

General principles of the UOC's language policy

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A large, stylized, dark blue logo consisting of the letters 'UOC' in a bold, sans-serif font, partially cut off on the right side.

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Purpose

The purpose of this document is to set out the general principles of language policy at the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya (UOC). These principles provide a framework for the effective handling and use of languages throughout the university.

Working languages

Catalan is the official language of the UOC.

Spanish is co-official – along with Catalan – at the UOC and is central to the university's internationalization strategy.

English is a working language at the UOC due to its status as the *lingua franca* of the international academic community. It is essential for achieving the university's objectives regarding excellence and global reach.

Principles

Principle 1: Catalan, the official language of the UOC

In accordance with its founding principles and the university's Organizational and Operational Regulations: "The UOC is an innovative university, rooted in Catalonia and open to the world, providing opportunities for lifelong learning and contributing to the progress of individuals and society as a whole, while conducting research on the knowledge society."

Article 1.1 of the regulations ("Objectives of the UOC") establishes that "the UOC forms part of the Catalan university system to serve Catalan society and culture, and to raise their profile globally". Article 3.5 of the regulations ("Virtual Campus, network and language") establishes that "Catalan is the UOC's preferred and official language, without prejudice to the provisions of Article 6 of Spanish Law 1/2003, of 19 February 2003, on the Universities of Catalonia. Thus, all the languages required at any given time may be used to develop academic activities."

Being rooted in Catalonia means the university has to provide a public service and, consequently, has to work for Catalan society by enriching the intellectual, cultural and scientific heritage of Catalonia, incorporating the Catalan language into all areas of

knowledge and contributing to the process of normalizing the scientific, cultural and social use of Catalan.

Bearing all this in mind, the UOC renews and confirms its commitment to making the use of Catalan as the university's official language compatible with the development of a multilingual strategy consistent with its international and intercultural mission.

Principle 2: Multilingualism

Multilingualism must be part of what the university is and represents, helping enrich society and bringing people who generate and consume knowledge closer together.

The need to incorporate more and more languages at the university is the result of forming part of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), which both aids academic and professional mobility, and raises the university's profile internationally. The university's international scope, the different contexts for communication this generates, and the fact it has three working languages – Catalan, Spanish and English – make it necessary and opportune to have guidelines for the use of these languages.

The UOC's intention, by way of these guidelines, is that its academic, institutional and administrative activities should be carried out in Catalan, but also in Spanish and English:

- With regard to students, the UOC must ensure that they achieve a sufficient level of linguistic competence to progress in their studies, to improve their employability and to meet the requirements established for obtaining the corresponding academic qualification.
- With regard to academic and administrative staff, the UOC must support the effective use of the three languages in accordance with each individual's specific duties.

Principle 3: Internationalization

Alongside Catalan, the UOC's multilingual model reserves a special place for Spanish, as a co-official language in Catalonia and a tool for global reach. Spanish is vital for the university's internationalization in Latin America and plays a strategic role in the UOC's activities throughout Spain.

It is important to ensure good use of English for the international exchange and dissemination of research. Notwithstanding its widespread use, the UOC is also committed to promoting a full and active role for Catalan, as the university's official language, in scholarly communication.

Likewise, provisions must also be made for the selective use of other languages, such as Catalan sign language, Occitan or French, in the university's activities.

Principle 4: Ubiquity

One factor that characterizes and sets the UOC apart from other universities is its internationalization through ubiquity. The UOC, by offering online higher education, has students and faculty from other countries who do not need to travel to Catalonia, who do not need to leave the country they live in. This means that the UOC's language use must adapt to this reality, which is unlike that of other Catalan universities, which have, even if only temporarily, students and faculty who reside in Catalonia.

Principle 5: Multichannel communication

The distance education offered by the UOC uses, above all, written texts. To date, these have been preeminent, but more and more audiovisual media are being used for communication, broadcasting content and teaching. This has led to the use of oral language in a context of increasingly multichannel communication.

Principle 6: Quality

The use of the UOC's working languages in its teaching, research and administrative activities must have the level of quality required in the university sector.

Good use of languages in the university's different activities is important due to the impact it has on the quality of teaching, research and service administration.

Principle 7: Transparency

In a multilingual context, it is vital to ensure clear information when it comes to the languages used in teaching. The UOC, therefore, must make the language of instruction publicly available and is committed to respecting the language stated in each case.

At the UOC, the language of instruction is understood to be the language of the programme the student has enrolled in, of the teaching resources and of the communication between the teaching team and the group.

Principle 8: Research and innovation

The UOC, as an expert in the intensive use of technology, is committed to promoting research and innovation in the field of online language teaching and learning, in terms

of both methodology and virtual environments (multilingual campus), and technological resources to support teaching, research, administration and communications.

Legal framework

To consult the legal framework that covers the *General principles of the UOC's language policy*, see the current language plan.