



Technische
Universität
Braunschweig



Recommendations on Language Policy at TU Braunschweig

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Foreword

The language policy of TU Braunschweig considers all status groups of the university. It recommends inter-institutional standards which regulate the handling of language training and multilingualism at a university level. It is based on current needs assessments. Regular monitoring is necessary in order to adapt language policy sustainably to the university's changing internationalisation efforts. The measures developed are to be understood as recommendations, not as binding implementation requirements.

The recommendations on language policy were developed by the Internationalisation Council of TU Braunschweig and supported by the Executive Board in its decision of 23.11.2016.

Objectives

TU Braunschweig regards the acquisition of foreign language competence and intercultural skills as a central prerequisite for success in all study programmes, as well as in an international work and academic environment.

With its language policy, TU Braunschweig pursues the following key objectives:

- **Qualifications for an English-speaking work and academic environment**
TU Braunschweig wants to provide its students with optimal qualifications for an international labour and research market. The English language, as the most significant international foreign language, is of particular importance. TU Braunschweig therefore trains its students in such a way that, by the time they graduate with a Master's degree at the latest, they have the necessary language skills to move confidently in an English-language work and research environment.
- **Maintaining German as an academic language**
TU Braunschweig wants to permanently maintain and strengthen the German language as an academic language. In addition, it wants to train its international students so that they are employable in Germany. This generally includes a good command of the German language.
- **Strengthening linguistic diversity**
TU Braunschweig wants to maintain and strengthen the linguistic diversity of its international university community. In addition, it wants to sensitize its students to the location advantages of the European region, with several developed academic languages. It therefore

promotes the acquisition of at least one other foreign language in addition to English language training.

- **Living a culture of welcome**

TU Braunschweig is convinced that the topic of internationality can only be sustainably established within the university if, in addition to teaching and research, the administrative sector is also included and the topics of multilingualism and interculturality are considered at all levels of the university.

I. Studies and Teaching

1.1: International Degree Students

The linguistic objective of the Bachelor's programme is to ensure that students are able to speak German in a professional manner. TU Braunschweig offers exclusively German-language courses of study in the Bachelor's degree programmes. It therefore expects its international students to be willing to acquire very good German language skills and provides the necessary qualification offers.

The Master's programme subsequently prepares students for the international work and academic environment. In addition to mastering German as a subject-specific language, the linguistic objective of the Master's programme is to enable students to confidently engage in academic discourse in English. TU Braunschweig is not planning a further expansion of purely English-language Master's programmes. Experience to date has shown that while these degree programmes are very intensive in terms of supervision, they still do not really meet the expectations of international students with regard to the acquisition of German language skills and thus social integration and employability in Germany.

- (A) In order to be admitted to all German-language Bachelor's and Master's degree programmes, international applicants must prove that they have German language skills which qualify them to follow the contents of the programme and to express themselves orally and in writing on complex issues. To do this, they must meet one of the following minimum language requirements:
- German language examination for university entrance 2 (DSH 2)
 - Test German as a foreign language (TestDaF) with a total of at least 16 points and at least 3 points in each part of the examination
 - The European Language Certificates: telc German C1 University
 - Assessment test of the Studienkolleg
 - Language Diploma of the Conference of Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs (Level II)

(Status 7/2017, a complete list of all recognised language certificates can be found in the current DSH exam regulations.)

- (B) Since the subject-specific literature for many subjects is in English, applicants for admission to a German-language Master's programme should also provide proof of English-language qualifications. The faculties are recommended to include in their admission regulations the following language certificates for international and German applicants:

- English at B2 level, to be proven within the framework of previous school or university education, e.g. through subject-specific English courses in the Bachelor's programme. (English as a leaving certificate subject is not a reliable proof of B2 skills. In the annual placement tests of the Language Centre, 30% of high school graduates do not reach B2 level; this also applies to high school graduates who had English as their leaving certificate subject.)
 - Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), internet-based test/(iBT) with at least 87 points
 - Cambridge First Certificate in English (FCE) (B2)
 - Cambridge Certificate in Advanced English (CAE) (C1)
 - Cambridge Certificate of Proficiency in English (CPE) (C2)
 - International English Language Testing System (IELTS), level 6.0 or higher
 - Language certificate (English Language Proficiency Report) of the TU Braunschweig Language Centre, B2 level or higher
 - If the faculty conducts personal interviews with the applicants for the Master's programmes, the English language skills can also be tested during the interview.
- (C) In the case of the Master's programme, individual exceptions to the minimum language requirements should be possible if the student possesses academic excellence. Decisions on individual cases are made by the respective faculty.
- (D) Experience with international students shows that, despite the minimum formal language requirements, knowledge of German for successful studies at TU Braunschweig is only sufficient in individual cases. Through the Language Centre, TU Braunschweig therefore offers its international students general, academic and subject-specific language qualification programmes at B2 and C1 level. In addition, TU Braunschweig actively encourages its international students to take part in advanced German language courses in the first two semesters of their studies for at least 4 SWS (4 credit hours) per semester. Participation is included in the optional curriculum with up to 4 ECTS (credit points) per semester, i.e. a total of 8 ECTS. A special emphasis is placed on subject-specific language courses in order to improve students' language skills during their studies. To this end, the faculties regularly report their needs to the Language Centre and evaluate the success of these measures.
- (E) Many international students struggle with initial difficulties not only in the linguistic field, but also in the intercultural and social fields. A particular problem is communication with fellow German students. In surveys, only 31% of all international students state that they communicate regularly with German students, and only 12% are satisfied with the type and scope of communication (cf. Wissenschaft Weltoffen 2011:38). Consequently, support services based on the concept of peer teaching, such as the language tandem programme and the SOS programme (Studying without Language Barriers), have proven to be particularly successful. The SOS programme is currently offered in the fields of electrical engineering and mechanical engineering. Within the framework of this programme, German-speaking students offer intercultural learning groups in which they support 2-8 international students in their learning process and discuss the contents of their shared courses. In addition to general and subject-specific language support, the programme also pays particular attention to social integration. It is to be continued and extended to other

courses of study. Other support programmes such as the Buddy Programme, Scout or inTU focus on social integration, which also indirectly promotes language acquisition. The idea is that every international student should take part in one of these tutoring or sponsorship programmes at the beginning of their studies. Further intercultural events are offered as part of the Certificate for Intercultural Competence (ZIK).

- (F) English-language qualification for the Master's programme takes place in the same way as for German students (see I.3. (A)). However, with regard to the target group of international students, it should be considered that there are countries of origin in which very little English is taught as part of school education. For these students it is therefore necessary to offer English courses at beginner level (A1 and A2 level).

1.2: International Exchange Students

When it comes to exchange studies, students often come to TU Braunschweig with very little knowledge of German. In addition to the acquisition of the German language, intercultural experience is often the main focus. German language skills are instead acquired at the level of everyday and colloquial language, which, however, is usually not sufficient for successful study in German. In order to be attractive to international partners in this respect, TU Braunschweig must offer a sufficient number of English-language courses in all relevant degree programmes. The Braunschweig thus also secures exchange places for its students abroad.

- (A) TU Braunschweig generally offers English-language courses of at least 30 ECTS credits per semester, so that exchange students whose language skills are not sufficient for German courses can acquire the required semester credits in English. A language qualification programme is offered which enables exchange students to improve their German language skills. This language offer consists of the following components:
- preparatory German courses (e.g. international summer courses) at levels A1, A2, B1 and B2
 - semester-long German courses at levels A2, B1 and B2 in the range of 4 SWS (credit hours).
 - crash courses during semester breaks at levels A2, B1 and B2
- (B) International summer courses for exchange students are offered, which are specially tailored to the needs of U.S. partner universities in terms of dates and content. The places offered contribute to the exchange balance and secure the exchange places for TU students at US American and other strategic partner universities.

1.3: German Students

TU Braunschweig wants to optimally qualify its students for the international labour and research market. The English language, as the most important foreign language internationally, is of particular importance. Before graduating with a Master's degree at the latest, all students should have the necessary language skills to move confidently in an English-speaking work and research environment.

In addition, TU Braunschweig promotes the acquisition of at least one further foreign language from a country of mobility or priority. In the field of foreign language training, three language groups with different foci are thus defined:

- (A) **English up to C1 level with a focus on academic and subject-specific language:**
The objective of the language training is to enable students to engage in an English-speaking subject-specific and academic discourse. For this purpose, general, subject-specific and academic English courses are offered in both the Bachelor's and Master's programmes. At the end of the Bachelor's programme, students should have at least a general language qualification at B2 level (approximately leaving certificate level). Participation in English courses at B2 or C1 level is integrated into the curriculum of the Bachelor's programme in the elective area with 2 ECTS (credit points) per semester. At the end of the Master's programme, a subject-specific language qualification at C1 level should be completed. Participation in C1-level subject-specific English courses is integrated into the curriculum of the Master's programme in elective subjects with 2 ECTS (credit points) per semester.
- (B) **European languages (French, Italian, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Swedish, Spanish, Turkish) up to B1/B2 level:**
The objective of language training in this field is to prepare students for a stay abroad within Europe. In this case, the language skills at the level of everyday and colloquial language are sufficient. Further offers can be provided in individual languages such as Spanish and French.
- (C) **Languages from strategic priority countries (Arabic, Chinese, Japanese) up to A2 level:**
Language training in this area provides an introduction to the language, writing and culture of the potential host country. As a rule, in-depth language skills are not required here, as teaching at the partner universities takes place in English.

In addition to pure language training, the aspect of intercultural education should always be taken into consideration. In addition, supplementary offers with other methods of language teaching are to be offered, such as intercultural training, foreign-language theatre groups, readings, film screenings, language tandems or cultural events. A certificate for intercultural competence (ZIK) will be introduced, in which the acquired qualifications can be compiled and verified.

Foreign language training at TU Braunschweig is generally oriented towards the goals of a university education. In order to ensure a uniform and internationally comparable standard of quality, TU Braunschweig is accredited in English, French, Italian and Spanish as well as in German as a foreign language by UNICert®.

Foreign language training must be closely geared to the current needs of students and existing university partnerships in the field of student mobility. A broad range of foreign-language offers is desirable, but in the distribution of financial resources the respective demand must be differentiated and weighed against the more intensive German and English education.

II. Research

TU Braunschweig considers the possibility of conducting research in English to be a decisive prerequisite for attracting internationally outstanding scholars. It is also an important prerequisite for the recruitment of international doctoral candidates. The German language must not become a hurdle in the selection of suitable candidates; research at TU Braunschweig should generally be possible in English.

For both groups, however, a knowledge of German facilitates integration into the university and into German society. In addition, international doctoral students in particular often come to Germany with the expectation of having a potential career path here, which, however, is not possible without sufficient knowledge of German.

- (A) TU Braunschweig expects its German and international scholars to have a very good command of English, which will enable them to teach or carry out research. The faculties are therefore recommended to request the following language certificates from their applicants:
- English at B2/C1 level, certified by a recognised language certificate such as TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language), the Cambridge Certificate or UNICert II.
 - Alternatively, the ability to speak English can also be tested in an interview with the supervisor of the doctoral thesis.
- (B) Clear linguistic standards should be agreed upon at the time of admission to the doctorate, which determine the language in which the research work and the doctorate are to be conducted.
- (C) DaF for staff: TU Braunschweig expects scholars and doctoral students who have been working and researching at TU Braunschweig for a longer period of time to be willing to acquire an adequate knowledge of German. It must be considered that doctoral students are usually under a lot of time pressure. TU Braunschweig therefore offers specific DaF language courses in the evenings at levels A1 - C1, which are geared to the needs and working conditions of scholars and doctoral students.
- (D) In research, the increasing or exclusive use of the English language leads in some cases to a flattening of communication, which can hinder work efficiency. It also leads to international scholars not being able to use their existing knowledge of German and thus not being able to improve their German language skills. TU Braunschweig therefore wants to focus on the principle of receptive multilingualism wherever possible. In this form of intercultural communication, the participants can speak both German and English (or another foreign language), provided that passive competence in the other language is sufficient to be able to follow the course of the conversation.

III. The Institutional Dimension

TU Braunschweig is convinced that the topic of internationality can only be sustainably integrated into the university if, in addition to teaching and research, the administrative sector is also included and the topics of multilingualism and interculturality are taken into consideration at all levels of the university.

In order to attract good students and scholars to TU Braunschweig, both excellent study and research conditions and soft location factors are decisive: individual advising and mentoring, support services in German and English and successful integration at the university are aspects of a lively culture of welcome that make TU Braunschweig attractive to an international target group and contribute to the long-term commitment of international guests to the university and to making them ambassadors for TU Braunschweig.

1.1: Service- and consulting offers

- (A) TU Braunschweig bundles all administration and services relevant for international students in the International Office. For this purpose, employees are available who have a very good knowledge of English and other foreign languages and are well acquainted with the specific consulting and information needs of this target group.
- (B) International doctoral students and visiting scholars are advised by the Mobile Researchers' Centre (MoRe) at TU Braunschweig. Only employees with very good English language skills, a high level of intercultural competence and specific expertise in the field of advising and mentoring international scholars are employed for this purpose.
- (C) The central administration unit includes all areas that also have more intensive contact with international target groups. In these divisions, employees are appointed who have a good knowledge of English or further languages and for whom the topic of internationality may be of particular concern out of personal interest or experience. These employees receive special training so that they can be deployed as competent contacts for international guests.
- (D) All interested employees in the administration are offered specific training in English and intercultural competence as part of our staff development program. The training courses are designed to refresh general language skills, acquire task-related language skills and reduce communication barriers. The DAAD Academy's subject-specific training courses for administrative staff at universities can also be used. In addition, administrative staff will be encouraged and motivated to participate in staff exchanges with international partner universities. In this way, the international perspective can be experienced personally and intercultural skills can be deepened.

- (E) In the administration sector, a "network of interpreters" comprising volunteers with special foreign language skills and intercultural competences is being set up. If necessary, the respective employees can be called on to solve comprehension problems.
- (F) The official language in the administration of TU Braunschweig is German. However, in order to make it easier for international guests to deal with administrative matters, all forms and information materials that are frequently used by international target groups are identified. These documents are explained or made available in English.

1.2: Public Image

- (A) In order to make it easier for international students and scholars to start their studies and research in Germany, the English-language website of TU Braunschweig will be further expanded. Above all, the information that is important in the decision-making and entry phases must be available in English throughout. This particularly concerns:
 - all information for prospective students
 - all information about the study programmes
 - all services for international students and scholars
 - all relevant information about TU Braunschweig
- (B) The central administration identifies all websites that are frequently used by international target groups. These pages are provided in English. Each division is represented on the internet with at least a brief description and a contact address in English.
- (C) In future, frequently used buildings and facilities in the central area will be signposted in German and English.