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## Language Policy for KTH 2010 (Förslag US 2010-04-21)

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### 1. Introduction

KTH is one of Sweden's most international universities, with operations that span the globe. KTH is also one of Sweden's oldest universities, cooperating closely and actively with Swedish society. The University develops its national and international role with great care and strives for active participation in the development of the community.

KTH's overarching goal and most powerful driving force is to attain excellence in education and research. This goal requires KTH to act wisely and with insight in all of its endeavours, whether it be at local, national or international level. KTH aims to be an outstanding Swedish *and* international university.

KTH has set up a number of goals, several of which have a direct bearing on language use. Some of these goals are explicitly international, for example, that KTH is committed to being an international university and to ensuring that its students will be attractive on the international job market.

Within research, English is a *lingua franca* for communication between people with different mother tongues. Most researchers at KTH use English daily when working with international colleagues and when publishing their findings. When working with Swedish colleagues, native speakers of Swedish naturally use Swedish, as they do for publishing in research areas where Swedish is the language of publication.

Within education, KTH uses mainly Swedish for the first three years of study. In order to adapt the education to the Bologna process and to promote internationalisation, tuition during the subsequent two years is mainly in English.

The demand for KTH to live up to its role as *both* a national *and* an international university, where Swedish and English are used in parallel, focuses on the importance of language ability. The interest among staff and students to be active on a national and international level means that language competence in Swedish and English is developed even without measures initiated by the university. There are, however, certain situations and issues that require linguistic skills to be the subject of policy in order to clarify the principles and rules according to which language is used and promoted at KTH.

The current policy stresses parallel language skill in KTH activity as a rule. International students in KTH educations at advanced and research education levels are not embraced by the policy if no special agreements have been made.

## **2. The Five Aspects of the Language Policy**

In the Language Policy, overarching goals are drawn up and commitments are made that take into account and promote the following five important aspects.

### **2.1 KTH in the World**

Education and research at KTH is highly internationalised. The internationalisation of the education is in itself a quality factor that contributes to the personal development and employability of the students. KTH receives many students from abroad. This creates multicultural student groups, contributing to internationalisation at home. KTH strives to be an attractive environment for distinguished researchers and teachers from all over the world.

When working with internationalisation in education, it is important to strike a correct linguistic balance between the needs of the various student groups. By creating good opportunities for staff and students to be able to express themselves in both Swedish and English within science and technology, KTH will be able to contribute to internationalisation through more effective learning and communication, greater understanding for science and technology in the community, a more positive image among teachers and teenagers at school, better opportunities for researchers to take part in public discussion of social issues and better opportunities to utilise research findings in the community. A prerequisite for KTH to continue to offer its education to international students is that they are also offered education in English.

### **2.2 KTH and Quality in Education**

Since education at KTH contains elements of both Swedish and English, students with Swedish as their mother tongue will acquire certain passive language knowledge, for instance in English, certain specialist terminology, and correspondingly, international students will come into contact with Swedish.

KTH presupposes, however, that course aims are best achieved if the students assume a depth-oriented approach to their learning, which is supported by, among other things, good linguistic communication among students and between students and teachers. A more conscious use of Swedish and English can, therefore, improve the efficiency not only of the teaching, but also of other in-house communication at KTH.

However, one should be aware that some studies have shown communication in another language than one's mother tongue to be less effective and to result in inferior understanding than communication in the mother tongue. As a consequence of the increasingly international labour market it is a strict quality requirement that graduated engineers and architects should be able to use English as a work language.

### **2.3 KTH and the Language of Science**

The role of the university as a conveyor of knowledge requires a good command of language from those who are to present and conduct discussions on this knowledge. With increasing technical possibilities for communication, higher demands are placed on those who are to reach out to the community and represent KTH, as staff or as present or former students. Good language skills provide an edge in competing for attention. If the University and its representatives are to participate satisfactorily in public discussions, simple, clear language is a prerequisite. Graduates from KTH, therefore, need to master their subjects both in Swedish and English, in other words, have parallel language competence.

Research at KTH normally uses English as the language of publication and often as the working language. This is a necessary condition for internationalising science and technology, and good

knowledge of English is thus essential for staff and students alike. However, good knowledge of Swedish is also needed in day-to-day work, in education and in contacts with the surrounding community. The University should not contribute towards Swedish becoming a low language and English a high language. Both languages are needed.

Both students and teachers may exhibit deficiencies in the general technical vocabulary and the patterns of construction, sentence structure and style of scientific Swedish. This may lead to an inability to conduct a discussion even on the level of popular science in Swedish. Such domain losses for Swedish may have serious consequences for the universities' contacts, for the standard of general education and, by extension, for democracy. They may also affect the training of teachers in the school system. To counteract such a development, KTH should draw attention to the question of scientific Swedish in its education and promote the development of Swedish terminology in its areas of activity.

## **2.4 KTH and Diversity**

The increased diversity in KTH is positive from social, cultural and operational points of view. At the same time, the language sets limitations on integration between Swedish-speaking and non-Swedish-speaking staff. Many international doctoral students, post-docs and guest researchers may feel excluded, with few social contacts in the workplace beyond their closest colleagues. Teachers who do not know Swedish find it difficult to meet the requirements for promotion and are normally not considered for leadership assignments. KTH can counteract this by lowering the barriers raised by the language.

Integration is also a matter of integration into Swedish society and the Swedish job market. To address this, KTH will facilitate the process for international students, doctoral students, teachers and researchers to acquire the language prerequisites necessary for them to settle permanently in Sweden. It is even more important that the level of ambition of all employees is high with regard to reception and integration into the activities of the University.

## **2.5 KTH and the Language Act**

As of 1 July 2009, a new Language Act is in force. Among other things, it lays down that Swedish is the main language in Sweden, that the language of official business must be Swedish and that it must be clear, carefully worded, correct, simple and understandable. Moreover, authorities have a particular responsibility to ensure that Swedish terminology in their various specialist areas is available, used and developed. KTH will naturally observe the Language Act. It is the opinion of KTH that the Language Policy is an aid both to meeting the requirements of the Language Act and to developing into a multilingual university.

### **3. Overarching Goals**

The Language Policy of KTH will increase awareness of language among students and employees alike at KTH and will aid KTH in its efforts to develop into a multilingual university.

#### **3.1 High linguistic quality**

KTH's contacts with students, researchers and the surrounding community are to maintain high linguistic quality.

#### **3.2 Language competence of the students**

##### **3.2.1 Studies at undergraduate level**

When KTH students graduate with their first degree (Bachelors level, including Bachelor of Science in Engineering) they will have developed a certain degree of competence in specialist language in Swedish and passive specialist language competence in English. Exemptions may be made for programs taught in English at basic level.

##### **3.2.2 Studies at advanced level**

The ambition is that engineering and architect graduates will have developed specialist language competence in both Swedish and English, in other words, will have parallel language competence. Students who have been admitted after having obtained exemption from the requirement for Swedish will have developed specialist language competence in English. Depending on the education language they will also have acquired a certain degree of specialist language competence in Swedish.

##### **3.2.3 Studies at research level**

When research students graduate, they normally must master their subject both in Swedish and English. Exceptions may be made for research students who have been admitted after having been exempted from the requirement for Swedish must master their subject in English.

#### **3.3 Linguistic competence of teachers and researchers**

In their teaching, KTH's teachers must be able to communicate effectively and at a high level in speaking and writing in either Swedish or English and preferably both. A good comprehension of both spoken and written Swedish will facilitate taking part in the work of the university and enable a dialogue with the surrounding community. Likewise, a good understanding of English is a precondition for participating in the scientific community.

#### **3.4 Multilingual education**

KTH must offer a balance between Swedish-language and English-language courses and degree programmes. Furthermore, students are to be encouraged to learn other foreign languages.

#### **3.5 Swedish and English specialist language**

Swedish specialist language is to be created and maintained within all research and education areas at KTH, alongside the English specialist language.

## **4. Commitments and Plan of Action**

### **4.1 Administrative language**

The administrative language of KTH is Swedish. The work is controlled by laws and regulations in Swedish, and all local decisions should be worded in Swedish. KTH endeavours to ensure that English translations of all important strategic and legally binding documents are available. These documents are to be regarded as translations without legal status.

### **4.2 High linguistic quality**

KTH's main language goal, high linguistic quality, is to be achieved as an integrated part of all education and to be taken into account continuously in all work. It is to be related and adapted to every educational programme. KTH will encourage a continuing discussion of language issues within the University. KTH's contacts with the surrounding community (appearances in the media, talks, popular science articles) are to be carried out in clear, simple and understandable language.

### **4.3 Conscious language choice**

KTH's choice of language in its work is to be related to the intended target group. In communication with Swedish-speaking people and Swedish authorities outside the University, Swedish should be used. Information addressed to both Swedish-speaking and non-Swedish-speaking people should be available in Swedish and English (and preferably in other languages). KTH should establish methods for proofreading and translation of Swedish and English texts and, if possible, earmark resources for this work.

Technical equipment and web-based platforms for teaching should be adapted for both Swedish and English. KTH's websites are to provide basic information in both Swedish and English and additionally in other languages if possible, and are to be programmed to enable an interactive choice of language on multilingual websites.

### **4.4 The students' parallel language competence**

Students' language competence is important both for understanding and for exchange of ideas. By parallel use of Swedish and English in undergraduate education, the students strengthen their knowledge of English, and this is necessary. At the same time, they acquire good Swedish terminology, which is a precondition for being able to communicate in the subject in Swedish. KTH should, therefore, endeavour to ensure that there are both Swedish and English components in courses at different levels. In research education, there must be components in both languages to an extent that allows the goal to be fulfilled.

### **4.5 The students' communicative competence**

Students at all levels must be given the opportunity to systematically practise written and oral communication, in both Swedish and English, with teacher feedback that also concerns language. To ensure that the feedback to the students maintains high quality, teachers are to be offered in-service training in language evaluation

#### **4.6 Language workshop**

To reach the language goal above, a language support activity is needed. Resources should be set aside for a language workshop which provides assistance with reports and oral presentations, for example.

#### **4.7 Bilingual education**

During undergraduate education to the Bachelor level, the greater part of the teaching should be in Swedish, with components in English or another language (e.g., occasional lectures, textbooks) to prepare the students for larger English components later in their education.

Education at advanced level should normally be taught in English. Students at advanced level and also at research level, who do not speak Swedish should be given the opportunity to learn Swedish in parallel with their subject studies.

#### **4.8 Examination**

Examination constitutes an exercise of public authority. Therefore, students must always have the right to hand in their answers to an examination in Swedish, unless the test concerns knowledge of language and linguistic terminology, irrespective of which language is mainly used in the teaching.

In research the common language is English and dissertations at KTH will normally be written in English. Dissertation Acts will therefore also normally be conducted in the English language.

#### **4.9 Language competence of the employees**

Language competence is an important factor in communicative ability. It is KTH's ambition that all permanent employees will be able to understand Swedish sufficiently well to acquaint themselves with decisions and information and to participate in the in-house work; it is also self-evident that all teachers and researchers must master English sufficiently well to be able to participate in scientific communication. Newly employed staff who do not master the Swedish language are to be offered training in Swedish.

#### **4.10 Abstracts of dissertations and theses**

Every Master's dissertation, licenciate thesis and doctoral thesis that is written in English is to include a Swedish Abstract. Similarly, every dissertation or thesis written in Swedish is to have an English Abstract.

#### **4.11 Trial lectures for appointment as a docent**

To promote the development and spread of Swedish terminology and to give Swedish-speaking researchers practice in presenting their research in Swedish, they are recommended to give their trial lecture for appointment as a docent in Swedish, unless there are reasons for using some other language.

#### **4.12 Swedish specialist language**

KTH's responsibility for Swedish special terms being created and maintained is shared with all the other seats of learning in Sweden. Through Swedish-language Abstracts of doctoral theses and trial lectures for appointment as a docent held in Swedish, Swedish terminology will be created, used and become known. KTH should support the work on terminology that is being done on a national level in Sweden. Teaching materials in Swedish are also important in creating and upholding special terminology. In their teaching, teachers should endeavour to use Swedish and to teach Swedish special terms, and in cooperation with colleagues within and outside KTH, create Swedish special terms for new phenomena.

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