

# Language Policy for TU Berlin

## Foreword

The Language Policy presented here contains recommendations concerning the approach to be adopted towards language training and multilingualism at TU Berlin. It is embedded in the implementation plan for the University's internationalization strategy passed by the Academic Senate (see resolution passed by the Academic Senate in session 764 of 12.10.16) and is intended for all members of the University. The measures arising from these recommendations are also included in the above-mentioned implementation plan.

## Introduction

TU Berlin regards itself as an international university committed to maintaining the highest standards in research, teaching and organization, and recognizes the responsibilities associated with its national and international reputation for excellence. TU Berlin is an outstanding educational and research institution as well as an attractive place of employment, and welcomes researchers, students and administrative staff from all over the world. The University is constantly striving to expand its international network with partner institutions and to increase the diversity of its members. The Language Policy presented here is intended to help define a consistent understanding of the significance of language and language acquisition at TU Berlin, thus enabling the University to do justice to its international role on an ongoing basis.

The TU Berlin Language Policy is based on **three main principles**:

- 1. German as central language**
- 2. English as second language**
- 3. Embracing multilingualism and intercultural competence**

### 1. German as central language

German is the central language of teaching, research and administration at TU Berlin. The compulsory teaching elements on bachelor's programs at TUB are conducted primarily in German. German (along with English) plays a central role in research as the language of work communication and publication. Communication in German is the legally-binding basis for administrative matters. Mastering German as a language of scholarship and science is, generally, a fundamental requirement for an academic career in Germany. Mastery of German is similarly essential for success in the German labor market. Acquiring German as a second language also helps international students, researchers and teachers as well as all other staff at TU Berlin to integrate effectively.

- All international students are required, if not by their admission requirements then during the course of their studies, to achieve a level of written and spoken German enabling them to communicate effectively within the context of their specialist discipline, as well as in their professional lives.
- All researchers and teaching staff are expected during their employment at TU Berlin to acquire a level of German allowing them to communicate effectively in their daily lives at the University, and in the long term to participate in research and teaching within the German-speaking academic community. A willingness to acquire language skills will strengthen the capacity of international researchers and teachers to engage effectively with the German-speaking student body, as well as with office and technical staff.
- All other members of staff are expected during their employment at TU Berlin to acquire a level of German allowing them to communicate effectively in their daily lives at the University.

## **2. English as second language**

English serves as the primary lingua franca for research, teaching and administration at TU Berlin. The ongoing support of English as second language at TUB is essential for a successful and sustainable process of internationalization. This applies to the multi-faceted nature of internationalization within the University as well as to all international communication conducted by TU Berlin and its members.

English-language publications ensure that research achieves international recognition. Programs offered in English and the establishing of English-language administrative structures as well as the employment of English-speaking administrative staff help make TU Berlin more attractive as an employer in the international labor market, while making it easier for international students and staff to integrate into life at TU Berlin.

- In addition to German, all students at TU Berlin are expected during the course of their studies to acquire an effective level of English, both as an academic language and as a second language for every day communication at the University.
- Students and junior scholars should be given the opportunity to put both their written and spoken German and English into practice (at least within the context of their specialist discipline).
- It should be possible to take English-language written and oral examinations.
- Important information, such as legally-binding documents, must be available in German and English (convenience translation).
- TU Berlin websites must provide clear and unequivocal information in both German and English concerning its range of offers and organizational structures.

- Teaching staff and researchers at TU Berlin should be in the position to communicate in both German and adequate written and spoken English for the purposes of teaching and research, as well as for dealing with administrative issues.
- All other staff members are expected to acquire English, or display the willingness to direct persons with little or no knowledge of German to the appropriate means of assistance (English-language documents or English-speaking staff).

### **3. Embracing multilingualism and intercultural competence**

Multilingualism and intercultural competence are further central elements of a successful internationalization of teaching, research and administration. Multilingualism is embraced throughout the entire TU Berlin campus and is further an expression of the diversity which already defines the University and which TUB wishes to intensify in the future. The embracing of multilingualism and intercultural competence are seen at TU Berlin as essential requirements for an effective working environment in all areas of University life, particularly regarding the important international and strategic partnerships which the range of languages offered by TU Berlin further seeks to support. Both aspects are firmly rooted in TU Berlin's concept of a cosmopolitan, international university with a high global standing.

- Students and all members of staff are to be encouraged to learn other languages in addition to German and English.
- All University staff are to be provided with the opportunity to take advantage of specialized measures tailored to their needs for the purposes of language acquisition.
- All members of the University are similarly to be assisted in their efforts to acquire intercultural competence through specialized training programs tailored to their needs.

This Language Policy was approved by  
the Academic Senate of Technische Universität Berlin  
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