

Language Policy

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Purpose

This policy sets out how UWCD supports and develops language provision for all members of the community. The ability to communicate effectively in more than one language provides students with the opportunities and tools to fulfil their potential. It widens the higher education prospects available to them whilst opening further social and intellectual opportunities, enabling our students

to become global citizens. Language provision is therefore at the core of our values as a United World College and as International Baccalaureate World School.

Scope

This policy applies to all students of the College.

Policy Statement

United World College Dilijan is home to students from around 80 countries. It is situated in Armenia, where the first language is Armenian, the second language is Russian and English is not commonly spoken, particularly among the older generation. Within the College, the working language of the curriculum is English and the working languages of the administration are Armenian, Russian and English.

Respect for cultural diversity lies at the very centre of the UWC values. This is explicitly stated in our [Definition of Global Citizenship](#), which focuses on our awareness of understanding ourselves and our differences in all interactions. Such diversity presents many educational opportunities, but also challenges. The essential tool of all learning is language. Its mastery promotes success in academic, but also in social and cultural areas. Each student should become a proficient user of the language of instruction at UWCD. It is the responsibility of all teachers to support the acquisition of English for every student and to consider their individual needs when planning, teaching and assessing.

The College acknowledges the equal status of all languages and encourages students to become confident communicators in two or more languages, through the completion of the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme. The ability to speak and communicate in more than one language is both a valuable asset and a skill. Language and culture are interconnected and the learning of another language exposes one to different cultures and ideas and promotes mutual understanding. This also promotes international cooperation and helps to dispel misunderstanding and resulting conflict.

UWCD reaches out to the local community and the wider world, thereby promoting international cooperation and understanding. The college encourages students to interact with the local community through charitable initiatives, community links and cooperative learning and the wider world through educational visits. The learning of new languages, while developing skills in the host language, enables pupils to develop links with the world beyond the college gates, fulfilling the IB's aim for all students to become effective communicators. At the same time, the development of

home language(s) has a positive and beneficial effect on learning potential as a whole, on the acquisition of additional languages and on the possession of a secure cultural identity.

Procedure

Language and the Organisation

The working language of the curriculum is English. The curriculum is delivered in English, outside of specific language lessons, and communication with teaching staff, students and parents is carried out in English. Communication with associate staff, the wider community and external organisations may be carried out in Armenian, Russian or English. This also applies to marketing. All legal documentation is published in both Armenian and English.

Reports to parents are produced in English. If there is a need to speak to or write to a parent who does not communicate in English, the College will try to find a native speaker to assist or will contact the relevant UWC National Committee for support.

Curriculum Provision

UWCD promotes the Armenian language within the student body. All first year students have two lessons of Armenian for beginners per week for one term to enable them to have brief conversations with members of the local community, during any external CAS activities and during Project Week and cultural events.

Armenian students can choose Armenian A as their Group 1 language. Should they wish to study English A instead, they attend an Armenian culture and literature course, which is a requirement of the government.

There is also provision within the College to support Russian. Mother tongue speakers are taught Russian A if there are enough students choosing this option to create a class and those new to the language may study Russian ab initio within Group 2.

UWCD is committed to providing students with a range of opportunities to become competent in a second or even third language, in line with the International Baccalaureate's philosophy. The IB Learner Profile encourages students to become effective communicators; language provision at UWC Dilijan College supports this aim. At the current time, we offer the following curriculum for language learners:

Group 1 – Studies in Language and Literature	Group 2 – Language Acquisition
Armenian Literature - HL and SL	English B
English Literature – HL and SL	German ab initio
English Language and Literature – HL and SL	Russian ab initio
Russian Literature - HL and SL	Spanish ab initio
School-supported self-taught Literature – SL only	Language and Culture (IB pilot subject)*

* Language and Culture is an interdisciplinary course that brings together methods, approaches and ways of thinking across studies in languages and literature and studies in individuals and society. Students will engage with questions that ask how linguistic and cultural practices shape our identities, and how we change these linguistic and cultural practices in turn.

UWCD supports students with the development of their mother tongue by assisting with self taught IB courses and encourages students to pursue bilingual diplomas. This includes provision of support from language and literature teachers and specific skill-based lessons. All students are provided with an online tutor for providing feedback on written work and also orals. In many cases, there are DP1 and DP2 students from the same country in the College, which provides opportunities for students to use their mother tongue in daily life.

Support

Fluency in English is generally a requirement for entry to a United World College, but students arrive with a range of proficiency in English, from near beginners to native speakers. UWCD is committed to supporting students to become proficient in English.

Teacher assessments and referrals are an essential tool to assist UWCD in identifying which students need support. A placement test takes place within two weeks of arrival in the college.

For the majority of our students, English is not their best language. A number of our students need additional support in English because they come to us from non-English speaking environments or have only been learning English for a limited period of time. The Deputy Head and Head of English will review student information sheets upon receipt from Admissions as well as the *English Proficiency Questionnaire* results. An initial list of students needing support will be compiled and support lessons are arranged within individual timetables.

Any member staff may identify students in need of support at any time. Students may also self-refer if they feel that they would benefit from extra support. Regardless of proficiency in

English, all teaching and support staff have an important role in meeting students' language needs. Support will be provided in different ways:

- Support lessons will be provided as needed.
- Students will also be offered the English B course in Group 2, provided that they can follow the self-taught mother tongue course in Group 1.
- Subject teachers will be asked to provide key vocabulary and glossaries for students and to support and scaffold their learning. There is training in place to raise awareness of language needs, and also to provide strategies and techniques to be used in Group 3 to 6 teaching.
- Teachers are offered TESMC courses (Teaching ESL in mainstream classrooms) in order to raise their awareness of the different linguistic and cultural profiles specific to this school and the potential difficulties of the students.
- Students identified as needing to develop their skills in English in advance of their arrival at UWCD will be guided towards British Council (online or in person) or MOOC (online) courses. This will allow students to begin to bridge the gap in their level of English.

Enrichment

UWCD aims to provide enrichment opportunities for students in a number of ways, including, but not limited to:

- Guest speakers lecturing in different languages
- Cultural trips e.g. German film screening in Yerevan
- Cultural evenings
- Explore Armenia – a series of trips to explore the culture and heritage of the nation
- Co-curricular activities in the local community

The College also endeavours to support language learning through the provision of books and resources in different languages which are available in the Library. Professional development will be provided to staff to support them to become effective communicators and to develop their skills in teaching and supporting language development within the College. Examples of this may include IB workshops for teachers in Groups 1 and 2 or support from English teachers for staff and students running co-curricular activities.

References

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