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Organisational unit: Vice-Chancellor's Office

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Annex to: Vice-Chancellor's decision on language guidelines for SLU of 21 June 2016

## Language guidelines

### Background and aim

SLU's language policy contains three language and language use objectives: plain language, parallel language use and high linguistic quality. In order to implement these objectives, we need guidelines for language use.

#### **1. Plain language:** Adjusting the information to the recipient and using a language that is cultivated, simple and comprehensible

This means that texts produced at SLU must be written according to plain language principles. Texts should be adjusted to the recipient on three levels:

- **Content.** Only include information that is relevant to the recipient. Communication only works if both the sender and recipient understand the content in the same way. Therefore, the writer must write from a recipient-perspective when selecting the content.
- **Structure.** The writer should select a document structure that suits the recipient and also make it easy to find things in the text, for example by using clear subheadings.
- **Language.** The language must be consistent since consistent language facilitates understanding. The language must also be cultivated – correct and clear – since linguistic errors impair readability. Cultivated language also strengthens the reader's confidence in the sender.

To reach the **plain language** objective, the following guidelines apply:

	<b>GUIDELINE</b>	<b>HOW</b>	<b>PERSON IN CHARGE</b>
1	Recently employed staff members receive information on the plain language objective and what it means, and all staff members are given the opportunity to receive plain language training.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refer to the pages on plain language on the staff web.</li> <li>• Set aside time to go through SLU's web-based plain language course.</li> <li>• Set aside time to participate in an internal plain language course.</li> </ul>	Immediate manager
2	Information published internally uses consistent language and follows SLU's linguistic profile. Information published externally follows SLU's linguistic profile unless the medium/channel has its own guidelines.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Follow the directions in SLU's style guide for Swedish or English.</li> <li>• Use the English terms in the SLU glossary.</li> <li>• Use the English terms that the government, Riksdag, ministries and public-sector bodies use for Swedish and international organisations, conventions, directives, programmes, etc.</li> </ul>	Writer
3	Texts written for an external target audience, all staff members and/or texts with a longer life span are revised with regard to plain language.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use the available aids for writing plain language and writing for an authority.</li> <li>• Use SLU's checklist for plain language or the Language Council of Sweden's plain language test.</li> <li>• Contact the language coordinator for assistance if you need a language revision.</li> </ul>	Writer

Find out more on the language pages on the staff web.

## 2. Parallel language use: Using Swedish and English in parallel in our operations

SLU is a Swedish-speaking university, but we also need English as a working language to strengthen our international competitiveness.

The Language Act states that Swedish must be used by public-sector bodies in Sweden and therefore is the language that normally must be used within an authority's core area. A core area is not the same as a core operation; it refers to procedures and public documents that are of great importance to public activities.

This means that the language used at SLU, an administrative authority, is Swedish. Documents that the university, according to administrative law, has an obligation to draw up must be written in Swedish.

SLU cannot demand that someone must communicate with the university in any other language than Swedish, for example by stating that an application must be written in English or by only publishing job advertisements in English.

There are staff members and students who cannot speak much Swedish, if at all. They have the right to the same information as the Swedish-speaking staff members and students, which means that translation is often necessary and that there is a need for concrete guidelines on when to translate information. However, staff members who have been employed at SLU for a longer period are expected to have acquired basic Swedish skills.

To reach the **parallel language** objective, the following guidelines apply:

	<b>GUIDELINE</b>	<b>HOW</b>	<b>PERSON IN CHARGE</b>
1	All documents that the university has an <b>obligation</b> to draw up are written in Swedish.		Responsible administrator and decision-maker
2	<b>Legally binding</b> documents are written in Swedish. If the other contracting party does not speak Swedish, agreements may be <b>written in English</b> .	If an agreement is written in Swedish and then translated, the translation to English must be done by an authorised translator who can affirm that the translation is in accordance with the original by certifying it. Please contact the language coordinator if you need a translation to be certified.	Responsible administrator and decision-maker

3	Decisions are made in Swedish. <b>All information which is used as basis for a decision must be available</b> to all participating decision-makers. Decisions can be written as <b>bilingual</b> documents.	For example, if a board is not quorate if information is only available in Swedish, the information must be translated.  Every body (board, etc.) internally decides if they wish to use resources for translation or if knowledge of Swedish must be a prerequisite for participating in their work.	Responsible administrator and decision-maker
4	<b>Non Swedish-speaking staff members</b> must, within four years of first being employed, have sufficient knowledge of Swedish/Scandinavian to understand information in Swedish (does not apply to doctoral students).	Time/resources are devoted to giving staff members the opportunity to study Swedish.  Staff members have access to Swedish-writing aids.	Staff member/ immediate manager  Language coordinator
5	Information concerning SLU's <b>administrative routines and procedures</b> are available in Swedish and, if necessary, English.	Information on how to order translations can be found on the staff web's language pages.	Responsible administrator and decision-maker
6	Information <b>targeting all SLU employees or students</b> is available in both Swedish and English.	Information on how to order translations and language revision can be found on the staff web's language pages.	Sender

7	If the <b>whole target audience or parts of it does not speak Swedish</b> , the information must, in some form, be available in both Swedish and English.	Information can be made available in three ways: 1. The whole text is translated. 2. A summary of the text is translated. 3. Instructions are given on where to find the same information elsewhere.	Sender
8	<b>If a document is translated, only the Swedish version is the official one.</b> If a text has been adopted in Swedish and is translated, it must be made clear that only the Swedish text is legally binding.	In internal governing documents, the text <b>Only the Swedish version is the official version</b> is added to the header.	Responsible administrator and decision-maker
9	Meetings are normally held in English if non Swedish-speaking staff members participate.  Regardless of the <b>meeting language</b> , all participants have the right to choose if they wish to speak Swedish or English.	The chair chooses the meeting language.  If necessary, the chair is responsible for presenting an oral summary in the other language.	Chair
10	All <b>organisational units</b> have names in both Swedish and English.	When there is a decision to set up a new unit, the Swedish and English name for the unit must be established at the same time.  The names must follow the linguistic recommendations in SLU's style guide.	Responsible administrator and decision-maker

11	<p>In accordance with the guidelines and directions for <b>degree programmes</b> and <b>courses</b>, the names are both in Swedish and English.</p>	<p>Names of programmes and courses must follow the linguistic directions in SLU's style guide.</p> <p>Names of programmes and courses must be consistently formed.</p>	
12	<p>All <b>licentiate and doctoral theses</b> that are written in English have abstracts/summaries in Swedish and vice versa.</p> <p>Abstracts/summaries in other languages (for example in the writer's mother tongue if this is not Swedish or English) are encouraged.</p>	<p>The summary can be written in one of the languages and be translated to the other. If the writer does not speak the other language well enough, the department will pay for the translation.</p>	<p>Writer</p> <p>Supervisor</p>
13	<p>All <b>job advertisements</b> are published in Swedish or Swedish and English.</p> <p>In job advertisements in English, the English job titles provided by the Division of Human Resources are used.</p>	<p>The list of job titles maintained by the Division of Human Resources is included in the SLU glossary. It contains the British equivalents.</p> <p>If necessary, the US equivalent may be used, but then together with the British term so that the connection to the Swedish title remains.</p>	<p>Writer</p>
14	<p>The principal language used at SLU's academic ceremonies is <b>Swedish</b>.</p>	<p>Participants may choose to deliver a speech, lecture, etc. in <b>Swedish or English</b>.</p> <p>The master of ceremonies, together with the vice-chancellor, decides on the language in printed matter in connection with ceremonies.</p>	<p>Master of ceremonies</p>

15	<p>SLU contributes to a <b>satisfactory Swedish technical language</b> by using and developing Swedish terminology in its respective fields.</p> <p>SLU ensures that Swedish terminology concerning the university's varying fields is <b>available</b>.</p>	<p>Regarding programmes taught in English, students who speak Swedish also have access to subject terminology and text patterns in Swedish through sample texts, glossaries and other resources.</p> <p>Students who do not speak Swedish are encouraged to familiarise themselves with terminology and text patterns in their mother tongue.</p> <p>Existing terminology resources are checked and new ones are created if necessary.</p> <p>Term material from SLU is disseminated in a suitable way, for example by being published in Rikstermbanken<sup>1</sup>.</p> <p>SLU's subject-matter experts assist the language coordinator with the terminology work.</p>	<p>Course coordinator</p> <p>Language coordinator</p>
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Find out more on the language pages on the staff web.

### Minority languages

Aside from parallel language use, which concerns English and Swedish, SLU as an authority is responsible for furthering the national minority languages. This mainly concerns Finnish, Meänkieli (Tornedal Finnish) and Sami. According to the Minority Language Act<sup>2</sup>, SLU, as an administrative authority, must:

- in an appropriate way inform the national minorities of their rights according to the Minority Language Act;
- give individuals the right to use Finnish, Meänkieli or Sami in oral or written contact with authorities when the individual acts as a party or deputy party.

<sup>1</sup> [www.rikstermbanken.se](http://www.rikstermbanken.se)

<sup>2</sup> SFS 2009:724

This may for example mean that we accept supporting documents in minority languages for authority matters. If a party requires an answer in a minority language, the university is obligated to provide it.

**3. High linguistic quality:** Staff members and students are given the opportunity to receive language training and have access to language support.

To reach the objective **high linguistic quality**, the following guidelines apply:

	<b>GUIDELINE</b>	<b>HOW</b>	<b>PERSON IN CHARGE</b>
1	Texts produced at SLU use a consistent and cultivated language.	<p>Writers follow the linguistic recommendations in SLU's style guide as well as rules for spelling, punctuation, etc., and official language recommendations.</p> <p>There are linguistic recommendations in the form of a style guide that is updated when necessary.</p> <p>Staff members have access to aids for writing plain language.</p>	<p>Writer</p> <p>Language coordinator</p>
2	Swedish-speaking staff members have a good knowledge of English.	<p>All staff members are given the opportunity to develop their language skills.</p> <p>Staff members have access to aids for writing in English.</p>	<p>Immediate manager</p> <p>Language coordinator</p>
3	Students and doctoral students who have taken a qualification at SLU can produce high linguistic quality.	<p>Students and doctoral students at SLU</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• have access to aids and support for scientific writing;</li> <li>• are trained in oral and written presentation during their whole study period;</li> <li>• are trained in adjusting their oral and written presentations of their subject knowledge to varying target audiences.</li> </ul>	Course coordinator

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