

## Language vouchers

### Explanation & Conditions

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In 2006, the university introduced the ‘language voucher system.’ Upon enrolment at Tilburg University, all students receive 12 credits worth of language vouchers with which they can, while enrolled at the university, take courses at the Tilburg University Language Centre. Certain conditions have been set for the entitlement to and use of these language vouchers, which are explained in the text below. Course participants who wish to use the vouchers are bound to complying with the conditions set for their use.

#### **1. What is a language voucher?**

A language voucher is a digital unit worth 1 ECTS credit hour of instruction. Students who are entitled to language vouchers receive a total of 12 language vouchers when they enrol at the university. The language vouchers are personal and cannot be transferred, exchanged, or traded.

## **2. Who is entitled to language vouchers?**

Full-time students, part-time students, and work-study students who pay tuition *at Tilburg University* are eligible for language vouchers. Upon their initial enrolment, they receive 12 ECTS credit hours of instruction that they can use during the time they are enrolled as students. Exchange students also receive 12 ECTS credit hours of instruction.

## **3. What can language vouchers be used for?**

The language vouchers are meant for language courses offered by the Language Centre that are *not* part of the compulsory curriculum. The Language Centre offers courses of 6 ECTS credits, but also shorter courses of 3 ECTS credits. Students can take the language courses as elective subjects. Information about the rules and regulations regarding elective courses is available at the various faculties. If the language course cannot be admitted as an elective, the course will be noted as an extra course in the student's transcripts, upon completion of the course.

For language courses that are part of the *compulsory curriculum*, no language vouchers need to be used; registration for these courses takes place through the relevant faculty.

## **4. Validity of language vouchers**

As long as a student is enrolled at Tilburg University, he or she can use the language vouchers. The voucher balance of students who leave Tilburg University is frozen. If a student enrolls again at a later date, his or her voucher balance is reactivated, given there are still credit hours that have not been used.

## **5. Consulting the voucher balance**

The voucher balance can be consulted using the Personal Electronic Guide (part of the Tilburg University Electronic Guide system)

## **6. Registering and deregistering for a course**

Information about the courses on offer at the Language Centre is available on the Language Centre website and in the Electronic Guide. From August onwards, students with a username and password can register for the language courses on offer through COMAP. Registration applications are dealt with on a first come, first served basis.

Students can only register after ticking the box that affirms that they have been provided with the explanation and conditions as set in this document and willingly comply with the terms set for registration. If it is determined at the start of a course that a student does not meet the requirements then the student in question will be denied access to the course and not be allowed to take the final exam. In such cases, language vouchers are not refunded.

COMAP automatically checks whether a student has sufficient language voucher credit hours. If so, the student is registered for the course. During the registration period, the student can register and deregister for courses. Once the registration period has ended, deregistering is no longer possible.

#### **7. Paying to take courses**

If a student registers for a course, COMAP checks if the student has enough language voucher credit hours. If the voucher balance is insufficient, the student can still take the course for a reduced rate. He or she will be redirected to the Student Service Centre (SSC) on the ground floor of the Prisma building (Building P). Registration can be completed there, upon payment of the (remaining) amount.

Tilburg University employees and individuals outside the Tilburg University community can pay to take language courses. Registration takes place through the SSC. For employees, the reduced rates apply; external participants are required to pay the full rates.

Within the registration period, it is still possible for course participants to deregister for courses, through the SSC, and receive restitution of the course fees. However, 50 euros will be withheld to cover administrative costs. Once the registration period has ended, it is no longer possible to receive restitution of course fees. Both the full fees for external participants and the reduced fees as set for students and staff members are posted annually on the Language Centre website, with changes being announced by the 1<sup>st</sup> of August of each year.

#### **8. Registration periods**

The registration for language courses for the *entire* academic year starts in August. Registration is final at the end of the registration period. The language vouchers used are deducted from the student's voucher balance at that time.

For courses in the first semester, the registration period ends in late August/ early September; for courses in the second semester, the period ends in late January/ early February. The specific dates for a given academic year are posted as of the 1<sup>st</sup> of August preceding that academic year on the Language Centre website.

#### **9. Entry requirements**

For some courses, there are specific formal entry requirements (required prerequisites), or a certain entry level of proficiency (recommended prerequisites) is assumed.

**Specific entry requirements**

The specific entry requirements (required prerequisites) set generally involve the successful completion of a Language Centre course. Admission to the course 'Spanish II', for example, requires successful completion of the course 'Spanish I'. These requirements are provided in the course descriptions included in the Electronic Guide and posted on the Language Centre website. Prior to registration, students are required to affirm that they meet the entry requirements (by ticking a box). For those students who do not meet the formal entry requirements but consider their level to be sufficient for taking the course, there is the possibility of taking an entry test. Upon passing this test, these students can register for the course using the normal procedure. Students requiring entry-level testing are requested to contact the SSC.

**Entry level**

For some courses, there are no specific formal entry requirements, but a certain entry level is assumed (recommended prerequisites). The entry level is given in the course information in the Electronic Guide. Assessment of proficiency with respect to entry requirements is the responsibility of the applicant. Should it be desired, counselling and advice can be provided by a Language Centre instructor. Appointments can be made through the Student Service Centre (SSC).

Students who are found not to meet the entry requirements will be denied access to the classroom and will not be allowed to take the final exam. Language vouchers are not refunded in such cases.

**10. What if all of the groups are full?**

The Language Centre determines how many students can take part in a group. If a given group is full, there is often the opportunity for students to register for a parallel group. If all of the groups are full, students are advised to check COMAP regularly; registered students sometimes deregister for courses, thus making spots available. In addition, students can request to be put on a waiting list. If an extra group is started, those students on the waiting list will be notified by email. They can then register for this group. Here again, first come, first served applies. Reserve groups will also be used to fill those spots not reserved at the start of a given course.

**11. Cancellation of a course**

The Language Centre reserves the right to cancel a course or group at any time, for example, if there are not enough students registered in a given course. If a group is cancelled, students are notified as soon as possible. Should this occur, the language vouchers or money paid is refunded.

#### **12. Awarding ECTS credits to language courses**

Faculties have been requested to include a section in their Education and Examination regulations that states that all Language Centre courses taken are eligible for consideration as ECTS credit points in the respective programmes. The Faculty of Arts is responsible for the quality and level of the language courses.

When students have successfully completed a Language Centre course, the ECTS credit points are automatically added to their transcripts. Students can also take Language Centre language courses as electives. Information on the various faculty rules and regulations is available at the respective faculties.

#### **13. Exams**

For practical reasons, signing up for exams does not take place through the regular sign-up system. In consultation with the students, the Language Centre sets the dates for examinations and resits. The Language Centre sends the results to the student administration for registration in the student progress monitoring system.

Students are entitled to take part in the exam and one resit, if a passing grade is not achieved on the first examination. Language vouchers are not refunded if the student fails both exams. A student who still wants to complete the course successfully will have to register and use language vouchers or pay for a second time.

#### **14. Restitution of language vouchers**

Language vouchers are only refunded if the Language Centre cancels the course. Poor results are explicitly excluded as possible grounds for restitution. In special cases, however, such as persistent illness or personal circumstances, the Head of the Language Centre can decide to refund language vouchers or the money paid for the course. Students can submit a request for restitution to the SSC, c/o the Head of the Language Centre. Written evidence of the circumstances underlying this request needs to be supplied when the request is submitted. The Head is obliged to render a decision within six weeks of submission and/or a hearing.

#### **15. What if you do not agree with a decision?**

Should you not agree with decisions regarding restitution, admission to a course, etc., you can submit an appeal to the Head of the Language Centre. Should you not agree with the Head's decision you can subsequently appeal to the Executive Board. This appeal can be submitted to the Central Complaints Desk or directly to the Executive Board within six weeks of the date of the announcement of the decision being appealed.

**16. Hardship clause**

The Language Centre is committed to finding reasonable solutions to all cases not covered by these rules and regulations.

**17. Enactment**

The rules and regulations stated in the aforementioned are binding as of September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2007.