

Implementation provisions, Bachelor's and Master's Levels¹

Senate Committee Meeting of 15 June 2015

Reference	Languages
Legal basis	Arts. 10, 18, 22, 39 ER AY and Arts. 6, 10 CR AY Art. 23 ER BA and Arts. 27 to 31 CR BA Art. 15 ER MA
1. Scope of application and principle	
1.1.	At the University of St.Gallen, German and English shall be regarded as course languages. The first undergraduate year (Assessment Year) is monolingual. The choice of course language for the Assessment Year shall be incumbent on students. In their further studies at the Bachelor's Level, a minimum of results in both course languages shall be compulsory in the Business Administration, Economics and International Affairs majors. The BLaw and BLE majors shall be monolingual in German. At the Master's Level, degree courses shall be completed monolingually in German, monolingually in English or bilingually in German and English depending on the Master's programme. Non-German-language students shall have to provide evidence of a command of German in the course of their studies at the University of St.Gallen.
1.2.	Before graduation, students at the University of St.Gallen must provide evidence of two foreign languages. Courses and examinations shall be provided in various foreign languages.
1.3.	These implementation provisions shall govern <ol style="list-style-type: none">the concept and evidence of students' native language (= school language),the definitions of the levels of students' evidence of proficiency in a foreign language,the linguistic admission criteria (ability to study) for the Bachelor's and Master's Levels,the language requirements at the Bachelor's and Master's Levels,the possibility of extramural evidence of linguistic proficiency being credited.
2. Concept and evidence of students' native language (= school language)	
2.1.	The language in which students were taught during the majority of their school days, i.e. at least 8 years of 12-13 years' schooling, shall be deemed to be their native language ("school language" principle).
2.2.	If at school, students were taught (and examined) in two languages in approximately the same proportion until the final examinations (12-13 years), their childhood languages shall be the decisive factor for their native language. ² The childhood language shall be the language with which a student has grown up and in which such student has preferred to

¹ Pursuant to Art. 123 of the University Statutes of 25 October 2010 (Consolidated Statute Book of the Canton of St.Gallen, No. 217.15)), only the German version of these Regulations shall be legally binding.

² Students whose childhood language is none of the two course languages can themselves choose one of their school languages as their native language.

communicate in a private environment. Simultaneously bilingual students shall designate their preferred childhood language themselves.

- 2.3. Students shall declare their native languages (school languages) themselves. Degree course applicants shall have to indicate on application: school language, language of their final examinations and correspondence language (German or English). This information shall be checked for correctness.
- 2.4. Any language not designated as a student's native language (school language) shall be deemed a foreign language.

3. Definitions of the levels of students' evidence of proficiency in a foreign language

- 3.1. Two or three levels of proficiency shall be established for each of the foreign languages offered at the University of St.Gallen.
- 3.2. The foreign language proficiency levels shall be established in accordance with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).
- 3.3. The reference point for the definition of the proficiency levels demanded shall be constituted by the Swiss *Maturität* examination (knowledge already acquired in German, French, English, Italian and Spanish; no previous knowledge of any other language).
- 3.4. Evidence of proficiency in foreign languages is provided by taking language examinations consisting of oral and written parts.

4. Bachelor's Level

A. Admission requirements

- 4.1. Applicants who want to complete the Assessment Year in the course language German (German-language track) shall provide evidence of the ability to study in German at Competence Level B2 (CEFR) in German before the beginning of their studies. Accepted as evidence shall be German native language, Swiss *Maturität* examination or German-language university entrance qualification or language diploma (in accordance with para. 6).
- 4.2. Applicants who want to complete the Assessment Year in the course language English (English-language track) shall provide evidence of ability to study in English at Competence Level B2 (CEFR) in English before the beginning of their studies. Accepted as evidence shall be English as the native language, an English-language university entrance qualification or a satisfactory grade in the *Maturität* or other university entrance qualification after being continuously taught in English for the last three school years or language diploma (in accordance with para. 6).
- 4.3. Students in the English-language track whose native language is a foreign language shall provide information about the status of their command of the German language. If they are unable to provide evidence of their ability to study at the time of admission, they shall have to provide such evidence during their undergraduate studies in accordance

with para. 4.8. At the time of admission, evidence of the ability to study shall be the native language, a German-language university entrance qualification or a satisfactory grade in the *Maturität* or other university entrance qualification after being continuously taught in German for the last three school years or language diploma (in accordance with para. 6).

- 4.4. Students who have already obtained a Bachelor's degree and join the third semester directly shall provide evidence of their ability to study in English and German at Competence Level B2 (CEFR) for the undergraduate studies in the majors Business Administration, Economics and International Affairs, and of their ability to study in German at Competence Level B2 for the majors BLaw and BLE. Accepted as evidence shall be native language, studies at the Bachelor's Level in the course languages German or English, a German- or English-language university entrance qualification or a satisfactory grade in a university entrance qualification after being continuously taught in German or English for the last three school years or language diploma (in accordance with para. 6).

B. Language requirements within the Bachelor's Level

- 4.5. By the end of their undergraduate studies, students shall have to provide evidence of proficiency in two foreign languages.
- 4.6. At the end of the Assessment Year, students shall have to sit an examination at the lower level of proficiency (cf. Appendix)³.
- 4.7. Students who have provided evidence of proficiency in a foreign language at the lower level in the Assessment Year shall be able to continue this language at a higher level during their studies at Bachelor's Level. Evidence of proficiency in a second foreign language shall also have to be provided in this case.
- 4.8. Students who are unable to provide evidence of any command of German at the beginning of their studies shall have to sit a language examination in German in the Assessment Year.⁴ This examination shall examine proficiency at Level A2 (CEFR). This language examination shall replace the regular language examination to be taken in the course of the Assessment Year. In their further studies at the Bachelor's Level, the students shall be obliged to provide evidence of proficiency in German at Level B2 (CEFR). Students shall additionally have to provide evidence of proficiency in a second foreign language by the end of their undergraduate studies. There will be preparatory courses for this examination.
- 4.9. During undergraduate studies, students shall be able to sit a maximum of four examinations to enable them to provide evidence in foreign languages. If students fail to appear at an examination for no valid reason, they shall be deemed to have sat the examination. If they fail to achieve a satisfactory grade at the fourth attempt, they shall only be able to provide evidence of proficiency by means of an external equivalent (in accordance with

³ Cf. overview of the levels of proficiency demanded in the Appendix. In the case of languages with three levels of proficiency, the lowest or the intermediary levels may be chosen for the language examination of the Assessment Year.

⁴ A command of German shall be deemed sufficient if on enrolment, students indicate German as their native language (school language) or as the language in which they have acquired their university entrance qualification or if they have achieved a grade in German in their university entrance qualification after or if they have obtained a recognised external language diploma. If on enrolment, students indicate German as their childhood language in their CV or elsewhere, for instance, this shall also be deemed to be evidence of a sufficient command of German.

para. 6).

- 4.10. Once students have provided the necessary evidence of proficiency in foreign languages, they shall not be entitled to attend further foreign language courses.

C. Possibilities for providing evidence of proficiency in foreign languages

- 4.11. Evidence of language proficiency may be provided in the following ways:

- a) Students who have achieved a satisfactory grade in the language examination in the Assessment Year shall have provided evidence of proficiency in one of the two languages required for their Bachelor's degree. If their grade is unsatisfactory, students shall have to provide evidence of proficiency in both languages in their remaining undergraduate studies.
- b) After the Assessment Year, students may provide evidence of proficiency in foreign languages through language examinations at the University of St.Gallen or by means of external language examinations or language diplomas which satisfy the requirements of the University of St.Gallen (in accordance with para. 6). If students sit language examinations at the University of St.Gallen, they are deemed to have provided evidence of proficiency in the respective language if they achieve a satisfactory grade.

The equivalence of language diplomas obtained externally shall be governed by the CEFR. The reference categories are listed in the Appendix.

5. Master's Level

A. Admission requirements

- 5.1. For students to be admitted to a German- or English-language programme, they shall have to provide evidence of proficiency at Competence Level C1 (CEFR) in the language in which the programme is taught before they start their studies. In bilingual programmes, evidence of proficiency in one course language shall be sufficient.

- a) The following shall be accepted as evidence of proficiency in German: German as the native language, Swiss *Maturität*, a German-language university entrance qualification or Bachelor's degree, evidence of proficiency at Competence Level C1 (CEFR) of the University of St.Gallen or an external language diploma (in accordance with para. 6).
- b) The following shall be accepted as evidence of proficiency in English: English as the native language, an English-language university entrance qualification or Bachelor's degree, evidence of proficiency at Competence Level C1 (CEFR) of the University of St.Gallen or an external language diploma (in accordance with para. 6). Alternatively, TOEFL shall also be accepted (paper-based 600, computer-based 250, internet-based 100).

- 5.2. Admission to the Master's programmes in Economics (MEcon) and International Affairs and Governance (MIA) and shall be contingent on evidence of proficiency in English at

Level C1 (CEFR).

B. Language requirements within the Master's Level

- 5.3. To be awarded a Master's degree, students who start their studies at the University of St.Gallen only at the Master's Level shall have to provide evidence of proficiency in two foreign languages.
- 5.4. The requisite evidence of proficiency in foreign languages is part of the admission conditions and shall be submitted by the end of studies at the Master's Level. It will not be referred to in the Master's degree certificate. A Master's degree cannot be obtained without such evidence of proficiency in foreign languages.
- 5.5. Students of the English-language or bilingual Master's programmes who cannot provide evidence of any command of German⁵ shall have to provide evidence of proficiency at no lower level than Level A1 (CEFR) in the course of their studies at the Master's Level. Language examinations and preparatory courses will be on offer. Evidence of proficiency at the minimum Level A1 (CEFR) shall be sufficient for students to satisfy the language requirements.
- 5.6. Students who have joined an English-language or bilingual Master's programme and are able to provide evidence of the fact that English was both their childhood language and their main school language and the language in which they obtained their university entrance qualification shall be exempt from having to provide evidence of proficiency in that language.
- 5.7. Students shall be able to sit a maximum of four examinations. If students fail to appear at an examination for no valid reason, they shall be deemed to have sat the examination. If they fail to achieve a satisfactory grade at the fourth attempt, they shall only be able to provide evidence of proficiency by means of an external equivalent.
- 5.8. Once students have provided the necessary evidence of proficiency in foreign languages, they shall not be entitled to attend further foreign language courses.

C. Crediting possibilities

- 5.9. Language diplomas obtained externally may be credited as evidence of linguistic proficiency (in accordance with para. 6). The equivalence of language diplomas obtained externally shall be governed by the CEFR. The reference categories are listed in the Appendix.
- 5.10. A Master's degree awarded by the University of St.Gallen can be credited to students as a foreign language at Competence Level C2 (CEFR) provided the course language in which they completed the programme is not their native language.

⁵ A command of German shall be deemed sufficient if on enrolment, students indicate German as their native language (school language) or as the language in which they have acquired their university entrance qualification or if they have achieved a grade in German in their university entrance qualification after or if they have obtained a recognised external language diploma. If on enrolment, students indicate German as their childhood language in their CV or elsewhere, for instance, this shall also be deemed to be evidence of a sufficient command of German.

6. Recognition of externally obtained language diplomas for admission to degree courses and crediting of the provision of evidence of language proficiency

- 6.1. A language examination shall be recognised for admission to undergraduate studies if it satisfies reference category B2 (CEFR) (in accordance with paras. 4.1., 4.2. and 4.4). Students shall themselves provide evidence of the relevant reference category.
- 6.2. A language examination shall be recognised for admission to studies at the Master's Level if it satisfies reference category C1 (CEFR) (in accordance with paras. 5.1. and 5.2). Students shall themselves provide evidence that their diploma satisfies this reference category.
- 6.3. Students who want to have an external language examination credited as an equivalent of a language examination of the University of St.Gallen shall have to submit a diploma which satisfies the reference categories listed in the Appendix.
- 6.4. Requests for externally obtained language diplomas to be credited shall be submitted to the Admission and Crediting Office along with the original copy of the diploma. The decision as to whether a diploma is credited or not shall be made by the Foreign Language Officer. A fact sheet shall provide information about the crediting criteria.
- 6.5. External evidence of linguistic proficiency must cover oral⁶ and written examination elements.
- 6.6. Diplomas obtained externally must not exceed the validity period indicated in them and in any case must not be older than five years at the time of enrolment or of the request for them to be credited.

7. General conditions

- 7.1. The weighting mode for the examination parts of the examinations to be sat in the Assessment Year shall be defined in the curriculum of the Assessment Year. With regard to the examinations offered in subsequent undergraduate studies, the Foreign Language Officer shall define the way in which the oral and written examination parts are weighted in cooperation with the faculty members responsible for the individual languages.
- 7.2. The Dean of Studies shall issue guidelines for the organisation of language examinations.

8. Final and transitional regulations

- 8.1. The provisions shall become effective as from 1 August 2016.
- 8.2. From Autumn Semester 2016 onwards, evidence of proficiency in foreign languages provided before Spring Semester 2016 shall be accounted for in accordance with the CEFR.

⁶ Oral examination elements shall be examination forms which involve interaction between students and examiners (not online language input).

Appendix: reference categories for the crediting of language diplomas obtained externally

For diplomas in languages that are taught at the University of St.Gallen to be credited, students must attain the following levels of proficiency:

- German, English: C1 (GER) or higher
- French: B2 (GER) or higher
- Spanish, Italian: B1 (GER) or higher
- Portuguese: A2 (GER) or higher
- Russian, Chinese: A1 (GER) or higher
- Japanese: Japanese Language Proficiency Test (JLPT), Level 5 or higher

For diplomas in languages that are not taught at the University of St.Gallen to be credited, the following rules shall be applicable:

- The diploma shall have to satisfy the requirements of Level B2 (CEFR) at the minimum. Students shall themselves provide evidence that their diploma satisfies this reference category.
- Languages which require students to learn a non-Latin script shall be treated in analogy with Chinese, Japanese and Russian, i.e. as equivalent to Level A1 (CEFR) at the minimum. Students shall themselves provide evidence of the fact that they have learned the script.
- In the case of languages which are outside the CEFR reference frame, students shall have to submit a certification of the equivalence by an official authority (university, etc.).
- All the documents shall have to be submitted in the original. If necessary, a certified translation into German or English shall be submitted.
- Decisions regarding the equivalence of foreign languages which are not taught at the University of St.Gallen shall be made by the Foreign Language Officer after consultation with the Admission and Crediting Office. Detailed information can also be found in the document entitled "Directions concerning the crediting of external evidence of linguistic proficiency".