

The Language Principles of the Student Union of Tampere University

Towards a truly international university community

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About the Language Principles

The Student Union is a student community in Tampere, to which each person wants and feels that they belong – from a fresher to an alumnus. In order to ensure the equal status of all members of the Student Union, the activities, communications, services, and advocacy work of the Student Union and the associations operating within it must be accessible to all, both in Finnish and in English.

The Language Principles steer the realisation of the internal multilingualism of the Student Union. In addition, the Language Principles steer the advocacy work related to improving the multilingualism of the University. The Language Principles supplement other steering documents of the Student Union, such as the Policy Paper and the Equality Plan. The Language Principles further the existence of the Student Union as an equal, social, open, and responsible community in which the student is at the heart of everything. The Student Union furthers students' opportunities to study different languages at the University and encourages its employees to improve their language proficiencies.

In this document, bilingualism refers to the use of Finnish and English, whereas multilingualism refers to the use of several different languages in the community. Internationality and multilingualism are a significant strength and resource for the entire university community. The bilingualism of the

Student Union is seen positively, and its necessity in the equal treatment of students is understood.

The document is updated every three years, next in 2028.

The Language Principles that steer the activities of the Student Union

The Student Union adheres to the following principles in all of its activities.

Employees, the Executive Board, and the Council of Representatives

- We actively improve and maintain our capabilities for bilingual office work. As an employer, the Student Union supports its employees in improving their skills and knowledge.
- We review the bilingual office work ground rules annually.
- We specify the language proficiency needed for a position in our recruitment processes and welcome applicants from different language backgrounds.
- We ensure that international students have access to enough information on the activities of the Student Union and the participation opportunities related to our activities.
- The Council of Representatives examines actively its internal discussion culture.
- We collect feedback and improvement suggestions on the activities of the Council of Representatives. When collecting the feedback, we take

into account Council members whose native language is not Finnish as a special group.

Associations and member services

- We set an example regarding bilingual activities.
- All of our member services and information on these services are bilingual.
- The meetings of our working groups are flexibly bilingual.
- The communications regarding our working groups and the materials produced for our meetings are bilingual whenever it is appropriate.

Tutoring

- Our communications regarding tutoring are bilingual, and by way of tutoring, we continue to build a community that fosters multilingualism as part of internationality.
- We primarily use English as the language of communication in international tutoring. We encourage tutors and their tutees to also use any other languages in common in order to foster diverse language proficiencies and further integration into the student community.
- We strengthen the position of international tutoring at the University and our collaboration with the working group for tutoring organisers.

Events

- We create event activity approaches that promote the interaction between national and international students.
- Our communications regarding events are always bilingual. We always collect feedback on these events bilingually.

Communications and translation work

- We always take into account bilingualism in the planning and execution of our communications. Bilingual communications are simultaneous, adequately resourced, and high-quality.
- We train the persons operating in TREY on communications and its principles on bilingualism annually.
- We take data security and sustainability into account in our translation work. We do not translate texts with generative artificial intelligence or machine translation tools that are not secure.
- We do not publish raw machine-translated texts. All of our translations are either made or checked by humans.
- We take into account students' diversity in our communications.
- We use understandable standard language in our communications.

Advocacy

- We train the persons operating in TREY to recognise different dimensions of bilingualism in their sectors and, more broadly, in the activities of the Student Union and the university community.
- We encourage all of our interest groups to bilingual activities.
- We remind our interest groups of bilingual communications, if necessary.
- We train student representatives and the persons operating in the Student Union on multilingualism.

The language policy goals of the Student Union

The Student Union furthers the following goals in its advocacy work.

- Tampere University offers high-quality teaching in several different languages.
- The core vocabularies of courses taught in languages other than Finnish are available in Finnish. This supports the position of the Finnish language as a language of science and helps international students to learn the vocabulary of their own field in Finnish. Similarly, the core vocabularies of courses taught in Finnish are available in English.

- Tampere University bears responsibility for the national culture and the position of our national languages. The position of the Finnish language as a language of science is bettered.
- The University recognises the value of minority languages (such as the Karelian and Sámi languages) and the challenges faced by the students that speak these languages.
- The materials of the working groups and bodies of Tampere University are also available in English, and it is possible to participate in their activities bilingually.
- Teaching personnel are offered training on language-aware pedagogy.
- Teaching personnel have the opportunity to receive comprehensive support for improving their English language skills. Persons who do not have the capabilities necessary to offer teaching in English are not obligated to do so.
- The language used must be understandable and easy-to-digest.
- The Finnish as a second language studies are high-quality, and international students have the opportunity to study Finnish at least to the B2 level, if they wish to do so. International personnel are also offered the opportunity to study Finnish while working.
- The course completion possibilities are diverse regardless of language.
- Multilingualism is valued and recognised as a valuable resource to the entire university community.

- At Tampere University, no one assumes the language a person speaks based on, for example, their appearance or name.
- The communications of Tampere University are bilingual whenever it is appropriate. Communications in different languages are simultaneous, adequately resourced, and high-quality.
- The University has a well-resourced language centre that enables the flexible completion of language studies.
- International students are offered an adequate number of Finnish language courses that reach a language level that corresponds to the actual needs of education and working life.

Focus areas for improving activities 2026–2028

The following three key objectives are set in order to improve activities.

1. Information management and bilingual office work

Actions:

- The internal workplace platforms and practices of the Student Union are streamlined in order to enable a bilingual office environment.
- Adequate resources are allocated to translation work, and long-term solutions for enabling and ensuring bilingual activities are developed.

- Documentation on the activities of the Student Union is translated into English.
- The persons operating in the Student Union reserve adequate time for translation work in order to ensure the quality of the translations.
- Communications are high-quality and simultaneous in Finnish and in English.
- Special days of different cultures are taken into consideration in communications.

Responsibility: Main sector, each sector for its own part.

Indicators:

- Improvement of internal work processes
- Translation work resources
- Amount of translation work
- Communications done

2. Bilingual participation in the activities of the Student Union

Actions:

- Equal opportunities to serve on the Executive Board of the Student Union in English are ensured.

- Council members who use English as their working language are ensured an equal opportunity to participate in the decision-making of the Council of Representatives also in the preparation phase.
- Communications regarding the council elections and the activities of the Council of Representatives are high-quality and bilingual.
- The sector instructions given to new Board members include a section on bilingualism.
- It is possible to work in English in the working groups of the Student Union and the committees of the Council of Representatives.

Responsibility: Main sector, Executive Board, and communications sector.

Indicators:

- Decisions made by the Council of Representatives
- Communications done
- Contents of sector instructions
- Activities of the working groups

3. A community with flexible language practices

Actions:

- The Student Union trains associations on bilingualism and language principles that support integration.
- Associations are offered trainings in English more broadly on different themes, not just internationality.
- The Student Union gathers associations together to consider and share good practices on bilingualism.

Responsibility: Association sector, tutoring sector, and advocacy sectors.

Indicators:

- Trainings organised
- Contents of trainings

Monitoring

The realisation of the Language Principles is evaluated informally annually alongside the mid-year report. The Executive Board, the Student Union employees, and the Council of Representatives all participate in the evaluation process. The evaluation is headed by the Specialist in International

Affairs of the Student Union and the Executive Board members responsible for international affairs in the Student Union.

A report on the realisation of the Language Principles is written every three years when updating the document. The report is submitted to the Council of Representatives and published on the website of the Student Union. In addition, a survey on language principles is conducted when updating the document.

The Council of Representatives, the Executive Board, and new Student Union employees are introduced to the Language Principles.