

CAS language practices

At CAS staff and students of many different (inter-)disciplinary and language backgrounds meet. We use multiple local, global, and classical languages in research and daily communication. We see languages as resources for knowledge exchange and collegial communication, and we are proud of being and creating a plurilingual workplace.

These recommendations for good language practices among CAS staff help to ensure we can all

- have access to participation (i.e. in meetings, committees, decision making)
- share our expertise (among peers or in broader public)
- collaborate effectively (i.e. in a working group)
- take part in social and collegial interactions (i.e. lunch chat, informal contexts).

This is a constructive document in progress that we plan to develop and revisit regularly. It presents a set of general recommendations for good language practices that should be adapted to the specificities of the local linguistic environments within CAS' manifold contexts of various working units (i.e. departments, research groups, committees). The document does not address teaching contexts and refers to existing study regulations and the [Language Policy of the Faculty of Arts](#).

While official language policies regulate the status and normative standards of languages within societies and large organizations, our daily life interactions at floor level are often characterized by a higher degree of communicative complexity and linguistic diversity than official language policies can accommodate. By supplementing the existing *policy* with *practical* recommendations, we take a functional approach to working languages (in plural) as something we develop and learn throughout our academic careers.

Recommendations for promoting more inclusive language practices at CAS:

1. **Address language diversity:** Start a dialogue in your local unit about language preferences within teams and meetings and ensure that everyone has a chance to express their comfort level with different languages in various contexts. As chair or head of unit, avoid singling out individual participants about their language skills in plenum; rather, create safe spaces for language requests ahead of meetings.



2. **Explicitness:** Make sure that ‘insider terminology’ (i.e. ‘AU lingua’ about study regulations or ‘helhedsplan’) is transparent and understandable to all participants. Here effective onboarding and early involvement of new colleagues in fora and committees together with mindful explanations are more important than word-for-word translations. For the latter, you may refer to the [AU dictionary](#).
3. **Flexibility:** Sometimes, inclusivity means allowing multiple languages and switching between several languages during a conversation to ensure all participants are comfortable in expressing themselves (i.e. speaking in one language and listening in another).
4. **Adequacy:** Different communication contexts may call for different language practices (i.e., at the negotiation table, it is important that the language choice does not reinforce existing power hierarchies and that linguistic dominance is not misused to gate-keep, but rather to bridge communication. At the lunch table, it can be fun to exchange thoughts in the learning language of your colleagues.)
5. **Voicing and listening skills development:** To foster an encouraging language learning environment embrace variations in language proficiency. Avoid letting ideal, but seldom realistic notions of ‘mastering’ standard language become a barrier to voicing your perspective. At CAS we need to hear many different voices. Train your ability to listen to your colleagues regularly – regardless of their preferred language.