

Language Policy

FOR GÖTEBORG UNIVERSITY



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INTRODUCTION

One of the Government's objectives in the internationalisation of higher education is that foreign students should find Sweden an attractive country in which to study.

The extensive and increasing number of programmes and courses given in English is an (. . .) important prerequisite in terms of international competition and Sweden's attraction as a country in which to study. It is important that courses given in English are available at every level in the university. Teaching should, to a greater extent than today, be conducted in other foreign languages than English.

(Ny värld – ny högskola. (New World – New University).

Government Proposition 2004/2005:162, p 59)

At the same time, within certain linguistic domains today, it is necessary to argue in favour of the use of Swedish in research fields such as medicine, the natural sciences and technology. Recent trends show that the Swedish language is losing ground in competition with English; other languages are marginalised. Within other fields of research, in particular in areas where research is dependent on linguistic interpretation, Swedish is usually the main language. In other areas, oral skills are less important and consequently less dependent on the language which is used. The overall aim of this language policy is to increase language awareness among all those who study or work at the university.

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As one of the major universities of Europe, Göteborg University should therefore

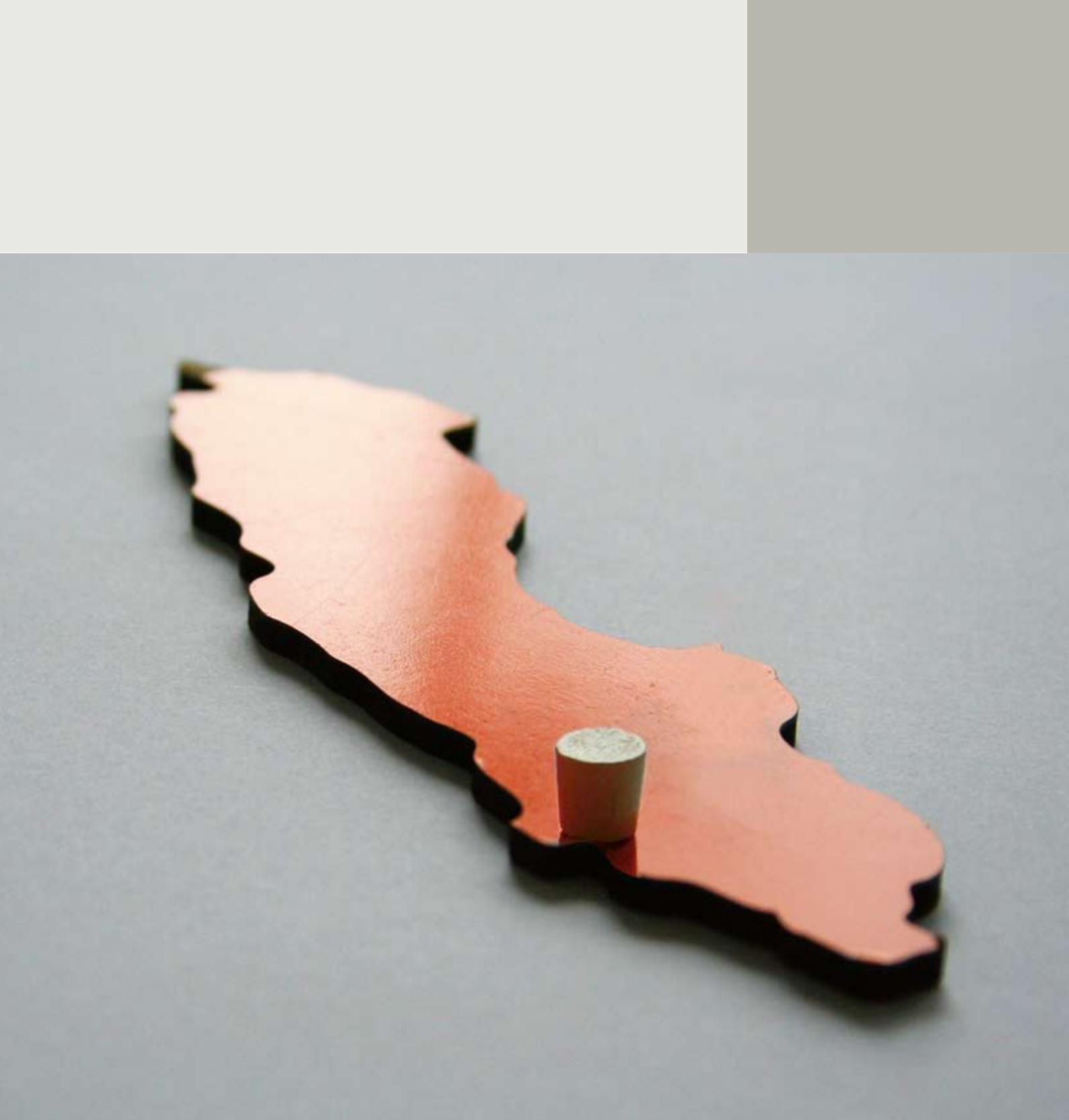
- > contribute to the development of students' language proficiency, to the development of the academic use of language and to the students' ability to communicate in different languages, their knowledge also to people outside the academic world
- > promote mobility, employability and competitiveness on the job market among its students and staff by encouraging language studies and the use of languages other than Swedish
- > promote linguistic diversity in its organisation
- > be an attractive university to international researchers, teachers and students
- > communicate information via home pages and relevant documents and publications in languages other than Swedish, primarily in English, which is most widely spread internationally

SWEDISH

Swedish should be the main language of teaching in first-cycle courses (Bachelor level) and should be used unless it is necessary to use another language, such as in foreign language courses. Studies at first-cycle level should teach students to express themselves about their studies in clear, intelligible Swedish. In connection with response to subject matter, students should also receive feedback concerning their language usage by giving a stronger position to modules which should improve students' oral and written proficiency both in Swedish and English. (*Bästa språket. En samlad svensk språkpolitik. Prop 2005/06:2, s 47*). Also at first-cycle level, students should acquire, for Swedish, a certain amount of language for specific purposes (LSP) in terms both of comprehension and production. At the advanced level (Master level, second cycle), a higher degree of LSP is expected. Projects at the advanced level in languages other than Swedish should be accompanied by extensive summaries in Swedish. See *Handlingsplan för språkfrågor (Action Plan for Language Issues)* for a description of aid and support to be given to students with special needs.

Dissertations in languages other than Swedish are to include extensive summaries in Swedish.

Swedish for specific purposes should be nurtured and developed so that science can be communicated to non-specialists. Within all the scientific fields, the university should endeavour to use adequate terminology in Swedish.



ENGLISH

Göteborg University should be an attractive university for international researchers, teachers and students also outside Scandinavia. Teaching in English (and possibly other languages) is a prerequisite for this. The number of courses in which English is used as the language of teaching and the number of registered students should, therefore, increase to encourage mobility and heighten the quality of research and education according to the objectives of the Bologna Process.

In order to facilitate the use of English on higher levels of study, course literature and teaching should, to a certain extent, be in English at first-cycle level, so that comprehension is increased and improved.

At the advanced (Master's) and doctoral levels, English should be used to a greater extent than at first cycle level in order to

- encourage and stimulate mobility and attract incoming exchange students
- improve Swedish students' international communication skills in order to increase their possibilities of becoming known internationally
- improve Swedish students' chances of becoming accepted for doctoral studies abroad
- be able to attract highly qualified international researchers and teachers

At the advanced level, course literature should, to a large extent, be in English and teaching should also normally be in English or in Swedish and English simultaneously (with visual support in the non-native language) if the teacher knows no Swedish or if the group consists of non-Swedish speaking students.

Consideration should also be shown to students who do not have English as a second language. The recruitment of students from homes without an academic tradition can be impeded if teaching is done in languages other than Swedish. Support to students requiring language support is described in *Handlingsplan för språkfrågor (Action Plan for Language Issues)*.

All teaching staff should be prepared to teach in English or at least teach bilingually with visual support in English. When it comes to developing competence to be able to teach in a language other than the mother tongue, see *Handlingsplan för språkfrågor (Action Plan for Language Issues)*.

A prerequisite for a high international standard of research is international contacts and international quality control. All the university's researchers and scientists should, therefore, strive to contribute to an international research environment by publishing in English and other relevant languages and by attending international conferences.

The proportion of doctoral dissertations in English at Göteborg University should increase. Dissertations written in Swedish should include an extensive summary in English. Those who have recently completed dissertations in Swedish should be encouraged to publish articles in English.

For information concerning courses in Academic Writing in both Swedish and English, see *Handlingsplan för språkfrågor (Action Plan for Language Issues)*.

OTHER LANGUAGES

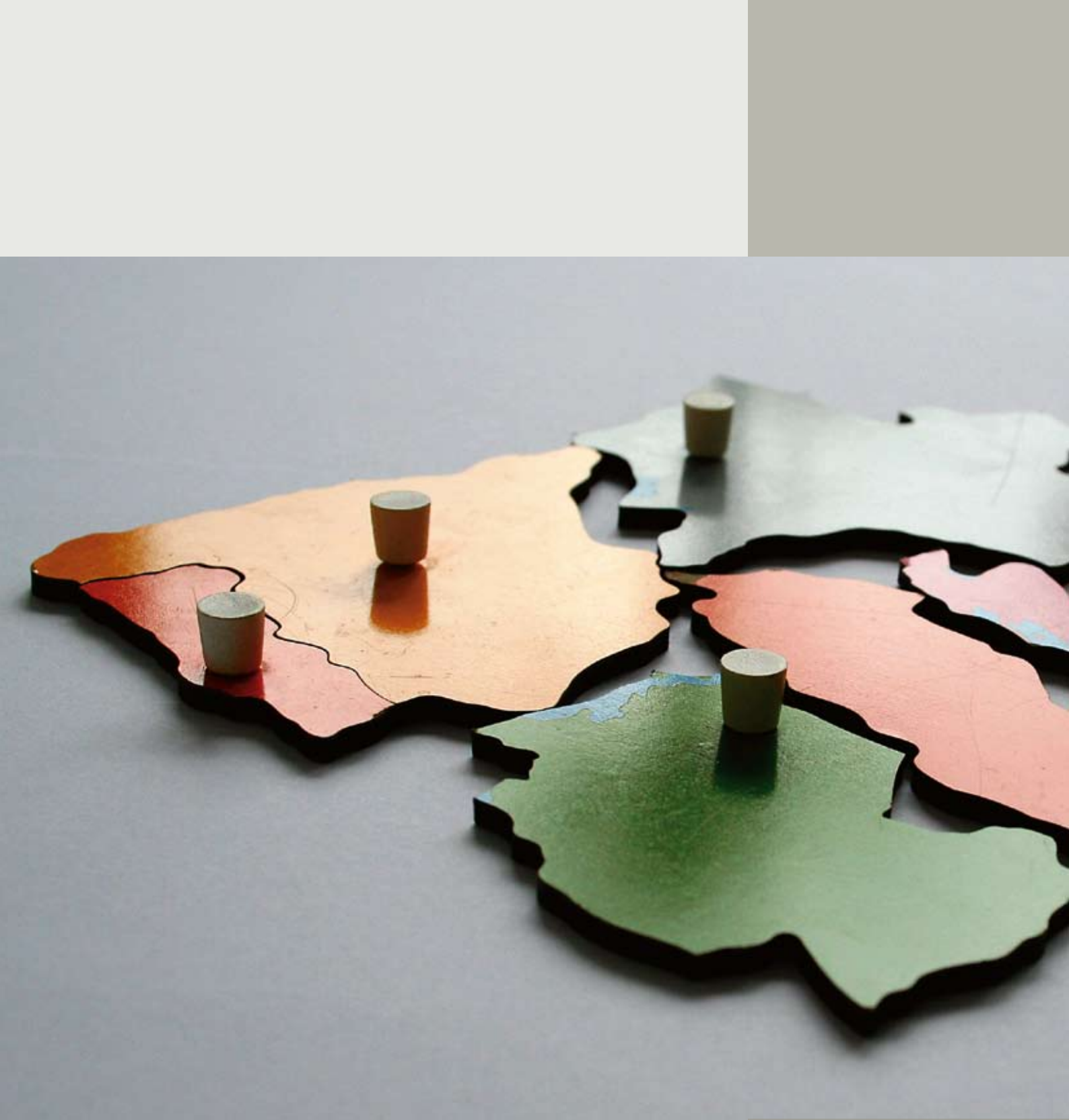
The use of English as a language of communication is on the increase; however, most of the world's population has only a limited knowledge of English. A prerequisite for successful communication with people from other countries is knowledge of their language. Language competence can also facilitate the understanding of other people's cultures. Furthermore, the development of one's own knowledge also benefits from having it related to that which is unfamiliar.

Göteborg University should promote students' and teachers' possibilities to read and understand scientific literature in languages other than Swedish and English.

Within the EU, there is strong emphasis on the major European languages. Consequently, other languages are paid too little attention. Competence in languages other than Swedish and the major European languages should be taken advantage of to a greater extent than is done today. Göteborg University offers courses in those languages which will become important in our future global economy. Together with other universities, the University should develop and reinforce the basis for this kind of work.

Göteborg University should strive to make clear the competitive value of linguistic and cultural competence. All types of language competence, including that which can be acquired through placements abroad, should be stated in a degree certificate. Students should also be given the opportunity to include in their degree certificate, a statement about language(s) used in the courses. The European Language Passport can be used to show language proficiency in different languages at different levels. See *Handlingsplan för språkfrågor (Action Plan for Language Issues)*.

Language competence should also be considered as an additional qualification for employment at Göteborg University, in particular having studied, taught and/or published in languages other than Swedish.





INFORMATION

about research and development

One of a university's three main objectives is to spread information to the general public about the work done. Research and development findings should be distributed to society as a whole. The dissemination of research findings is hampered by the fact that scientific language, language for specific purposes, is a language of its own with varying degrees of complexity.

For most of Sweden's researchers, English is the obvious language to use. However, Swedish is the main language of Sweden and researchers at Göteborg University should therefore be able to communicate their knowledge in clear, intelligible Swedish. The University's researchers should consider the responsibility they have to develop the Swedish language in scientific communication between Swedes by sustaining the use of existing terminology and by working for easy adaptation of English terms to Swedish usage.

The dissemination of information to the general public can also be applied in an international perspective. Research findings should therefore be communicated in English that is clear and intelligible even to non-specialists.

PRESENTING

the University in languages other than Swedish

Göteborg University should be visible internationally. Information about the University should be available in languages other than Swedish, primarily in English. Relevant home pages/web sites and documents and publications should be internationally available. The University should provide the necessary resources for translation and revision. See *Handlingsplan för språkfrågor (Action Plan for Language Issues)*.

The student unions should be encouraged to provide relevant information in English.



SUMMARY

1. The official language of communication at Göteborg University is Swedish. Workers in fields of research which are dominated by English should be able to communicate their knowledge in clear, intelligible Swedish.
2. The number of courses given in English should increase, primarily at advanced levels. An increased use of English should be encouraged in areas of research which are at present dominated by Swedish.
3. Göteborg University should strive towards linguistic diversity and see to it that competence in languages other than Swedish and English is seen as an additional qualification for employment at Göteborg University.
4. Göteborg University should disseminate research findings to society in general in clear and intelligible Swedish and English.
5. Göteborg University should be make itself visible internationally and information about the University and its activities should be available also in languages other than Swedish.

The steps necessary to implement the above policy will be presented in Göteborg University's *Handlingsplan för språkfrågor (Action Plan for Language Issues)* (to be published). This also includes instructions for follow-up and evaluation procedures.

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