



## LANGUAGE POLICY

### Introduction

Somerset College is committed to the promotion of language equity and language rights as required by a democratic dispensation. This is dependent on the availability of adequate resources and the demand for languages made by the learners. Languages will be offered in the context of the National Language Policy framework. It is the College's aim that by Grade 12 learners should be proficient (speaking, reading, and writing) in at least one of the additional languages.

### Language levels: (Taken from the FET Language Statement)

Language learning in the Further Education and Training band includes all the official languages – Afrikaans, English, isiNdebele, isiXhosa, isiZulu, Sepedi (Sesotho sa Leboa), Sesotho, Setswana, Siswati, Tshivenda, Xitsonga – as well as Sign Language, and can be extended to other languages endorsed by the Pan South African Language Board.

All languages can be offered at the following levels:

- **Home Language:** The learner's home language needs to be strengthened and developed so as to provide a sound foundation for learning additional languages. In the Further Education and Training band, all official South African languages have Home Language Learning Outcomes of a high, internationally-comparable standard. This is in line with the constitutional requirements of equal status for official languages. The cognitive level of the home language should be such that it may be used as a language of learning and teaching. Listening and speaking skills will be further developed and refined, but the emphasis at this level will be on developing the learners' reading and writing skills.
- **First Additional Language:** Learning a first additional language promotes multilingualism and intercultural communication. Learning Outcomes for First Additional Languages provide for levels of language proficiency that meet the threshold levels necessary for effective learning across the curriculum, as learners may learn through the medium of their First Additional Language in the South African context. This includes the abstract cognitive academic language skills required for thinking and learning. This applies to all official languages. There will be an equal emphasis on the skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing.
- **Second Additional Language:** Learning a second additional language furthers multilingualism and intercultural communication. Although reading and writing skills will be developed, at this level the emphasis will be on developing listening and speaking skills. The level of the Second Additional Language should target improved interpersonal communication.

### The College Language Policy

The medium of instruction at the College is English.

Afrikaans and isiXhosa are offered as additional languages.

All learners will offer two SA languages for the National Senior Certificate (NSC) examination:

- English Home Language as the medium of instruction.
- One other additional South African language (Afrikaans, isiXhosa.)

- Afrikaans may be offered at Home Language or First Additional Language level while isiXhosa is offered at First Additional Language level.

**GET Phase** (grade 8 and 9): All learners do English at Home Language level and Afrikaans at either Home Language or First Additional Language level. Learners must also choose one of isiXhosa, French or German as a Second Additional Language.

**FET Phase** (grade 10 – 12): Learners will have to choose two official languages, provided that one of the two official languages is offered on the Home Language level, and the other, on First Additional Language level, and provided that one of the two languages is the language of learning and teaching.

### **National Senior Certificate:**

Government Gazette (No 31231) published on 11 July 2008  
The revised language requirement is as follows:

“The pass mark in languages offered at Home Language Level is 40%. The minimum admission requirement is a National Senior Certificate with a minimum of 30% in the language of learning and teaching of the higher education institution....”. The 30% minimum is the pass mark that applies to languages offered at First Additional Language Level. Learners should also note that individual higher education institutions require institution-specific admission requirements and point scores for admission.

### **Immigrant Status: (candidates matriculating from 2008)**

The definition of an “immigrant”, as amended in the Government Gazette dated 27 November 1998, is as follows:

- A child or a dependent of a diplomatic representative of a foreign government accredited in South Africa; or
- Any other person who:
  1. Having begun his or her schooling at a South African school, has attended school outside South Africa for two or more consecutive years after Grade 6 or its equivalent.
  2. First entered a South African school in Grade 7 or a more senior grade.

**GET Phase:** In Grade 9, an immigrant must offer English at Home Language level and one other language. The learner can use French or German as his/her second First Additional Language.

**FET Phase:** The rules for Immigrant Status in the FET phase remain the same. In order to obtain a NSC a learner with immigrant status need offer only one language but must still have seven subjects. As yet, there are no additional provisos for endorsement. Due to the uncertainty surrounding the language policy of South African Universities, Somerset College insists that learners with immigrant status must offer two languages. The learner can use French or German as his/her second First Additional Language.

Learners with barriers to learning may be exempt from some of the measures mentioned in the above policy.

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**Education Sub-Committee**