THE INDEPENDENT INSTITUTE OF **IIE** EDUCATION

POLICY NUMBER	**IIE013**	
POLICY NAME	**Language Policy**	
POLICY VERSION	**06**	
LEGEND	**None**	
POLICY APPROVAL	**Date of Approval**	**Date of Implementation**
	14 December 2005	**January 2006**
DATES AMENDED	**16 August 2011**[1] **30 November 2016**[2] **02 March 2018**[3] **11 July 2019**[4] **03 November 2022**[5]	**January 2012** **January 2017** **January 2019** **January 2020** **January 2023**
DATE OF NEXT REVIEW	**2027**	
RELATED POLICIES	**IIE001: Quality Assurance and Enhancement Policy** **IIE002: Admissions Policy** **IIE008: Information Centre Policy** **IIE009: Assessment Strategy and Policy** **IIE022 Teaching and Learning Strategy** **IIE026: Student Support and Professional Development Policy** **IIE029: Distance Education Policy** **IIE030: The IIE Internationalisation Policy** **IIE031: Governance Policy** **IIE032: Policy on Processing of Personal Information, Intellectual Property and Cyber Security** **IIE033: Policy on the Integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Teaching and Learning Practices**	
RELATED PROCEDURES	**None**	
POLICY ANNEXURES	**Annexure A: Major Languages of South Africa per Region**	

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[1] S27: 2011-08-16 Item 8.8 changes made throughout the whole document – refer to Annex 8.8
[2] Edited, renumbers and Glossary and Roles added.
[3] S47: 2018-03-02 Item 7.2.3 (whole policy change)
[4] S51: 2019-07-11 Item 7.2.5.
[5] S61:2022-11-02 Item 8.2.4 This Policy has been reviewed and re-organised to provide greater clarity and alignment with similar policies in the public higher education space.

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GLOSSARY

English Proficiency Test	A recognised assessment designed to evaluate a candidate's ability to use and understand the English language.
LoLT	Language of Learning and Teaching
Multilingualism[6]	A linguistic capacity that extends across more than two languages. Sensitivity to multilingualism in the higher education context requires an awareness of the cognitive processes of a foreign or second-language speaker in the learning process.
The IIE	The Independent Institute of Education (Pty) Ltd.
Twelve (12) Languages	These are the official languages of South Africa: Afrikaans, English, isiNdebele, isiXhosa, isiZulu, Northern Sesotho, Sesotho, Setswana, siSwati, Tshivenda, Xitsonga, and Sign Language.

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[6] S51: 2019-07-11 Item 7.2.5.

1   INTRODUCTION[7]

(1)   Language, especially in a diverse country such as South Africa, is an important resource to facilitate development, social cohesion, creativity, and learning. The Independent Institution of Education (Pty) Ltd (The IIE) recognises the importance of this resource and the role of language in the promotion of scholarship in higher education. Language policy and its implementation need to empower students and staff and strive to avoid social exclusion. Consequently, The IIE acknowledges the importance of language sensitivity and the promotion of a supportive, inclusive environment.

(2)   South Africa is a multilingual country with Twelve (12) languages being constitutionally protected. The unique history of our country, coupled with the international experience in multi-lingual countries, makes it imperative that African languages should receive ongoing attention at schools and in other spheres of social and economic activity.

(3)   The Higher Education Act of 1997 informs language policy for higher education. The documents Language in Education Policy (1997) and the Language Policy for Higher Education (2002) set out the framework for policy development. Under the Higher Education Act, and subject to the policy determined by the Minister of National Education, each higher education institution must determine its language policy and publish such a policy[8].

2   POLICY STATEMENT

(1)   As English is the language most commonly used in official and commercial life in South Africa and is also regarded as a global language[9] Its use enables improved access to the country's economic resources and increases the ability of students to participate meaningfully in the economy. English is also the language associated with social mobility. Thus, English is the primary medium of instruction and assessment at The IIE except where another language is being taught. This applies at all NQF levels, including postgraduate theses and dissertations for higher degrees.[10].

(2)   English is the language of internal governance, administration, operations, and support services. This includes but is not limited to official events, all governance and other committee meetings. All policy documents and capacity development will be made available in English.

(3)   The IIE further underpins respect for all languages used by international students and recognises this multilingual diversity[11].

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[7] S61: 2022-11-03 Item 8.2.4 – new Introduction
[8] S51: 2019-07-11 Item 7.2.5
[9] S51: 2019-07-11 Item 7.2.5
[10] S61: 2022-11-03 Item 8.2.4
[11] S51: 2019-07-11 Item 7.2.5

3 APPLICATION OF THE LANGUAGE POLICY[12]

(1) This Policy applies to all academic, operational, administrative and management services offered across the brands within The IIE including staff and students.

4 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

All Brands within The IIE will ensure that the following principles are adhered to[13]:

4.1 Language Proficiency

(1) Different language proficiencies are accommodated through the provision of glossaries, in-text explanations of difficult vocabulary, software programmes, varied teaching methods including visual aids and manuals, and access to word-processing facilities that enable grammar and spelling checking. In this way, the impact of these differences will be mitigated.

(2) All lecturers and administrative staff are sufficiently proficient in English to deliver excellent services to staff and students.

(3) In relation to student registration contracts, and where necessary, and practically possible:

    a) the terms and conditions for the registration contract shall be translated into three African languages being the three languages listed as home languages for the largest number of students registered at The IIE. The translated terms and conditions will be uploaded to the IIE's website. [14]

    b) services of administrative staff in relation to student registration.[15] Contracts will be provided in South African home languages to fee payers and contracting parties who are not proficient in English, either directly or by using a translation.

(4) All staff will be sensitive to the different proficiency levels of the students. The staff is expected to accommodate different levels of proficiency by being tolerant and inclusive, allowing code-switching (i.e., peer-to-peer native translation)[16] to clarify concepts where necessary and ensure students are given reasonable opportunities to clarify their communication.

(5) While improving proficiency in English is desirable as an outcome of the qualifications, assessment methods will focus on module and qualification outcomes without unnecessarily penalising language proficiency.

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[12] S61: 2022-11-03 Item 8.2.4 – new Section included.
[13] S51: 2019-07-11 Item 7.2.5
[14] S61: 2022-11-03 Item 8.2.4
[15] S51: 2019-07-11 Item 7.2.5
[16] S51: 2019-07-11 Item 7.2.5

(6)   It is a requirement that students are able to communicate their ideas and arguments competently in English to confirm that certified graduates have communicative competence.

4.2 Teaching and Learning

(1)   Particular language requirements can be applied to specific disciplines. English is both the medium of teaching and of examination, except in language and literature departments where another language is taught and may be used. This applies at all levels and to dissertations and theses for higher degrees. The policy supports English as the Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT) but is also committed to promoting multilingualism[17].

(2)   All material provided to students (including assessments, course material and guides) will be presented in unambiguous language that seeks to eliminate cultural bias and uses English that is accessible to second and third-language speakers.

(3)   English dictionaries will be available on campus, in the Information Centres [18](previously known as Libraries) and in all examination and test venues. If students are not permitted to use dictionaries in an examination, then this will be specified on the paper. Information Centres will have bilingual dictionaries available in the major languages normally represented on the campus. (Annexure A provides a guide to major regional languages, but the campus spread may be different as students frequently travel from other regions to study.)

(4)   Teaching and learning specialists on campus provide support to lecturers to promote multilingualism.[19]

(5)   Language-based activities to support the development of language proficiency should be made available to all students where possible (i.e., writing centres).[20]

(6)   Campuses will be requested to continuously evaluate the extent to which curriculum, teaching-learning methods and assessment are appropriately pitched for the communicative competence of students.[21]

(7)   Campuses must ensure that students attain a certain level of communicative competency in English.[22]

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[17] S51: 2019-07-11 Item 7.2.5.

[18] S55: 2020-12-02 item 8.2.7 (previously library)

[19] S51: 2019-07-11 Item 7.2.5.

[20] S51: 2019-07-11 Item 7.2.5

[21] S51: 2019-07-11 Item 7.2.5.

[22] S61: 2022-11-03 Item 8.2.4

4.3 Respect and Inclusivity

(1) Staff and students should be sensitised about the need to counteract possible sexism or racism in the language employed in materials for teaching, assessment, research, and in academic and everyday usage.[23]

(2) Staff and students should avoid all language use that may be deemed discriminatory, disrespectful or humiliating.[24]

(3) Staff and students should respect the value of human dignity and recognise that language extends beyond communication, but also relates to identity.[25]

5 LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY REQUIREMENTS

(1) Students applying for admission must provide proof of English proficiency prior to being admitted.[26]

(2) Campuses must ensure that, where required, students have demonstrated that they have attained a certain level of communicative competency.[27]

(3) If no level of communicative competency is required, then the level of proficiency is determined by the statutory minimum admission requirements for the type of qualification concerned.

(4) Students who are not sufficiently proficient in English or from a non-English speaking country are required to present a recognised English proficiency test for admission.[28]

(5) In the event of Senate Discretionary Admissions, The IIE may require a student to undergo a written or oral test to confirm proficiency.[29]

(6) The IIE may accept a student who does not meet the above prerequisites based on a written undertaking by a student to attain the required proficiency in English (at their own expense) before the commencement of the programme.

(7) For acceptance in all professional degrees, all requirements of regulatory bodies must be followed, specifically, the language requirements for teaching qualifications in South Africa. These requirements will be made explicit in the Admissions Policy and the curricula.

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[23] S51: 2019-07-11 Item 7.2.5.
[24] S61: 2022-11-03 Item 8.2.4
[25] S61: 2022-11-03 Item 8.2.4
[26] S51: 2019-07-11 Item 7.2.5.
[27] S51: 2019-07-11 Item 7.2.5
[28] S61: 2022-11-03 Item 8.2.4
[29] S51: 2019-07-11 Item 7.2.5.

ANNEXURE A: MAJOR LANGUAGES OF SOUTH AFRICA PER REGION

Please note that the table below indicates the two languages that are most widely spoken per province, excluding English. For example, Information Centres for campuses in KwaZulu-Natal should have Zulu/ English and Xhosa/ English dictionaries available.

Province	Major languages
Eastern Cape	isiXhosa, Afrikaans
Free State	Sesotho, Afrikaans
Gauteng	isiZulu, Afrikaans
KwaZulu-Natal	isiZulu, isiXhosa
Limpopo	Sepedi, Xitsonga
Mpumalanga	siSwati, isiZulu
Northern Cape	Afrikaans, Setswana
North-West	Setswana, Afrikaans
Western Cape	Afrikaans, isiXhosa