

# Position Paper: The Role of English in Teaching at the St. Pölten UAS

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### **Introduction/Preamble:**

The Committee for Internationalisation of the St. Pölten UAS professes its commitment to an intensification of the English language in teaching. The following position paper is addressed at the staff of the St. Pölten UAS, especially at decision-makers, and aims at supporting the study programmes in their internationalisation efforts, as well as offer suggestions and assistance:

### **English as Language of Instruction**

When converting courses currently conducted in German into English, it is absolutely necessary to redesign the concept of the respective courses. The following options are conceivable in this context:

- Complete conversion from German to English
- Partial conversion from German to English through:
  - delivering individual units of courses in English
  - integrating English literature or other sources in German-taught courses
  - providing performance records in English (bachelor theses, examinations, seminar papers, master theses)
  - planning projects and course content with international orientation (e.g. International Week etc.)
  - Providing for the attendance of international guests (teachers and students, guest lecturers who hold courses in English etc.)

In order to promote cultural diversity, students are encouraged to read relevant technical literature in different/other languages in which they are proficient. In case the language of instruction is German, the Committee for Internationalisation recommends that the respective technical vocabulary should also be taught in English, including the specific idioms, from the beginning in order to encourage easy access to international research literature.

### **Occupational Profile and Employability**

In many occupational profiles, linguistic competence (e.g. English) significantly improves the employability of the students, as indicated by the particular relevance of the choice of English as a language for lectures or study programmes. For this reason, it is useful for a study programme to conduct an exact analysis of the corresponding requirements in the respective fields. Another opportunity for graduates is inherent in career opportunities abroad for which English language skills are usually indispensable as well.

## **Availability of (International) Teaching Staff**

The St. Pölten UAS actively recruits teaching staff with diverse cultural backgrounds, even if they teach only in block sessions for short periods of time or in the form of lecture series with a limited number of units (ECTS, semester periods per week).

## **Desirable Framework Conditions from the Lecturers' Perspective**

From the perspective of teaching staff, the comprehensive support provided by various service centres is indispensable in the transition to English as a language of instruction, which is why opportunities such as the course “Academic Teaching Excellence in English: Course for University Lecturers” held by the British Council or similar offers are an important factor that should be maintained. When it comes to the preparation of teaching materials, the level of support has to be enhanced.

## **English-Language Documents**

Published documents (curricula etc.) are always translated and/or proofread by qualified staff at the St. Pölten UAS.

## **Guidelines for the Consideration of Questions Prior to the Conversion or New Conception of Courses in English:**

1. What are possible occupational profiles and fields of work? Does the study programme “allow” for subsequent professional activities abroad? Is the qualification recognised? Has experience shown that completion of the programme often results in employment at international companies?
2. How do students react to courses held in English? Would they welcome a complete conversion to the English language or would they see it as a burden? During which phases and in which courses does the German/English language make more sense? Which student segment is supposed to be addressed? Would an English-language study programme increase the number of international students at the St. Pölten UAS?
3. Are technical terms, research literature and relevant studies mainly available in English? Does the majority of available online resources tend to be in German or in English?
4. What about personnel resources? Are the teaching staff sufficiently prepared for a conversion to the English language? Do they support such an endeavor? Would the university risk losing experienced and highly qualified teachers? Is a loss of quality in teaching a potential risk? How would the university react to a potential deterioration of evaluations (by students)? What other forms of support (language courses, translations, proofreading etc.) are needed?
5. Is the study programme rooted more in the context of Austrian or international projects?

6. What is the main language of publication for the teachers of the study programme team?
7. What would be the respective advantages and disadvantages for the study programme of keeping the German language and of introducing the English language on the other hand? What pros and cons would arise from (not) using the English language? What is the current status of the St. Pölten UAS in the international research landscape and what are the aspirations and desired changes expected from converting to English?

Decided by the Board  
22. January 2018