
GENERAL NOTICES • ALGEMENE KENNISGEWINGS

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SACE

South African Council for Educators

Towards Excellence in Education

SACE
LANGUAGE POLICY

LANGUAGE POLICY

1. PREAMBLE

The Council adheres to a policy of functional multilingualism in order to accommodate linguistic diversity. The promotion of the principle of multilingualism is enshrined in the Constitution of South Africa¹.

The Council is committed to the promotion of equitable language rights with particular emphasis on uplifting the status and usage of the marginalized indigenous languages. Multilingualism is also acknowledged as a powerful tool to promote social cohesion between diverse groups in our society.

The development of the diverse languages of our country will take time and resources and should be pursued in a phased way, as resources and developmental opportunities allow.

2. AIM

This policy informs the use of language in all aspects of communication of the Council, i.e. public, internal and external communication.

3. DEFINITIONS

African languages	mean African languages in South Africa;
Functional multilingualism	means that the choice of a particular language in a particular situation is determined by the context in which it is used, i.e. the function, the audience and the message for which it is used. The purpose and context of the communication, the availability of resources and the target audience determine the choice of languages;
Functional multilingual policy	carries the same meaning as 'functional multilingualism' above;
Language of record	means the language in which documents destined for record keeping will be recorded;
Official languages	are the languages referred to in section 6 (1) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996;

4. PRINCIPLES

4.1 The Council:

- 4.1.1 acknowledges that there are eleven official languages in South Africa and ensures that, together with South African Sign Language, they enjoy parity of esteem and equitable treatment.
- 4.1.2 respects the founding values of human dignity, the achievement of equality, the advancement of human rights and freedom, non-racialism and non-sexism as proclaimed in the Constitution.
- 4.1.3 recognises the constitutional provision pertaining to the right to receive service in the official language(s) of choice, taking into consideration equity, practicability, and the need to redress the results of past racial discriminatory laws and practices.
- 4.1.4 realises that language is not only about communication, but also about identity and respect, and
- 4.1.5 undertakes to support the Language Policy and its implementation in terms of finance, technology and human resources.

4.2 Language(s) of service

- 4.2.1 The Council will provide services, where it is deemed practical, in the official languages of South Africa on the basis of functional multilingualism.
- 4.2.2 Services may be offered in languages other than the official languages, subject to the proviso that official languages receive priority treatment when the Council allocates resources.

4.3 Languages of public communication

4.3.1 Oral communication

- 4.3.1.1 In oral communication with the public, employees should make every attempt to accommodate the language preference of the interlocutor.
- 4.3.1.2 Employees refer telephone enquiries to other employees who are able to answer in the language chosen by the caller where feasible. Employees make optimal use of multilingual automatic answering services.
- 4.3.1.3 At all important service points (general information desks, supervisory services and registration desks) the Council makes the means available to assist and advise clientele

and employees in the language of their choice, including South African Sign Language to enhance a user-friendly ethos.

4.3.2 **Written communication**

4.3.2.1 In its languages of public communication, in an effort to create an enabling environment, the Council endeavours to use the official languages of the province concerned.

4.3.2.2 Addressees answer correspondence in the language in which it is addressed to the Council, where feasible.

4.3.2.3 Official brochures and reports are written in accessible, reader-friendly language to accommodate the target audience and the language community for which a given document is intended. In addition, writers adhere to a functional multilingual policy.

4.3.2.4 Council publications consider their target readers and adhere to the institution's language policy. The use of various languages in these publications will be a visible sign of the Council's commitment to multilingualism. Summaries are provided in other relevant languages.

4.3.2.5 The Council strives towards attaining the capacity to use all official languages without neglecting minority South African languages or South African Sign Language.

4.3.3 **Signage and branding**

The Council endeavours to do signage and branding in the languages of the province concerned.

4.3.4 **Advertising**

Advertising should be in the language of the target audience concerned. Where possible all eleven official languages should be used in at least one of the media channels used that is radio, television, or newspapers.

4.4 **Languages of internal communication**

4.4.1 **Oral communication**

4.4.1.1 Oral communication takes place in languages understood by the parties concerned.

4.4.1.2 All official meetings are conducted in English.

4.4.2 Written communication

- 4.4.2.1 The language of record is English.
- 4.4.2.2 Documents of general interest to employees that change infrequently, for example the Council Composition, conditions of service, rules and forms, should be available in as many official languages as possible.
- 4.4.2.3 Documentation relating to meetings will be in English.
- 4.4.2.4 Notices and circulars on the intranet will be produced in English.
- 4.4.2.5 Official written communication will, as far as possible, be gender-neutral or gender-inclusive.

4.5 Communications with people of restricted sight or hearing

The Council provides special communication aids required by clientele with sensory disabilities on request and where feasible, e.g. interpreters for South African Sign Language, Braille, tapes and other functional means to promote communication.

4.6 Special support for African languages

African languages, both as media of communication, have been historically disadvantaged. The Council should make resources available for the development of the nine official African languages for the benefit of the Council and the country.

4.7 Employee development and capacity building

4.8.1 The Council should provide facilities through the relevant department(s) or otherwise to advocate and encourage employees to learn an African language and South African Sign Language, and to increase their competence in any medium of instruction. These courses will be predominantly conversational in character, content and form to enable employees to communicate effectively.

4.8 Labour relations

- 4.9.1 All participants at employee disciplinary hearings have the right to use any of the official South African languages and South African Sign Language.
- 4.9.2 A participant or employee at a disciplinary hearing must notify the Council five (5) days prior to the commencement of the hearing that he/she will use a language other than English to enable the Council to provide translation.

4.9.3 Where multilingual discussion has taken place, the Council provides summaries of the proceedings in at least English for record purposes.

4.9 Social relations

Social events, within the Council, are intended to further the mission of the Council. The Council respects the rights of its community members to participate in the activities and social events of the Council in the language of their choice.

5. IMPLEMENTATION

The implementation of the policy is the responsibility of the Advocacy Communications & Outreach Committee (ADVOCO).