

Pursuant to Article 54, paragraph 1, point 17 of the Statute of Union University Belgrade and the recommendation of the University Senate approved on 20th of March 2019, the University Council session held on 25<sup>th</sup> of March 2019, has adopted the following

## **LANGUAGE POLICY**

### **I. PURPOSE OF LANGUAGE POLICY**

The Union University in Belgrade is committed to enhancing the language competences of both its students and its academic and administrative staff. Since 2008, the Faculty of Law and Business Studies Dr. Lazar Vrkatić has offered an accredited bachelor's degree programme in English Studies and, since 2010, there has also been an accredited master's degree in English Studies available at this faculty. Foreign language courses are an integral part of every bachelor's degree program across the University. In addition, the Faculty of Law offers an accredited master's degree program in Human Rights Law which is taught entirely in English. Demonstrating foreign language proficiency is one of the requirements for attending courses at the master's and doctoral levels and candidates preparing their theses or dissertations are also required to use a specific number of sources in a foreign language.

The primary purpose of the Language Policy (hereinafter referred to as "the Policy") is to raise awareness among students and staff of the importance of foreign language learning for maximizing their career prospects and success in scientific research. Foreign language proficiency is a precondition for the exchange of ideas and communication with partners across the globe, making it the focus of the Strategy for the Internationalization of the University.

The Language Policy prescribes the principles that the University must adhere to in developing language competences during studies and it applies to all the students and staff at all levels and at all faculties within the University, including incoming exchange students and staff.

### **II. LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION**

The majority of study programmes at the University are delivered in Serbian.

The master's degree program in Human Rights Law at the Faculty of Law, and both the bachelor's and master's degree program in English Language at the Faculty of Law and Business Studies Dr. Lazar Vrkatić are realized in English.

In addition, incoming students are offered a number of courses instructed in English and individual tutorials in English ([Course Catalogue link](#)).

Following the adoption of the Strategy for the Internationalization of the University (2019-2023) and the Action Plan for its implementation, the University is committed to defining and initiating the accreditation process for an additional number of study programmes in English. This will not only attract more incoming students in the mobility program, but it will also provide domestic students with the opportunity to broaden their knowledge and enhance their employment prospects within the international labour market; that is, it will enable domestic students to apply more easily for study programmes abroad.

### III. BASIC PRINCIPLES

The Policy rests on the following principles:

- Continuously improve and develop language competences in university students and staff
- Promote transcultural competences among university students and staff
- Provide additional support and motivation for university students and staff to achieve greater language competences

### IV. GOALS

#### 1. Developing students' language competences

Students' language competences are developed in four ways:

- by offering foreign language learning courses at the bachelor's level (predominantly English language courses, but also other language courses like German or Italian),
- by offering study programmes that motivate students, mainly those at the master's or doctoral levels, to use their foreign language skills during studies as much as possible (by instructing students to use scientific literature in foreign languages when preparing exams or foreign language material to support their master's theses or doctoral dissertations),
- by offering English language bachelor's and master's degree programs at the Faculty of Law and Business Studies Dr. Lazar Vrkatić,
- by offering an accredited English-instructed master's degree programme (currently offered only at the Faculty of Law).

#### 2. Introduction of English-instructed study programmes

By adopting the Strategy for Internationalization (2019-2023), the University has recognized the need to work harder on adjusting the academic curriculum and developing foreign-language teaching capacity (primarily in English, but also in other languages) and has identified as one of its main goals the development and accreditation of new study programmes in a foreign language.

#### 3. Language support for exchange students

##### 3.1. Language requirements

The agreement between the University and its partner institutions of higher education specifies an adequate level of proficiency in the language of instruction. The lowest level of language proficiency that incoming and outgoing students have to achieve is B1-B2 (in reading, writing and speaking) according to CEFR or an equivalent level in other language evaluation schemes. In this respect, the University accepts a large number of international language certificates.

##### 3.2. Language support for outgoing students

In order to be able to make the most of their mobility programme and engage actively in cross-cultural and international academic environments, all students who wish to take part in the mobility programme will be required to demonstrate language competence in the English language or the local language of the host institution.

If a student cannot provide an official English language proficiency certificate, the faculties will make every effort, within their capacities, to provide students with English language support and

tuition necessary for achieving the adequate level of language proficiency. In addition, the faculties will organize, within their capacities, free, three-day English language courses at 6-month intervals; that is, immediately before the departure of outbound exchange students (in September and February).

### **3.3. Language support for incoming students**

Incoming exchange students are also required to demonstrate English language proficiency, unless their first language is English or Serbian, or unless they have already earned a bachelor's or a master's degree taught exclusively in English. In other words, incoming students have to provide either an official English language proficiency certificate or a confirmation of English proficiency signed by an English language teacher of the partner institution of higher education.

Although the majority of study programmes are delivered in Serbian, the teaching staff can arrange tutorials in English for incoming students, either one-to-one or in small groups, for the majority of courses.

If they wish to improve their language skills, incoming students can take foreign language courses that are available at faculties within the University.

Also, the University and its constituent faculties will provide support for incoming students who wish to learn Serbian so as to help them adjust to the new social environment during their mobility period as smoothly as possible. Support in the form of Serbian language classes will be offered to incoming students at no additional cost.

### **3.4 Developing teachers' language competences**

Language proficiency is a precondition for the successful implementation of the teaching staff mobility program and the advancement of research results obtained by the academic staff. Both incoming and outgoing staff are required to show evidence of a minimum level of language proficiency (B2 of CEFR).

The University supports the improvement of language competences of the staff by encouraging them to participate in international programs, projects, conferences and networks, in both formal and informal settings.

Language policy recommendations and a high level of language proficiency will be taken into account when planning activities and recruiting new academic staff.

## **V. SUPERVISION AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

Faculty deans are responsible for ensuring the implementation of the Policy within the study programmes of their respective faculties.

A Vice-Rector for International Cooperation oversees the implementation of the Policy at the University level and reports to the Rector's Council, which is responsible for overseeing the implementation of the University's Internationalization Strategy.

## VI. ENTRY INTO FORCE

This Policy shall become effective on the day of its adoption and shall be published on the University's website.

University Union Council Chair  
Slobodan Vukadinović



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