Language Learning Statement

Purpose and Scope
This policy sets out the College’s principles and guidelines with regard to foreign (i.e. non-English) language learning and the course provision for students, staff and the public. The policy covers the language learning provision of the Centre for Languages, Culture and Communication.

Aims
We intend to enhance:
1. Our students' field-specific learning outcomes, by enabling access to international bodies of knowledge in foreign languages, by improving their international and multi-cultural education and enhancing their mobility prospects;
2. Our staff's ability to pursue research partnerships, and to increase the impact of their work in multilingual settings;
3. Public and community engagement with Imperial by fostering links with the local community, neighbouring higher education institutions as well as with businesses.

Principles
1. Multilingualism is the ability to communicate and interact personally and professionally in more than one language in a range of settings. As a university with a strong international vocation, Imperial College London supports and promotes multilingualism and linguistic diversity.
2. Many students and staff are already multilingual due to their personal and/or academic background. The College regards this as an asset.
3. The College has a specific need to support higher-level language learning, additional learning for multilingual learners and language learning with a STEMB focus. All Imperial College students and staff are enabled to access a language learning opportunity, whether to acquire new skills or improve existing ones.
4. Provision of high quality language learning opportunities for the general public can strengthen the links with the wider community, improve the College’s visibility and contribute positively to its cultural footprint.

Guidelines
The College will provide:
1. Language learning support to undergraduate students in a range of languages and in a range of levels, from beginners to advanced, as part of the Horizons programme:
   a) all undergraduate students will have the opportunity to study a language through a Horizons course, i.e. 2 hours of tuition weekly, at some point in their degree.
   b) Horizons courses are scheduled on three specific days of the week (see below), organised by year group as well proficiency level, and attended primarily by imperial undergraduate students.
Postgraduate students and staff may attend for a fee and subject to availability of places. Class sizes vary with a maximum of 25 for level 1 and 22 for all higher levels. For groups with YiE or LfS students we aim to have a maximum of 18-20 students per class.

c) The language provision of the Horizons courses is determined by the Horizons Committee in response to student demand and feedback.

2. Specialist language learning opportunities for undergraduate students on specific programmes, namely:
   a) Year Abroad (Year-in-Europe, YiE) programmes. Students on these programmes will additionally be offered courses covering technical language as well as preparation for residence abroad. Altogether, students will be offered three hours of language tuition per week (one 2-hour Horizons course plus one dedicated 1-hour YiE course).
   b) Language for Science (LfS) programmes (i.e. degree programmes which combine either a Life Science discipline or Chemistry with French, German or Spanish). Students on these programmes will additionally be offered modules on history and politics, history of science and translation. Altogether, students will be offered four hours of language tuition per week (one 2-hour Horizons course, one 1-hour YiE course, one 1-hour history or history of science course, plus fortnightly tutorials. Students returning from a year abroad will receive four hours tuition per week in the first term and two hours per week in the second term, plus fortnightly tutorials.

3. General language learning opportunities (fee paying) for all undergraduate, postgraduate students, staff, alumni and members of the public as part of the Evening Classes programme, i.e. courses covering productive and receptive skills with a focus ranging from everyday situations to current affairs. Evening Class courses will be provided most weekdays, conditional on sufficient demand.

4. Informal language learning opportunities for all undergraduate and postgraduate students through the Language Pairs scheme, as well as self-study opportunities through a resource centre and online provision.

5. Bespoke language courses for other London-based HE institutions, local community and businesses, to provide additional income for College.

Language Provision

All major European languages including Russian as well as world languages of strategic political, economic and scientific importance such as Arabic, Japanese, Chinese and Korean are offered. Imperial Horizons (primarily for undergraduates; postgraduates and staff may attend subject to availability and for a fee):

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1 We would like to define ‘major languages’ (French, German, Italian and Spanish) in relation to a) the respective countries’ economic importance in terms of relative size of GDP and b) the percentages of native speakers within the European Union. According to the Special Eurobarometer 386 report ‘Europeans and their Languages’ “The most widely spoken mother tongue is German (16%), followed by Italian (13%), French (12%), then Spanish … (8%).” (Source: http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs_386_en.pdf, last retrieved 15/10/2016). In rank order, the GDP list for all nations 2016 includes Germany (4th), France (6th), Italy (8th) and Spain (12). (Source: International Monetary Fund World Economic Outlook (April-2016), http://statisticstimes.com/economy/countries-by-projected-gdp.php, last retrieved 15/10/2016).
The inclusion of a new language within the Horizons programme is based on student feedback as well as the development of new research links or exchange programmes. The language provision is kept under review by the Horizons Committee, following the development of students’ needs, demand and feedback. Although no language has ever been removed from our catalogue, different guidelines would have to be applied according to different programme strands.

For Horizons, a recommendation to discontinue a language must be made to the Horizons Committee in November for the following academic session after an insufficient number of students (minimum of seven) has enrolled in any level over a three-year period. However, this will not apply if the language in question is offered as part of a Year Abroad/Year-in-Europe or ‘With [Language]’ degree programme.

For the language courses within the Evening Class programme, which is based on a completely different ethos to that of daytime provision such as Horizons, flexibility is of the utmost importance. Their main purpose is to provide funding for the department, as well as to raise the College’s profile in the community and provide a useful service. For this reason, languages may be added or removed from the programme by the Evening Class Co-ordinator according to their attractiveness, e.g. Greek was removed after years, when enrolment continued to be poor but Brazilian Portuguese was added before the Olympic Games in Brazil were due to take place. All courses are offered as part of the University-wide elective modules framework timetable. Unless otherwise specified by departments, language courses can be completed by students in any year within their degree course to suit their individual needs.

Language courses for undergraduates are provided from 4-6pm on specific days for specific years (Monday for 2nd years, Tuesday for 1st years, Thursday for 3rd and 4th years). Imperial Horizons courses provide: 2-hour classes over 20 weeks (19 for 1st year students).

**Year Abroad and Language for Science** (for undergraduates only)
Specialist courses for students on a Year Abroad programme normally take place 12-1 and 1-2 on Fridays. Modules for students of Chemistry or Life Sciences on a Language for Science degree take place 1-2 (History and Politics) and 12-1 (History of Science) on Thursdays, as well as Mondays and Fridays 12-1 (Translation). Specialist modules for Year Abroad and Language for Science degree programmes are 1-hour classes over 19 or 20 weeks respectively in all years of study and 2-hour weekly Scientific Translation modules in years 3 or 4 exclusively for students on a Language for Science degree.

**Evening Class Programme** (for students, staff and members of the public, fee paying)
New languages are added to the Evening Course programme based on feedback received from course participants and market research. Courses on the Evening Programme are general courses of up to four levels. They do not include coursework or examinations, however there is an optional test for 2 ECTS credits. Courses take place most weekdays from 6 to 8pm over 20 weeks, are open to members of the public as well as to all students and staff. A staggered fee system is in place, with staff, students, alumni and other categories enjoying discounted rates (available at [http://www.imperial.ac.uk/evening-classes/autumn-spring-courses/enrolment-fees/](http://www.imperial.ac.uk/evening-classes/autumn-spring-courses/enrolment-fees/)).
Open Access Resources and informal learning opportunities (for students and staff)
The Language Lab on level 3 in the Sherfield Building and the Language Pairs scheme, for which learners can enrol online, are available free to all undergraduate and postgraduate students as well as members of staff.