

Guiding Principles for Effective EMI

The GELS network, a collaborative initiative between 14 European institutions, seeks to enhance language skills in future engineers that align with the challenges of the international workplace, across academia, industry and business.

The GELS network also collaborates on policy initiatives, such as English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI). Our objective is to safeguard the value of cultural diversity within communities of practice through language policy.

We advocate the following guiding principles for effective and responsible EMI implementation towards sustainable shifts in practice that accompany EMI policy:

- To be effective, an EMI curriculum should embrace the intercultural aspects of English and inter-communication. Therefore, it is essential to raise awareness among members of each EMI community about how their perceptions of the world embedded in their native language(s) may influence the way they communicate in English. This intercultural competence enables more effective communication in intercultural environments and global collaboration among Engineers.
- An EMI curriculum should focus on equipping its participants with the confidence and skills required in a global world using English as a lingua franca.
- All stake holders should have a say in establishing the EMI curriculum in an institutional context.
- GELS advocates respect for linguistic diversity as per the EU language policy. The Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU, adopted in 2000 and made legally binding by the Treaty of Lisbon, prohibits discrimination on grounds of language (Article 21) and places an obligation on the Union to respect linguistic diversity (Article 22).
- An institution's EMI vision should be made transparent so that all key players ascribe to the same clear purpose and participants understand the implications, benefits and challenges.
- A needs analysis should be conducted to ascertain the requirements of all key players before an EMI policy is implemented.
- The agreed timeline for policy implementation should be realistic and include funding implications.
- All key players, including academic subject teachers, students, English teachers, administrators and policy makers, are implicated in EMI policy and delivery. Therefore, if EMI is chosen as an institutional policy, the decision-making process should involve all key players.
- An institution choosing to advocate EMI should strive to be an inclusive community. The use of language should support inclusiveness within a diverse academic community.