



CALL FOR PAPERS

***Professionalising multilingualism in higher education:  
developing plurilingual individuals and multilingual  
institutions***

**International conference**



## Hosting institution

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University of Luxembourg

## Venue

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CCRN - Centre Culturel de Rencontre Abbaye de Neumünster  
28, rue Münster - L-2160 Luxembourg  
Grand-Duché du Luxembourg  
<http://www.ccrn.lu/>

## Date

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February 4-6, 2010

## Organizing committee

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Guy Poos, Secretary of the Board of Governors / Senior advisor

Dr Michael Langner, Guest Professor, University of Luxembourg  
Dr Gudrun Ziegler, Associate Professor, University of Luxembourg

Philippe Blanca, Conference coordinator (**main contact**), University of Luxembourg

Laetitia Béveillard, Assistant to Secretary of the Board of Governors / Senior Advisor,  
University of Luxembourg

Marnie Ludwig, Student Assistant, University of Luxembourg  
Adrienne Lambo Ouafo, Student Assistant, University of Luxembourg

## Conference website

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<http://www.multilingualuniversities.net>

## Contact information

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Philippe Blanca, Conference coordinator:  
Tel.: (+352) 46 66 44 9546  
[contact@multilingualuniversities.net](mailto:contact@multilingualuniversities.net)

## Calendar

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March 2009 – First call for papers  
01.4.2009 – On line interface available for submission  
April 2009 – Second call for papers  
30.09.2009 – Deadline for submission  
31.10.2009 – Latest notification of acceptance



## **Background and purpose of the conference**

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Following the previous conferences held in Freiburg (2003), Helsinki (2005) and Bolzano (2007), the community of multilingual universities will meet in the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg. The Luxembourg conference will address the issue of professionalising multilingualism in Higher Education, with a particular emphasis on the development of plurilingual individuals and multilingual institutions. More specifically, the practices of the actors (researchers, teachers, students...) in their daily environment and activities will be taken into account, raising the question of certification of competences and institutional regulations regarding multilingualism.

## **Rationale**

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Addressing the issue of professionalisation in relation to the development of institutional multilingualism and individual plurilingualism requires a change of perspective by using a distinction as referred to by the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, 2001*.

In order to deal with this issue, firstly, the figure of a non-native speaker or learner, trying to bridge the gap to the native speaker, is replaced by the more complete figure of the learner as a social actor. In other words, the plurilingual social actor is not only learning languages in the classroom but also by using languages and different knowledge repertoires at his/her disposal in a variety of contexts (scientific, technical, administrative and so on) in which s/he is acting.

Secondly, complex interactions are considered in space and time as they are interconnected along four independent dimensions.

1. The experimental dimension is linked to an individual trajectory and all the material that is not directly observable in an interaction but is nevertheless present and transparent in an individual's action. The plurilingual individual (whether a student or a professional, whether highly experienced or a novice in a multilingual environment) in the context of social, cultural, or geographic mobility is not only vocationally and linguistically skilled but also a practitioner with the capacity to transform experiences, qualifications and repertoires into resources for communication.
2. The socio-organisational dimension can be observed in the plurilingual's action and habits. How does the individual / social actor behave in his/her vocational environment and activities? Which spaces does s/he use and prefer? Which tools and devices are brought into play? How do hesitations and silences work in multilingual encounters? How is participation in conversations accomplished? These observations contribute to the enrichment of the growing comprehension of the features of plurilingual individuals in their social context, allowing for a contextualising of the multifaceted personality of the multilingual professional.
3. From a systemic point of view, the individual has to be regarded in his/her involvement with the multilingual institution. From this perspective the institution can be considered through its forms of organisation and its regulations – specifically linked to its language policy - regarding the recruitment of staff, the selection of students or vocational training for members. Procedures, tools, and documentation available are then dedicated to the professionalisation of multilingual practices at all levels (administration, teaching, research) allowing also for the evaluation/certification of such



multilingual practices (not limited to the certification of one language/languages). All these aspects traditionally tend to constrain an individual, rather than develop him / her as part of the institution.

4. Finally, an inter-subjective dimension includes all (multilingual) communication practices occurring within the institutional context. Deriving/emanating from the shared life, resulting from common habits, mutual adaptations, implicit or explicit rules, all these practices create interpretations, (mis)understandings and managing devices for multilingual everyday issues in relation to personal purposes.

Drawing from this perspective of the plurilingual individual as a social actor using different resources in context, s/he can be described according to the four aforementioned dimensions, allowing connections between:

- The individual and the organisation/institution.
- The past, the present and the future: the (plurilingual) individual is a life long learner developing in different institutional contexts.
- The inside and the outside of formalised contexts: the (plurilingual) individual learns in and through different contexts, inside and outside of a multilingual institutional setting.
- Formal and informal learning experiences: the (plurilingual) individual learns in and through a broad range of interchanges, managing academic and non-academic contents.

More specifically, with regard to this conception of multilingualism and plurilingualism, the issue of suitable language training is addressed from a lifelong learning perspective, considering multilingual competences (and their certification) as an overall phenomenon not only bound to study programmes dedicated to the learning of languages. In sum, the issue of plurilingual individuals acting in multilingual institutions gives rise to a re-conceptualisation of the professionalising dimension regarding not only multilingualism in higher education.

Five thematic strands have been identified according to this conceptual framework.

## **Thematic strands**

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### **1 – Becoming a plurilingual professional in a multilingual world.**

Research has emphasised the role of higher education in the development of plurilingualism and multicultural areas. From this point of view, the training issue and the question of vocational teacher training is of core interest: which characteristics have to be developed in professionals in teaching (not only in teaching languages)? Which challenges and contexts have to be managed by the plurilingual professionals?

### **2 – Multilingualism in higher education and research: an economic perspective**

Multilingual universities represent the economic dimensions of multilingualism today. On the one hand side, university administrations have to handle costs and validations regarding documents and the set-up of administration in different languages. On the other hand, they are key players in the creation of added value with regard to the future economic success of candidates in a multilingual world and the enhancement the potentials of a region which hosts a multilingual university.



### **3 - Plurilingual biographies and professional identities**

Everyday life at university engages biographical, linguistic and professional backgrounds as regards acting in formal and informal multilingual communication at university in scientific, technical or administrative domains. Moreover, multilingual biographies and professional practices serve as training tools for multilingualism in professional contexts outside the academic framework.

### **4 - Multilingual higher education: implementing multilingual study programmes and assessment**

Multilingual higher education settings raise the question of the implementation of standards and normalisation efforts for multilingualism and/or multilingual practices. Moreover, experiences and observations of multilingual study programmes and their successful implementation demonstrate new models of assessment and evaluation, which cannot (only) be based on monolingual standards.

### **5 - Language policies for multilingual universities**

Beyond linguistic imperialism and historical implications, languages compete in relation to their roles in vocational domains, geographic areas, individual practices, institutional rules and political regulations. Firstly multilingual universities, here the university of Luxembourg, have issues of territorial, societal and educational multilingualisms. Secondly, in general, the transferability of the model of the multilingual university needs to be investigated and further developed.

## **Languages & multilingual conference practices**

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The languages of the conference are the three official languages of the university of Luxembourg, i.e. English, French, and German. Multilingual presentation modes are highly encouraged. In order to make use of multilingualism and to ensure mutual comprehension and discussion, we suggest the adoption of a bi- or trilingual communication mode (for instance, oral presentation in the chosen language and visual presentation and/or hand-out in another language). The conference organisation will not provide translation.

## **Programme & participants**

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### **Scientific public**

The conference will feature three plenary talks for the specialised scientific audience, as well as two general conferences for the larger public addressing general socio-political/socio-economic issues in line with the conference topic, two full days of parallel scientific symposia, panels, workshops and poster sessions. All researchers working in the area of the scientific strands of the conference are highly welcome to submit contributions.



## **Professional public – the training strand for the administrative and other staff in multilingual institutions**

In parallel to the conference, one full day will be allotted for activities and workshops relevant for a smaller group of professionals working with multilingualism in their daily environment, such as in a bilingual or multilingual higher educational institution. Professional participants (administration, secretary, student affairs) of this particular strand will be contacted by their central administration or a researcher/professional working in this field.

### **Presentation formats**

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Different presentation formats are available. Please read the indications provided for submitting your proposal in a presentation mode that best suits your topic.

#### **Type A) Individual paper**

Single or co-authored, 20 minutes presentation, 5 minutes discussion, organised in thematically organized sections.

#### **Type B) Symposium**

Single or co-authored. 90 minutes timeframe including discussion, bringing together at least three (maximum five) different contributions within one symposium topic.

#### **Type C) Poster**

Single or co-authored, presented during one of the two poster presentation slots (poster sessions are not held in parallel to other sessions).

#### **Type D) Workshop (S, Scientific public)**

45 minutes, including a minimum of 25 minutes for exchanges with the participants, data or application show, tell and interact sessions on recent research outcomes.

#### **Type E) Workshops (T, professional public/training strand)**

90 minutes, designed for interested administrative and other professionals working in a multilingual higher education institution, practical in its scope, concern and implementation on one special day of the conference.



## Proposal set-up

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Please read the following instructions carefully as they apply for any of the above-mentioned presentation formats (all types A, B, C, D, E).

Please choose one of the following languages to submit your proposal: English, French, or German.

- 500 word abstract including
- Title, subtitle
- Thematic strand you refer to (indicate thematic strand number as stated in the call)
- Keywords, 5 maximum
- Background and purpose of the contribution (including previous work)
- Rationale of the contribution
- Results
- References
- Indication in which languages your presentation/workshop will be held.
- Specification regarding material/technical requirements, if applicable.

Specific to Type B): An abstract for the symposium as well as individual abstracts (500 words each) per presentation within the symposium have to be submitted.

Specific to Type D) & Type E): Specify how the workshop is set-up. Indicate a preferred maximum/minimum of participants per workshop.

Specific to Type E): Please note that one day within the three conference days will include all workshops and activities in line with the training/professional strand. (*Note: For further information concerning Type E, please contact Michael Langner.*)

## Proposal submission

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Please submit your proposal through the conference website by June, 30<sup>th</sup>

The submission of the proposal is free of charge.

*Note:* Read the instructions provided by the conference submission tool carefully in advance and have the relevant information ready for feeding your information as well as abstract into the requested sections.

## Conference fee

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- Category A – Regular, 220€ for full participation in the conference;
- Category B - Reduced, 110€ for full participation of students (the presentation of a valid student identity card is mandatory);
- Category C - One day training for 110€ for administrative/professional staff.

Prices including all materials, coffee breaks and the conference dinner.



## Hosting university

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Luxembourg is often quoted as a model in and for the European multilingual environment: a trilingual country with a national language and French and German administrative languages. Therefore the young university of Luxembourg has been created as a multilingual university relying on English, French and German as working languages at the University of Luxembourg

The University of Luxembourg has been created with the following intent : « dans ses principes organisateurs, l'Université tient compte des spécificités traditionnelles du Luxembourg, à savoir la mobilité des étudiants et le multilinguisme. Pour ce qui est du régime des langues, c'est le principe d'une université multilingue qui est retenu. Ce principe est le reflet de la réalité linguistique du Grand-duché de Luxembourg. L'université est internationale avant d'être nationale. »

On an everyday basis, Luxembourgish plays also an important role within the University of Luxembourg. Study programmes, etc. at the UL rely on English, French and German as university and academic languages. Bachelor and master programmes are either held in a bilingual or in a multilingual mode.

*Fir Iech déi multilingual Réalitéit vum lëtzebuenger Land an senger  
Universiteit virzestellen, hunn mir d'Eier Iech den 4 bis den 6 Februar  
an der Abtei Neumünster ze begréissen!*