

The Wulkow Memorandum on Language Centres at Institutions of Higher Education in Europe

From Thursday, January 22nd to Saturday, January 24th 2009 a working party of directors from twenty-seven language centres, representing universities from thirteen countries in Europe met in Wulkow/Brandenburg, Germany.

They met to discuss and define the strategic role of Language Centres at Institutions of Higher Education in the process of Internationalisation of Higher Education in Europe by their expertise in teaching languages, fostering language acquisition, multilingual and intercultural communication, and in the areas of life long learning, employability and social inclusion.

The conclusions of this key meeting are found below.

- Language Centres at Institutions of Higher Education play a pivotal role in the development and delivery of effective internationalisation strategies throughout the European HE sector.
- Language Centres at Institutions of Higher Education actively contribute to the successful implementation of key aspects of the Bologna Process providing the linguistic and intercultural tools for effective mobility.
- Language Centres at Institutions of Higher Education are able to contribute not only to the theoretical and intellectual issues in language teaching and learning but are also best placed to apply these ideas effectively thereby benefiting all stakeholders in this process. This cannot be done without the political and financial support of all stakeholders in Higher Education.
- Language Centres at Institutions of Higher Education are Centres of Expertise which:
 - have sound management structures which promote a sense of professionalism and career development
 - contribute to effective student progression through all cycles
 - have sound staffing policies which are fit for purpose
 - bridge the role between Higher Education and the business and public communities
 - work with planners to devise teaching and learning spaces which specifically cater to the needs of the learner and support autonomous learning
 - stimulate innovation in research and development in the area of language learning and teaching through co-operation with colleagues within and beyond the borders of Europe.
 - have established contacts with both academic and business subject experts whose knowledge can feed into targeted languages programs.
 - deliver innovative, high quality courses in Languages for Specific Purposes at all levels as an optional or integral part of any study programme
 - are the forefront of developments in e-learning and the adaptation of new technologies for teaching and learning
- Language Centres at Institutions of Higher Education demonstrate a strong commitment to and awareness of the quality agenda. They work within effective frameworks and develop them to ensure best practice.
- Language Centres at Institutions of Higher Education actively recognise and promote the acquisition of all languages as part of an ongoing commitment to multilingualism, while acknowledging and supporting the role of English as a Lingua franca.

- Language Centres at Institutions of Higher Education recognise a core mission in teaching languages but also embrace new roles in creating courses which develop other key competencies and skills for global communication.
- Language Centres at Institutions of Higher Education maximise the academic and professional potential of all students and staff.
- Language Centres at Institutions of Higher Education reach out to the communities outside the university, promoting and fostering individual and societal multilingualism with innovative ideas and thus are laboratories for a multilingual Europe.

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