Aalto University guidelines on the languages of degree and instruction

1. Languages of degree and instruction

The Aalto University languages of degree are Finnish, Swedish and English in the fields of technology and art and design, and Finnish and English in the field of business.

The language of a degree programme may be defined as English, if the teaching and student advising of the programme are provided in English and the study attainments towards it may be completed in English. The language of degree of students studying in degree programmes with English as the language of degree (‘English-medium degree programmes’) is English. Students who study in English-medium degree programmes but write their thesis in either of the national languages of Finland will have the national language used marked as the language of degree in their degree certificate.

Students who have earned a degree will receive an original degree certificate in the language of the degree and a copy of it in English. Students whose language of degree is English receive an original degree certificate both in English and in Finnish or Swedish. The language of degree is mentioned in the diploma supplement. [sentence deleted 11 May 2021]

The primary languages of instruction of Aalto University are Finnish and English, and in the fields of technology and art and design, also Swedish.

2. Terminology

The schools shall take measures to ensure that the key terminology related to teaching and student advising is maintained in Finnish and English, and in the fields of technology and art and design, also in Swedish.

All Aalto fields of education offer the basic courses of each field in the national languages of Finland to ensure that students learn the basic concepts and terminology of their field in the national languages.

3. Curriculum

The curriculum of the degree programme specifies the language in which the teaching of the course or study module is provided.

The courses towards the bachelor’s degree are mainly offered in the national languages, while those towards the master’s degree are primarily given in English.

Regardless of their language of degree, all degree programmes may have courses/study modules where the language of study attainments or language of instruction is English.

Bachelor’s degree courses/study modules may have only English as the language of instruction or study attainments only if they count towards an English-medium area of specialisation, are part of elective or alternative studies, or if there are other special reasons.

The change of the language of a study module and the possibilities for taking courses during the transitional period must be communicated to the students well in advance.

4. Marking the language of the study attainment of the student

The language of study attainment marked in the student register is the language of instruction of the course or study module unless otherwise specified. As necessary, the teacher in charge of evaluating the study attainment defines the language of the study attainment and submits the information for registration along with the other details of the study attainment.

5. Linguistic rights of the students in studies

The schools shall ensure that students admitted to pursue a bachelor’s or master’s degree in a national language of Finland have an opportunity to either choose a Finnish- or Swedish-medium master’s programme or otherwise complete study attainments and the thesis in one of the national languages of Finland while studying in an English-medium master’s degree.
As a rule, students are required to complete their study attainments in the language of instruction. In the fields of technology and art and design, students may choose to complete their study attainments in either Finnish or Swedish on courses with Finnish or Swedish as the language of instruction.

Students have a right to thesis advising in the language of their thesis.

Students shall be reserved an opportunity to discuss their studies with an academic advisor, teacher, or tutor in Finnish, and in the fields of technology and art and design, also in Swedish.

6. Communicating the language guidelines and linguistic rights

The guidelines concerning languages of instruction and degree are communicated to the students and teaching staff in for instance, Aalto web portals, curriculum guidelines, approved curricula and other guidelines on teaching and studying. The teaching staff is recommended to advise students on the languages to be used on the course when going through the general course practices, and to ensure that the information on the languages of instruction and study attainments given in the learning platform used on the course is updated with the rest of the course information.

The guidelines on languages of instruction and degree are communicated to applicants in the Aalto web portal and other material used in student marketing and recruitment.

Entry into force and implementation of the guidelines

The present guidelines enter into force on 1 August 2015 with the following restrictions:

- The guidelines shall first be taken into consideration in the curriculum to be prepared for the academic year 2016–2017
- The goal is for the reforms requiring changes to the information systems to enter into force on 1 August 2016.

As necessary, further provisions on the application and implementation of the guidelines will be issued by the vice president for education. The vice president for education is also responsible for reporting to the Aalto University Academic Affairs Committee on the progress of the implementation.

Amendments to the guidelines

Amendments to paragraph 1 enter into force as of 11 May 2021.