

# Language Policy

*Last reviewed August 2024*

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*“UWC makes education a force to unite people, nations and cultures for peace and a sustainable future.” (UWC Mission Statement, 2006)*

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## School Language Philosophy

UWC Robert Bosch College is a multilingual learning community that is committed to the promotion and celebration of language diversity. We recognize the importance of self-expression and positive cultural identity through one’s first or home languages and we believe that all community members are language learners and ambassadors. It is central to our core values to recognize that with the sharing of language comes the sharing of culture and identity.

We recognize that language is a fundamental way of learning and knowing, as well as a forum for self-expression. We also recognize that language enables power and empowerment, which is why we aim to educate all members of the community about ways that language and identity are expressed.

## UWC Robert Bosch College Language Profile

The language profile of RBC is diverse and unique. In a typical year, less than 10% of students have English as a first language, speaking over 50 different languages and coming from approximately 85 countries. Furthermore, as articulated in the Admissions Policy, it is not required for students to have strong prior knowledge of English to be admitted to the College. Staff members currently come from approximately 25 countries and have about 10 first languages. The administrative and support staff is most likely to have German as their first language and English as a second language. However, English is not a requirement for all members of the support staff. Most members of the community are fluent in two or more languages. Many of the students come from multilingual communities and the languages they spoke at home are different from the ones they spoke in their communities and in school.

## Languages of Teaching and Learning

At RBC, English is the primary language of instruction. English A (Language and literature) and English B are offered at higher and standard levels.

Because of the location of UWC Robert Bosch College and the presence of about fifty German-speaking students, German A (Language and literature) is offered at higher and standard levels. Because of the admission of students from neighbouring countries and the probability that a number of students will have studied German as a foreign language, RBC offers German B. We also offer German ab initio for students and staff without prior knowledge of the language in order to facilitate interaction with the local community, including through service programmes, and with the administrative and support staff. For those who cannot participate in German ab initio as part of their IB programme, a German conversation class is offered as extracurricular activity.

Because France is a neighbouring country, and a country with strong and historical ties with Freiburg, French is offered both as an A (Language and literature) and a B language course at higher and standard levels.

Because of the composition of our student body, both Arabic A (Language and literature) and Spanish A (Language and literature) are offered at higher and standard levels.

Finally, RBC offers the standard-level “School-Supported Self-Taught Language A” (Literature) course in Group 1 to maintain first language development. The support includes provision of timetabled teacher support for this course.

## Language continuum scope and sequence

“School Supported Self-Taught Language A” is completed within one year. All other language courses are taught over the course of two years within the scope and sequence of the course outlines published in the official IB course guides.

## Teaching

All teachers are offered guidance during orientation and regularly thereafter to aid sensitivity to the language and cultural needs of the students.

All teachers are teachers of language and must welcome students of all language profiles into their classes.

Teachers are expected to explicitly teach the vocabulary and style appropriate to each discipline, and the rhetorical structures that help students express themselves in academic discussion and debate.

All teachers are expected to be familiar with and to follow the guidance provided in the “RBC Checklist for a Supportive Language Learner Classroom” (See Appendix A).

## Placement

Incoming students complete placement tests or conversations for entry into the appropriate English, German and French courses. The decision over individual students placement is taken by the Director of Studies at the recommendation of the respective teachers, always with reference to the IB publication “DP language courses: overview and placement guidance”. To the greatest extent possible while respecting the requirements of the Diploma Programme, students are placed in a course that is the best fit, offering an appropriate challenge.

## Support for learning

Prior to students’ arrival at the College, UWC National Committees who selected them are made aware that English is the language of instruction and daily operation at UWC Robert Bosch College. National Committees are encouraged to find local English training programmes for non-or foreign language English speakers for the months leading to the student’s arrival in Germany. In some cases, and only by prior arrangement, this can be funded by UWC Robert Bosch College.

UWC Robert Bosch College provides specialized English language learning (ELL) support to students in need. These students’ progress is monitored more closely by the academic support team and the support is mainly provided in the form of drop-in-sessions after school or during free blocks.

Our Study Buddy programme, under the guidance of our SEN/Learning Support Coordinator, empowers peer tutors to provide support across a range of IB subjects, including in languages.

## Teachers as learners

RBC encourages all teachers and staff members to continue their development as language learners. Where possible, we will provide in-house opportunities and encouragement for all non-German-speaking staff to attend German lessons. English language support may also be offered to staff members whose mother language is not English.

## Policy details

This policy is based on the UWC Pearson College Language Policy, with the permission of that College, interpreted and expanded for the location, student and staff body and opportunities available to UWC Robert Bosch College.

This policy is to be published on the school website. The Director of Studies (DOS) has the primary responsibility to ensure its implementation. Under the guidance of the DOS, and with input from key stakeholders, this policy should be reviewed and updated at least once every three years. The date of last review is noted on the first page.

## Appendix A

### RBC Checklist for a Supportive Language Learner Classroom

To support language learning for the incoming new English speakers, UWC offers the following tips for all teachers:

- ✓ Have a variety of different activities and forms of response in each lesson.
- ✓ Give students plenty of time to craft their response or have them discuss the answer in pairs before sharing it with the plenary.
- ✓ Don't expect students to read, write and comprehend at the same time.
- ✓ Be very transparent about your lesson plan. Show the objectives and the steps on the board to help students keep track.
- ✓ Use cooperative language learning strategies. Use a buddy system in class. Ensure mixed language groups for presentations.
- ✓ Design appropriate tasks for various language levels offering alternative assignments. Give these tasks in writing.
- ✓ Periodically check to ensure all students understand.
- ✓ Simplify sentence structures and repeat sentences verbatim before rephrasing them. Explain idioms. Speak clearly, and not too fast.
- ✓ Consider recording classes and important lectures. Make scripts and notes available. Use vocabulary lists and visual aids as much as possible.
- ✓ Prepare the students for the reading task before setting it.
- ✓ Allow students to prepare for the next lesson by providing vocabulary or reading/videos which can be reviewed in advance.
- ✓ Make sure the students understand the essay expectations before setting written tasks. Provide them with examples. Consider differentiate by giving them extra time or expecting fewer words at the beginning. Have a follow-up discussion reflecting on essay writing and common errors.
- ✓ Encourage students to keep a diary or notebook.
- ✓ Research and direct students to IB-appropriate resources in various available languages. Check myIB for suggestions. Ensure the library has books for your subject available.
- ✓ Ask for feedback from students on activities on a regular basis, e.g. weekly.
- ✓ Respond to students' language errors sympathetically by gently rephrasing their responses. Model correct usage.