Language Policy

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PREAMBLE

The Language Policy underscores the pivotal role of higher education in fostering intellectual growth and driving societal progress. It establishes a comprehensive framework that prioritises accessibility, quality, and inclusivity, aligning with the principles outlined in the Language Policy for Higher Education (LPHE) (2002). Recognising the transformative power of education, this policy emphasises the importance of English language proficiency as a cornerstone for academic achievement and professional development. At MANCOSA, the diverse backgrounds of students and academics create a unique opportunity to engage with English as a medium for exploring multiple perspectives, including indigenous knowledge systems. This includes encouraging critical engagement with diverse epistemologies and facilitating the expression of indigenous knowledge concepts within the framework of academic English.

This Language Policy plays a vital role in guiding the use of languages within academic institutions. It aims to address matters related to instruction, communication, and the overall linguistic environment.

This policy aims to address the language aspects of teaching, assessments, communication and administration of the institution. As we move forward, we are committed to cultivating an inclusive and dynamic higher education environment that leverages the richness of the English language to develop knowledgeable, engaged and socially responsible individuals.

At MANCOSA, the medium of instruction, communication and administration is English. Although English serves as the global language for communication in science and business, it is not the first language for a significant portion of MANCOSA's students and staff. MANCOSA students are required to demonstrate strong English language literacy skills, enabling them to communicate effectively in both spoken and written forms across various contexts, including academic, social and future professional environments.

TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT

English serves as the medium for instruction, communication and assessment across all programmes which includes postgraduate dissertations, inclusive of postgraduate research outputs.

ADMISSIONS AND SELECTIONS

All applicants, whether at the undergraduate or postgraduate level, are required to demonstrate proficiency in English sufficient for academic study at the higher education level. As part of the admissions process, applicants must provide evidence of proficiency or competency in English. Acceptable evidence includes achieving a minimum score on specified standardized tests like TOEFL or IELTS, holding specific prior qualifications taught and assessed in English, successful completion of MANCOSA's English proficiency assessment, etc.]. Specific requirements, benchmarks, and alternative pathways are detailed in the MANCOSA Admissions and Selections Policy. To support this, an English literacy module has been designed to equip students with essential verbal and written communication skills teaching students how to effectively speak and write for various audiences and purposes, develop key language competencies, critically evaluate information and communicate with clarity and confidence.

GUIDELINES FOR ACADEMIC AND DIGITAL COMMUNICATION

Students are provided with clear guidelines to ensure effective communication in forums, social media platforms and online assessments conducted in English. These guidelines promote inclusive engagement and establish rules for appropriate language use and respectful communication. These guidelines are communicated to students via the student handbook, learning management system (LMS), and orientation programmes and cover aspects such as netiquette, appropriate academic tone, plagiarism avoidance and respectful interaction.

SUPPORT FOR NON-ENGLISH SPEAKERS

MANCOSA recognises the importance of providing comprehensive support for students whose first language is not English. To enhance communication and understanding between students and faculty, support programmes will be

introduced, and clear guidelines will be established to ensure that information is conveyed in English in a manner accessible to students with varying levels of language proficiency. As part of this commitment, an academic literacy module, available on the MANCOSA skillMe portal, has been developed to equip students with fundamental verbal and writing skills essential for the commerce sector. This module aims to help students communicate effectively for different audiences and purposes, develop key language competencies, evaluate information critically, and express themselves with clarity and accuracy.

PROMOTION OF CONTINUOUS LEARNING

To support continuous language development, MANCOSA encourages students to explore languages beyond traditional boundaries, including digital languages. Various programmes and initiatives are available to facilitate the acquisition of additional languages relevant to modern professional environments. These include short courses accessible through the MANCOSA skillMe portal, which provide students with opportunities to enhance their linguistic and digital competencies. MANCOSA's Language Policy in respect of South African undergraduate applicants requires that such applicants must be in possession of a National Senior Certificate or the National Certificate Vocational with appropriate subject combinations and levels of achievement as defined in the Minister's policies: Minimum Admission Requirements for Higher Certificate, Diploma and Bachelor's Degree Programmes Requiring a National Senior Certificate, Government Gazette, Vol 751, No 32131 of 11 July 2008, and Minimum Admission Requirements for Higher Certificate, Diploma and Bachelor's Degree Programmes Requiring a National Certificate (Vocational), published in the Government Gazette, Vol. 533, No. 32743, November 2009.

For postgraduate applicants, those with a Diploma or National Nated Diploma (NQF6-360 credit) qualification must also have a Bachelor of Technology or Advanced Diploma (NQF7) qualification to articulate onto the programme. Certified copies of both the Diploma and Bachelor of Technology/Advanced Diploma certificates, along with complete academic records, must be submitted.

Non-South African Students

If an applicant does not meet the specified English proficiency requirement through the standard evidence pathways, the applicant may complete the 150-hour (non-

degree purpose) NDP English Literacy module that is available on the MANCOSA skillME portal. A certificate will be issued upon completion of the module. (refer to the Admissions and Selections Policy, Page 6, point 7)

INCLUSIVITY AND DIVERSITY

MANCOSA upholds English as the primary medium of instruction while embracing inclusivity and diversity by offering specialised subjects within the Initial Teacher Education Programmes in various languages such as isiZulu, isiXhosa and Afrikaans, while in the Bachelor of Tourism and Hospitality programme, students have the opportunity to study subjects in languages such as German, French and Mandarin These subjects are taught and assessed in their respective languages. However, all official institutional communication, programme-level information, and instructions to students are provided in English to ensure consistency in administration while fostering and celebrating linguistic diversity. Module convenors delivering content in languages other than English are responsible for ensuring students understand how to access essential institutional and programme-level information provided in English.

STUDENT ADMINISTRATION

English is the designated language for governance and administration. All communications in English must adhere to clarity and conciseness.

REVIEW

This policy is a dynamic document and will undergo annual reviews and updates reflecting the circumstances relevant to the stakeholders.