



**Western Cape
Government**

Western Cape Education Department
Directorate: Communication

LANGUAGE SERVICES UNIT STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

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Annexures

- Annexure A: English circular template*
- Annexure B: English minute template*
- Annexure C: English letter template*
- Annexure D: English guidelines template*
- Annexure E: Department of Cultural Affairs and Sport Language Services Request Form
- Annexure F: Western Cape Language Policy
- Annexure G: Western Cape Government Language Code of Conduct
- Annexure H: Department: Government Communication and Information System Editorial Style Guide
- Annexure I: Western Cape Provincial Parliament Style Guide for English

*** Afrikaans and Xhosa templates available from the Language Services Unit on request*

1. DEFINITIONS

In this Standard Operating Procedure (SOP), any word or expression to which a meaning has been assigned bears the same meaning assigned to it and, unless the context indicates otherwise—

“**Circular**” refers to a document issued to inform Western Cape Education Department (WCED) schools and officials of matters of particular importance, i.e., policy matters which cannot be arbitrarily amended or ignored. Circulars may only be signed by the Head: Education or an official acting in that position and remain valid until their expiry date or until they are repealed.

“**Client**” refers to WCED officials at Head Office who send requests for language services to the Language Services Unit (LSU).

“**Editing**” is the process of meticulously going through a document to—

- a) ensure that it appears in the correct format (i.e., letterhead, layout, font, font size, numbering, page numbering etc.);
- b) correct spelling, grammatical and punctuation errors;
- c) check references to legislation or other documents;
- d) ensure compliance with the Department: Government Communication and Information System Editorial Style Guide and the Western Cape Provincial Parliament Style Guide;
- e) check for the consistent use of terminology;
- f) ensure a logical flow of information; and
- g) eliminate ambiguity and ensure clarity.

“**Language practitioner**” means a language professional adept at editing and translating in their respective language(s) of specialisation.

“**LSU Coordinator**” means the Head of the LSU who coordinates all requests for language services sent to the LSU’s inbox, assigning them to the respective LPs for editing and/or translation and then returning all the required versions to the client. The LSU Coordinator also negotiates deadlines/timeframes with clients, determines when documents must be outsourced and refers queries for resolution.

“**Minute**” refers to a document issued to provide information, instructions or clarity on routine matters. Minutes may only be signed by the Deputy Director-General of the branch concerned or an official acting in that position – with the exception of the Directorate: Business Strategy and Stakeholder Management and the Directorate: Communication whose minutes are signed by the Head: Education. Minutes remain valid for their year of issue and do not need to be repealed.

“**Proofreading**” is the process where an LP carefully reads through an edited/translated document to detect and correct any errors that may have occurred during the editing/translation process in order to finalise the document.

“**Request brief**” refers to the instructions accompanying a request to the LSU.

“**Translation**” is the process that follows editing where a text is converted from English (source language) into an equivalent text in Afrikaans and Xhosa (target languages).

2. **ABBREVIATIONS**

DCAS	Department of Cultural Affairs and Sport
LP	Language Practitioner
LSU	Language Services Unit
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
WCED	Western Cape Education Department

3. **LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK**

The legislative framework for this SOP is:

- a) Constitution of the Western Cape, 1998 (Act 1 of 1998);
- b) Western Cape Government Language Code of Conduct;
- c) Western Cape Language Policy;
- d) Western Cape Provincial Languages Act, 1998 (Act 13 of 1998).

4. **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this SOP is to provide the legislative context for the LSU and set out the procedures that guide its functions.

5. **SCOPE**

This SOP is applicable to all WCED officials at Head Office.

6. INTRODUCTION

- 6.1 The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, recognises 11 languages as the official languages of the Republic of South Africa. Section 5(1)(a) of the Constitution of the Western Cape, 1998 (Act 1 of 1998), designates three of these languages, Afrikaans, English and Xhosa, as the official languages for the purposes of provincial government.
- 6.2 The Western Cape Provincial Languages Act, 1998 (Act 13 of 1998), seeks to give legislative effect to this stipulation in the provincial constitution. The Act has reinforced the position of Afrikaans, English and Xhosa as the official languages of the province to be given equal status in all official communication by all government departments and provincial organs of state.
- 6.3 The Western Cape Language Committee, established in terms of section 6(1) of the Western Cape Provincial Languages Act, 1998 (Act 13 of 1998), monitors the use of Afrikaans, English and Xhosa by the Western Cape Provincial Government and has compiled a Western Cape Language Policy.
- 6.4 In terms of the Western Cape Language Policy, the Central Language Unit responsible for driving and monitoring language policy implementation in the Western Cape Government resides within the Department of Cultural Affairs and Sport (DCAS). The Central Language Unit is also responsible for providing translation and interpreting services to all departments. Furthermore, the Western Cape Language Policy makes provision for language professionals to be appointed in language units to expand larger departments' capacity to deal with language policy implementation.
- 6.5 In terms of the Western Cape Language Policy, a Western Cape Government Language Code of Conduct regarding language use and multilingualism was developed and must be adhered to by all departments.
- 6.6 The Western Cape Language Policy stipulates that all official notices must be published in the three official languages of the Western Cape, i.e., Afrikaans, English and Xhosa.
- 6.7 It is with this mandate that the WCED's Language Services Unit was established.

7. LSU DUTIES

- 7.1 As part of the Directorate: Communication, the LSU is required to provide a language advisory service to WCED Head Office officials as well as to edit and translate official circulars, minutes, policies, documents, correspondence and media releases.

- 7.2 All documents submitted to the LSU are edited. Editing entails meticulously going through a document to—
- a) ensure that it appears in the correct format (i.e., letterhead, layout, font, font size, numbering, page numbering etc.);
 - b) correct spelling, grammatical and punctuation errors;
 - c) check references to legislation or other documents;
 - d) ensure compliance with the Department: Government Communication and Information System Editorial Style Guide and the Western Cape Provincial Parliament Style Guide;
 - e) check for the consistent use of terminology;
 - f) ensure a logical flow of information; and
 - g) eliminate ambiguity and ensure clarity.
- 7.3 The aim of editing is to render a document in plain English that is clear, concise and reader-friendly.
- 7.4 If translation is requested, documents are translated into either Afrikaans or Xhosa or both.
- 7.5 Translation entails converting a text from one language (the source language) into an equivalent text in another language (the target language, i.e., Afrikaans and/or Xhosa).
- 7.6 In order to speed up the editing and translation processes and to ensure the accurate and consistent use of terminology throughout the WCED's documents, the LSU uses translation memory software, Wordfast. This software is MS Word based.

7.7 **Provincial Language Forum**

The LSU represents the WCED at the Provincial Language Forum, hosted by DCAS. At these quarterly meetings, LPs from the other provincial departments, the City of Cape Town and the Western Cape Provincial Parliament collaborate to solve and discuss solutions to language issues. This ensures the standardisation of the terminology used in the province.

8. **GUIDELINES FOR SUBMITTING REQUESTS TO THE LSU**

- 8.1 Documents should be structured according to the guidelines set out in Circular 0037/2015, dated 15 July 2015.
- 8.2 The approved WCED letterheads/templates should be used (attached as Annexures A–D).
- 8.3 **Only officials with the rank of Deputy Director and higher may submit requests to the LSU.**

- 8.4 Requests must be **emailed** to the LSU's generic email address:
wcedlangserv@westerncape.gov.za
Requests emailed to any other email address will not be actioned.
- 8.5 Every request must be accompanied by a **request brief**. The request brief must include the following:
- a) Exactly which services are required, i.e., **editing only**, editing and translation into **Afrikaans only**, editing and translation into both **Afrikaans and Xhosa**.
 - b) Urgency of the request, if the urgency is not indicated the request will be dealt with on a first come, first served basis.
 - c) Deadline, if a deadline is not indicated the request will be finalised as soon as possible but may be set aside if another request with a deadline is received.
- 8.6 Documents submitted to the LSU should be in English.
- 8.7 Urgent requests must be indicated as such. If a document is urgent and the LSU is unable to assist, the relevant client should contact DCAS to outsource the request.
- 8.8 Excel or PowerPoint files will be accepted on a case-by-case basis. Since these file formats are not supported by the software used by the LSU, delays should be anticipated.
- 8.9 In order to prevent later amendments and retranslation, **only final versions** should be sent to the LSU. Draft documents lead to duplication and cause delays.
- 8.10 Where possible, requests must be submitted well in advance to enable the LSU to meet the required deadlines and prioritise its workload.
- 8.11 Should a document require further amendment after the editing and translation process, the **edited English copy** that was returned to the client should be used and amendments should be indicated with tracked changes or highlighted.
- 8.12 New requests will not be acknowledged **after 15:00**. These requests will roll over to the next working day.
- 8.13 The LSU will not accept responsibility for documents that bypass the LSU and are sent to Registry to be disseminated with errors.

9. PRIORITISATION OF DOCUMENTS

9.1 Requests from the Head: Education or the Provincial Minister must be prioritised. If such urgent requests are received, all other requests will be put on hold. Therefore, the agreed deadlines for documents may occasionally need to be renegotiated.

9.2 The LSU is required to prioritise requests in the following order:

- a) Requests from the Provincial Minister's office
- b) Requests from the Head: Education's office
- c) Minutes/circulars
- d) Letters going out from Head Office
- e) Policies/legislation/guidelines.

10. DOCUMENTS NOT ACCEPTED BY THE LSU

The following documents will not be accepted by the LSU:

- a) Documents exceeding **25 pages**. All documents exceeding this limit should be outsourced to DCAS.
- b) **Hard copies**, all documents must be sent electronically.
- c) PDF files and documents **not in MS Word format** (*Excel or PowerPoint files will be accepted on a case-by-case basis but will cause delays*).
- d) Documents intended for internal circulation (e.g., minutes of meetings attended by WCED officials only, internal newsletters, memo submissions, etc.).
- e) Internal or personal correspondence.
- f) Documents that do not comply with the LSU SOP.

11. LSU PROCEDURE

11.1 The following procedure will be followed for every editing and/or translation request received by the LSU:

ACTIVITY	DETAILS
A request for translation/editing is received	The LSU Coordinator receives the request via email.
Confirmation	Confirmation of receipt is emailed to the client upon receipt.
Preliminary assessment	Document is assessed for the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Length- Deadline- Format- Technicality of terminology

Prioritisation	Request is prioritised according to deadline. LPs are consulted for reasonable deadline for the final document. Deadline renegotiated with client if deadline cannot be met.
Editing	Document is edited prior to translation. Document is returned to LSU inbox once editing is finalised.
Translation	If translation is required, the LSU Coordinator assigns the document to the next available Afrikaans and Xhosa LPs. Translated documents are returned to the LSU inbox.
Finalisation	LSU Coordinator saves the documents in the LSU Document Database on the shared network drive for future reference. All three versions are returned to the client simultaneously.

- 11.2 Upon receipt, LPs will change the title of the document in line with the following file-naming convention:
(Year) (Type of document) – (Short description) (LANGUAGE) (Initials of LP responsible)
e.g., 2022 Circular – Management of learner attendance ENG aa
- 11.3 If any of the LPs have a query about the content of the document, the client will be contacted for clarification. Should the client be unavailable, a comment will be inserted into the text to highlight the issue.
- 11.4 Unless specifically requested, changes are not tracked during editing.
- 11.5 The Afrikaans and Xhosa LPs do not translate unedited documents, all documents are edited first.
- 11.6 Finalised documents are saved in the LSU Document Database on the shared network drive for future reference.

12. **REVIEW**

This SOP must be reviewed when the need arises or in the case of changed circumstances, including changes to legislation and/or regulations and budgetary constraints.

I, Brent Walters, Head of Department for Education in the Western Cape hereby approve the above Standard Operating Procedure.

Brent Walters.....(signed name)

01/03/2022.....(date)