of a resolution of the Council. The procedure adopted by the Council for establishing these requirements, based on discussions of the models provided by higher education institutions, their curricular contents and methods of study, takes largely into consideration the experience and opinions of numerous academic centers”.

In accordance with the arrangements adopted by the Central Council of Higher Education, the minimum curriculum requirements should be understood as a set of general, basic and major courses, together with the curricular contents and the minimum number of hours which are compulsory for a given field of study. Thus, the minimum curriculum requirements do *not* represent ‘the minimum study programme’, but are only a common core part of curricula implemented by all higher education institutions which offer study programmes in a given field of study. As such, depending on the field of study and the specificity of an institution, the ‘minimum requirements’ leave considerable freedom to faculties in designing the remaining part of their study programmes.

In accordance with article 42 of the Higher Education Act of 1990, it is required by the Council that all forms of higher education programmes (day, evening, and extramural studies) which award the same professional titles be equivalent. The organisation and teaching of courses at evening and extramural studies should guarantee the same level of education among the graduates of such studies as do the daytime studies. Equivalent standards must be set for requirements to be met by students in all forms of study. Examination requirements must be the same or equivalent, in particular those which concern graduation or approval of the final diploma thesis.

Until the end of 2000 there were prepared and validated the minimum curriculum requirements for more than two thirds of the fields of study. Some of them were created only for “magister” (master) level courses.

The new programme proposals come from the University Senate upon the proposal from the faculty or institute. Individual institutions have a responsibility for the provision of programmes in their own institution and for allocating (or redistributing) adequate funds obtained from the Ministry of Education. The already approved programmes can be amended by the Prorector’s decision upon the proposal from the respective Board (Faculty or Institute). The changes in the language programmes are inspired mainly by the needs voiced by the stakeholders (students, employers) or national and European context.

An important part in introducing changes and innovation to the curricula have been played by European programmes (like Tempus and Socrates-Erasmus with its CDI /CDA monies) and probable future European integration.

The programmes and plans of study at each individual university should be consistent with the university mission, its goals and development strategy, as well agree with the core curricula adopted by the Central Council of Higher Education, allow for acquisition of a graduate's profile described therein.

In order to get the accreditation of the programme with the University Accreditation Commission the courses must be defined in accordance with ECTS in order to ensure the transparency of the programmes.

The learning outcomes as defined either in the core curricula or accreditation application are stated in a relatively general way and they do not provide for specific competences or skills necessary for a future teacher or translator or interpreter. Neither they are formulated in away that is relevant for a personal development and citizenship.

Language learning, its length and structure and content, depends on each individual university, its organisational-financial possibilities and rather infrequently on students' needs. It can be said that universities of economy, relatively better off, provide for longer language courses even amounting to 480 hours of language provision throughout the study period, whereas the most common model in other universities would be of 240 h of language instruction, ie. 4 semesters x 4 hours a week. The teaching standards and examination criteria as well as the outcomes are usually set at individual universities although there have been efforts made towards harmonisation of the requirements throughout universities of the same kind. An example of the changes which have recently occurred is Warsaw University, where the quality assurance issue, drove the University authorities to adopt "Modern languages: learning, teaching, and assessment; A Common European Framework of Reference" as the basis for the statements regarding the outcomes of language learning.

In order to be admitted to various language programmes offered at each individual university candidates must take a competitive entrance examination including also a written (and oral test) of the target language. High proficiency level is required as the language of instruction is predominantly a target language, except for some courses offered in Polish (eg. Philosophy or Sociology). Usually there are about 10 candidates to one place offered at the study programme.

Urgent needs from the stakeholders have resulted in some new study programmes. For example Poland's integration with the European Union drove university authorities and respective bodies to start some European programmes, and an urgent need to train translators and interpreters ready to start employment in the EU structures was the stimulus to launch European Masters Programme in Conference Interpreting – a joint initiative of Warsaw University and a consortium of 11 European universities.

Polish universities started working on a Diploma Supplement which will also help to provide for better transparency of the programmes and definition of learning outcomes and the following description of a graduate's profile taking account of all his skills and competences with a view of his personal development and possibilities of employment.

### ***3. Description and analysis of quality measures relating to the process of teaching and learning***

There is no uniform established system of quality measures relating to the process of teaching and learning. The question is left to decisions of individual institutions and any adopted solutions mainly relate to the delivery of teaching in the classroom. Classroom observation, peer review and students' questionnaires function to this end. The students' surveys covering the objective and the content of a course as well as the teachers' delivery/performance are processed by the heads of individual departments. The application of the conclusions though depends on individual decisions of the department authorities. There are not uniform practices prescribed though.

In general the didactic commissions of the Faculty/Institute Boards with the students' participation are responsible for the monitoring of the teaching and learning process.

As most of the universities in Poland adopted ECTS which calculates courses and modules in terms of overall student workload, it has become quite evident that there has been a shift from teacher-centred methods to learner-centred methods in teaching.

In order to facilitate the learning process more and more universities resort to ICT – setting up self-access centres or using ICT in the classroom. More and more often collaborative methods of learning are used: pair work, team work, projects etc.

The practice of very close cooperation with language and culture institutes (British Council, Goethe Institute, etc) is very frequent. As a result Polish students have not only access to their resources but also benefit from the contact with living languages.

As it has been stated above practically all language courses are delivered in target languages; language proficiency of the candidates being examined during entrance examinations.

There is a growing number of opportunities for student mobility, eg. within the framework of Socrates-Erasmus programme but also due to continued bilateral agreements concluded at each university. The skills and knowledge acquired during their study-related mobility is usually recorded on students transcripts of record which are then recognised as part of their academic programme.

In practically all HE institutions in Poland there are language centres catering for linguistic needs of the students.

It has been recognised that learning is a life-long process thus, technical resources permitting, students are equipped with such transferable skills as the ability to use ICT effectively for learning purposes.

The linguistic skills and knowledge acquired outside the university, as well as some certificates and diplomas, are often recognised at the HE institution. For example the Cambridge certificates are often recognised as equivalents to the language exams offered at the university.

Staff development courses are run in order to enhance methodology and teaching techniques as well as language competences or ICT skills of the teachers.

During their studies, students are examined in each subject separately. Examinations are written or oral (asking questions, checking written papers or a combination of both). Examinations held to assess practical skills consist mainly of exercises, individual and team project work, and practical placements. To complete a semester students are required to achieve passing grades in all courses specified in the curriculum as well as to receive at least satisfactory grades in all examinations and final tests. To complete a full academic year and be admitted to the next one, students are required to complete both semesters. Students may in some cases follow individual study programmes defined and approved by the faculty council. Candidates who fail in the first examination session may repeat an examination in the second session. Re-sit and verification exams in front of a special board are also possible. Those failing in such an examination must repeat the year in whole or in part. Polish school of higher education have their own grading system, which with the introduction of the credit systems (ECTS) is also convertible into the ECTS grade.

Students enrolled in all types of programmes write a diploma thesis (project) and defend it during a diploma examination. The examination board consists of faculty teachers. To be admitted to a diploma examination, the student must usually have completed successfully all subjects and practical placements, etc. as prescribed for a given field of study, submitted by the specified deadline his/her diploma thesis/project approved by his/her supervisor, and obtained from his/her supervisor a passing grade for the thesis/project.

In most higher education institutions, a final examination consists of two parts. The first one is held to examine the knowledge prescribed in the curriculum for a given field of study, and the second one is devoted to the defence of a diploma thesis (project).

The final grade covers the average of all grades obtained in the course of studies, the grade for a diploma thesis/project, the grade for a final exam. This grade is usually calculated as an arithmetical average of the above-mentioned grades.

#### ***4. Description and analysis of quality measures relating to the training of teachers and trainers professionally engaged in the area of languages***

Traditionally, university faculties of modern languages (philology faculties, or modern language faculties) or institutes of applied linguistics train language teachers in 5-year programmes towards a master's degree.

In order to teach in an institution of tertiary education a candidate must have completed a university 5-year Master's course including a pedagogical component. The law provides that the curriculum should include not less than 270 hours of psychology, pedagogy and foreign language teaching methodology plus at least 150 hours of compulsory teaching practice in school. Students usually decide about their specialisation, i.e. whether they are going to enter the teaching profession in future, during their third year of study.

Entry requirements for 5-year university courses are based on minimum four-year secondary school language course. All entrance examinations, however, are of competitive nature considering the fact that there are usually several candidates per place (as many as ca 20 candidates for one place at Warsaw University), which in fact presupposes a much higher level of entry skills.

There are five provisions in the hitherto Law on Higher Education of 1990 referring indirectly to the quality measures in training of teachers employed in higher education:

1. a holder of minimum Master's degree may be employed in a tertiary education institution, which means that according to the legislators it is to a certain degree a guarantee of sufficient qualifications;
2. academic teachers are obliged to constantly increase their professional qualifications;
3. a promotion to a higher position is carried out in a way of a competition procedure (open or closed)
4. each academic teacher undergoes a review process every four years
5. academic teacher has a right to postgraduate education and other forms of education financed by the university

Actually, all formal requirements are obeyed in the recruitment procedures. Unfortunately the evaluation mechanisms employed at different institutional levels depend on heads of university units, their persistence and very often determination.

Officially the review of the teaching staff is carried out every four years. The process, very often theoretically, consists of peer review, class observation, students' questionnaires and quite rarely of self-evaluation.

Besides, the evaluation of competence of the teaching staff is carried out on transition (promotion) from one qualification level (position) to another. In case of language teachers in the language centres from the position of lector to lecturer and senior lecturer. In case of research/teaching staff from assistant to assistant professor, associate professor and professor. However we have to stress that evaluation criteria do not always form a consistent system and are applied fairly liberally, although it happens that evaluation teams are made up of both internal and external reviewers.

Traditionally though, the main focus of evaluation in the faculties has been the research; teaching being somewhat neglected and treated like a second-class activity.

There are no special training programmes for university language teachers. Although in some universities there are induction programmes offered (mainly inspired by Tempus projects) and care of mentors (senior members of the staff).

In his letter directed to the Rectors of Polish universities the Minister of Education emphasized the role of universities in formation of new teachers able to satisfy the requirements of the education system undergoing a reform. Unfortunately the recent report of the Supreme Board of Supervision (June 2001) shows that universities not only do not provide their graduates with sufficient didactic skills but also they quite often disobey the relevant law allowing for shorter than statutory minimum courses of psychology, pedagogy or specific subject didactics. Presently the Ministry of Education is working on a draft law on standards in teacher education which should enforce further curricular changes at universities.

Language centres are solely teaching units, thus there is no requirement to pursue research and acquire further academic degrees. As a rule new staff are employed initially on a one-year contract subject to renewal or a nomination, which is a contract of employment for an indefinite period of time.

In-service training is offered to update teachers professional and language skills subject to financial and organisational possibilities at the institution, and to satisfy the requirement of continuous personal and professional development.

At the beginning of their professional career teachers are offered a position of a *lector* (language teacher) and a teaching load from 480 to 540 hours a year. After minimum 5 years they are entitled to take part in a competition to acquire a position of a lecturer with teaching load of 360 hours a year, after next five years they may compete for a position of a senior lecturer with the teaching load of 300 – 360 hours a year. The promotion, upon a positive result of the competition procedure, to a senior position is accompanied with a salary rise.

The didactic staff are subject to a review carried out every four years. The review procedure includes peer review, questionnaires, class observation report, and a superior's evaluation report.

The status of teachers in the society is rather low, and their financial status is very low indeed. At the university the status of language teachers as compared with research staff is also relatively low which should be related to traditionally low esteem and position of language teaching at universities. The situation has started to change with the students' and other stakeholders' conviction that the knowledge of foreign languages is very important on the labour market, especially with a view of European integration.

The salaries are below the national average and presently amount to ca 500 EUROS a month.

Academics employed at faculties, i.e teaching-research units of the universities, except for the didactic staff (i.e. lectors, lecturers and senior lecturers) are obliged besides teaching to

conduct research and acquire academic degrees (doctor's, and habilitation) and their employment is also connected with a competition procedure (open or closed). The teaching load is from 270 to 360 hours a year. The more senior the position (assistant to full professor) the higher the salary the fewer teaching hours. The salary varies from the equivalent of ca 500 EUROS a month to 1200 EUROS.

Language teachers at universities may take part in different post-graduate studies offered in situ (in FLT methodology eg.) or in- service courses (eg. ICT for language teachers).

Likewise the university students participate in different mobility programmes resulting from either European Educational programmes (Erasmus, Lingua, Leonardo da Vinci) or bilateral agreements concluded by universities. The participation is rather limited due to the fact that there may be replacement problems or due to scarcity of financial means.

Human resource management, including staff development, is the responsibility of the individual institutions.

### ***5 Description and analysis of quality measures relating to the organisation and management of the process of teaching and learning***

The curricula, allocation of adequate funding (received from the didactic subsidy from the Ministry) and successful realisation of programmes is the domain of the faculty, and respective bodies therein (Faculties are autonomous bodies within autonomous universities).

All the necessary information, in order to secure information and transparency): description of programmes, courses, modules, examination procedures and requirements are published both in printed form and on the web. The courses have their credit-point value and students know how many courses and exams have to take each semester in order to complete their study periods successfully. The student workload is calculated according to ECTS, and is 60 credits a year.

Unfortunately not in every university language provision is included into the ECT System thus very often demotivating students.

Universities in Poland have just launched a new initiative called USOS (University System of Student Services) which is an integral electronic system allowing for individual student registration for classes and courses and examinations, also for keeping track of academic achievements of individual students which eventually would print out the Diploma Supplement for each student. The initiative is fairly new and in experimental phase but in a few years time it will become an effective tool for management of the process of teaching and learning.

The tracking of students' achievements is the responsibility of faculties and on central level of the university students' affairs office which compiles annual report for the Ministry of Education on the efficiency of the study system showing how many students have completed their studies in time, what is the passing rate and the dropout rate.

All university authorities (from rector, to heads of departments and institutes, collegiate bodies, and individual ones) are elected every three years. It is often said that to operate a university successfully, and manage the teaching and learning competently, one should need more than just one term of office to learn the new skills, to master them and to develop and improve the system. Thus very often certain necessary changes or reforms especially within the framework of such a sensitive domain as quality assurance are often neglected for fear of loosing in the next elections.

## **Annexe 1. Minimum Curriculum Requirements for *Magister* (Master) Programmes in PHILOLOGY**

## I. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

The term "Philology" encompasses a very broad range of specialist options. These often differ considerably from each other, both in terms of the course load and the number of courses included. They also differ in terms of the number of hours allocated to the practical study of the target languages (some philological programmes covering the study of two or three languages). Moreover, in the English, German and Romance (French) language and literature programmes, English, German or French respectively serves as a medium of communication (with majors /in the form of lectures, classes and seminars/ taught in the language of the specialist option), and the practical language instruction is provided at very advanced levels and in a slightly different manner than is the case, for example, for the Scandinavian languages in the Scandinavian programmes. In the case of the latter, students start learning the language of their specialist option at the elementary level, and basic courses are conducted in the Polish language. Given this difference, the minimum curriculum requirements distinguish between various specialist options within this field of study, dividing them into the following two groups:

Group A comprises specialist options where language instruction begins at a very advanced level (English, German, French, Russian) as well as ones such as the Classics or Slavic, Byelorussian, and Ukrainian Studies in which language instruction begins at the elementary level but may take a similar number of hours as that in the specialist options where language instruction is continued from a certain level of advancement;

Group B comprises the remaining philological programmes, i.e. those where language instruction begins at the elementary level and requires a much higher number of hours.

Given the division described above, the minimum curriculum requirements comprise respectively:

Group A : 1665 hours Group B : 1965 hours.

The total course load for Group A specialist options ranges between 2000 and 3000 hours, while that for Group B specialist options ranges between 2700 and 3900 hours. *Magister* programmes have a duration of 10 semesters.

The minimum curriculum requirements do not include courses required for philologists to obtain additional professional qualifications, e.g. those of a language teacher, translator, publisher, editor, etc. Courses for these qualifications are taken as optional in accordance with curriculum requirements defined in other documents.

## II. PROFILE OF THE GRADUATE

The graduate possesses a good knowledge of general humanities, a general knowledge of literature, culture and history of the geographical area of the language chosen for his/her study programme as well as a general knowledge of linguistics. Moreover, the graduate is a specialist in terms of practical language skills and, as the holder of the title of *magister filologii*, a specialist in the literature of a given language, the culture of a given language area or linguistics, depending on the chosen academic specialisation. Philological programmes provide a background for graduates to obtain additional qualifications as required to work in the profession of teacher, translator, editor, organiser and promoter of the culture of a given language area, etc.

## III. COURSE GROUPS AND COURSE LOAD:

	<b>Group A</b>	<b>Group B</b>
1. GENERAL COURSES	330 hours	330 hours

2.	BASIC AND MAJOR COURSES	1335 hours	1635 hours
	<b>Total:</b>	<b>1665 hours</b>	<b>1965 hours</b>

#### IV. COURSES BY GROUP AND MINIMUM COURSE LOAD

##### 1. GENERAL COURSES

Total (A and B)	330 hours
Elective (e.g. computer science, logic, natural sciences or fundamentals of intellectual property protection)	30 hours
History of Philosophy	60 hours
2 <sup>nd</sup> Foreign Language	120 hours
Latin/Old Church Slavonic	60 hours
Physical Education	60 hours

##### 2. BASIC AND MAJOR COURSES

A: 1335 hours

B: 1635 hours

###### Set of courses in literature:

Introduction to Literature Studies	30 hours
History of Literature	120 hours

###### Set of courses in culture:

Culture of the language area	60 hours
History of the language area	30 hours

###### Set of courses in linguistics:

Introduction to Linguistics	30 hours
Descriptive Grammar	120 hours
History of the language with elements of historical grammar	30 hours
Contrastive Grammar/Metrics	15 hours

Practical language skills – in the language of the specialist option	A: 900 hours B: 1200 hours
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#### V. CURRICULUM CONTENTS FOR BASIC AND MAJOR COURSES

##### **Introduction to Literary Studies**

Theory of the literary work, stylistics, versification, literature types and genres.

##### **History of Literature**

History of literature in the target language area, including representative literary works in poetry, drama and prose.

### **History of Culture**

Elements of history and culture of the target language area as determining its cultural specificity.

### **Introduction to Linguistics**

Language categories, levels of linguistic analysis, paradigmatic and syntactic relationships, selected issues in the history of linguistics.

### **Descriptive Grammar**

The contents cover thematic areas relevant for the target language, these selected from among the following: phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, pragmatics.

### **Contrastive Grammar**

Concepts, principles and objectives of comparative analysis.

### **History of the Language**

Historical context of the development of the target language, including characteristics of the grammar system of the target language at the key stages of its development.

## **VI. RECOMMENDATIONS**

Courses which should be provided within the following specialist options in addition to the minimum curriculum requirements:

Baltic Philology: Latvian	60 hours
Romance Philology: second Romance language	240 hours
Romanian Philology: French	800 hours
Slavic Philology. Second Slavic language	240 hours
Ukrainian and Belarussian Philology: Russian	240 hours

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31st July 2002

### **Sources for the information used therein:**

Ministry of Education materials  
Bureau for Academic Recognition and International exchange materials  
University Accreditation Commission