

English as Medium of Instruction

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**British Council  
(Uzbekistan) EMI  
Project Impact  
Evaluation  
Executive  
Summary**

March 2022

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# Executive summary

Executive summary of the strategic recommendations.

- **For university leaders.**

- to reflect the importance of *holistic* EME development, provision, and training in institutional level policies and international strategies
- to view multilingualism, parallel language use, and translanguaging as assets in EME
- to standardise students' admission to EME groups through language proficiency tests
- to increase the number of teachers with language proficiency tests
- to recognise the value of highly competent non-native-speaker teachers and move away from an over-evaluation of native-speaker Englishes
- to agree a benchmark level of funding for supporting the implementation and development of EME
- to standardise salaries for both EMI and English language teachers, in order not to destabilise the market and introduce perverse motivations for delivering EMI
- to build the online and offline resource base to support teachers and students in their preparation for classes and assessments
- to support students and teachers in their language proficiency improvement through English courses, extracurricular workshops, and discipline-specific language trainings
- to actively monitor teachers' implementation of the British Council programme and assess the results at the end of the year
- to promote and support collaboration between language and content teachers
- to provide teachers with the right to initiate, request, and shape their EMI professional training in collaboration with teachers of similar disciplines at other universities in the country and overseas
- to continue to engage with external stakeholders (including British Council) treating professional development as a shared responsibility.

- **For teachers and university leaders**

- to combat any fixation on the development of English proficiency alone (since that is not one of the EMI objectives) and concentrate on the broader educational environment shaping teaching and learning practices.

- **For professional bodies and training providers**

- to address specific disciplinary needs and best practice through sector-wide discipline-specific training
- to deliver training in hybrid mode, where the materials could be available online and the active engagement of teachers achieved by bringing them together physically.



- **For the Ministry of Higher and Secondary Specialised Education**
  - to consider establishing an EME Development Unit at sector-wide level to help to grow the EME training capacities within the country.

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## EMI project

To respond to national large-scale higher education reform, capacity development and internationalisation objectives in May 2019 we in partnership with the Ministry of higher and secondary specialised education of the Republic of Uzbekistan launched our new long-term Higher Education for Employability programme to share UK experience in quality assurance in education. One of the key strands of the programme is English as a medium of instruction (EMI).

To respond to Concept of the development of Higher Education until 2030, the EMI strand of the Higher Education for Employability (HEfE) programme aims to develop an EMI strategy and national plan to mainstream EMI in HE offer in Uzbekistan and develop much needed capacity through Uzbekistan HEIs and the network of 25 English Reform hubs operating in all regional of Uzbekistan.

### Key features of the project

- to shape a clear national and institutional strategies for EMI
- to facilitate the development and delivery of a national EMI capacity-building programme for Uzbekistan's higher education sector, specifically sharing UK institutional and wider international experience in the field
- to develop a team of confident professionals who can develop and deliver programmes in their higher education institutions in English and 25 British Council hubs in higher education institutions all over Uzbekistan offering training and support to all EMI teachers in Uzbekistan.

### Objectives of the evaluation

The current project evaluation serves the main goal of understanding what the stakeholders in EME in Uzbekistan need to be to realise the strategy of internationalisation by researching key development indicators:

#### *Governance*

- policy implementations
- University International Strategy
- Resourcing

#### *Management*

- Student admission
- Students' Language Competence
- Teachers' Language Competence

#### *Praxis*

- Academic Disciplines

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Following a competitive process, the evaluation contract was awarded to the team from the University of Westminster in London. The research team conducted an evaluation focusing on the main strands identified in the British Council Evaluation Framework comprised of *relevance*, *effectiveness*, *sustainability* and *headline recommendations*. This report details the collected data and draws out research-driven strategic recommendations for EME stakeholders in Higher Education in Uzbekistan.

## The NILE training programme

The British Council strategy project for EMI in Higher Education in Uzbekistan was delivered between October 2019 and March 2021 by a team of trainers from NILE

Multiple insights from the beginning stage (needs analysis through classroom observations and interviews with stakeholders) and the professional experience of the training team formed fundamental principles relating to awareness-raising, the receptive and productive skills of learners, multilevel classes, teachers' awareness about their proficiency level and how to manage that, etc.

## Key findings

### Relevance

Overall, the findings suggest that the project stakeholders felt it to be very relevant. The training focused on diversifying EMI teaching methodology. The teachers particularly appreciated, for example, the use of scaffolding techniques and software. However, in terms of inculcating a broader EMI pedagogy framework, informed by the international debate on EMI, future training should also emphasise translanguaging pedagogy and assessment practices.

### Effectiveness

The effectiveness of the training was also highly evaluated. The teachers and university leaders were also particularly pleased with the enhanced and ongoing collaboration between language and content teachers. Collaboration via the training has already established a solid base for teachers' cooperation across disciplines within each participating university. The training identified key pedagogical principles in EMI, common-core and divergent EMI practices, and obstacles to overcome. **It is recommended that this good practice should continue; and content and language teacher collaboration should be encouraged and supported.** Taking this good practice, Macaro (2022: 12) suggests that there should be a "jointly established research agenda" that would allow language and content teachers to own the EMI agenda in their context.

Another point that the teachers made was that the impact of the training may have been greater had it been delivered offline because it would be a more enjoyable experience, but there is no direct evidence to suggest that the online delivery of the course was less

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effective. **It is recommended that in future any training should be delivered in hybrid form**, where the materials could be available online and the active engagement of teachers achieved by bringing them together.

We should also acknowledge that it may be too early to judge the effectiveness of the training, which will emerge in retrospective reports by teachers. In a year we should be able to look at the materials that the teachers are using, how they are organising their classes, and the extent of innovation in their assessments. **It is recommended that universities actively monitor teachers' implementation of the training and assess the results at the end of the year.**

### Sustainability

The intended sustainability of the course via the cascading of the training does indeed appear to be happening within and without the universities. Another means of maintaining ongoing enthusiasm for development is observed in teachers' willingness to participate in more EMI training and to undertake discipline-specific class observations. Finally, the materials and tools developed by the NILE team remain available to help teachers embed EMI pedagogies. On 17 March 2022, the Minister of Higher and Secondary Specialised Education of the Republic of Uzbekistan endorsed the EMI guidelines developed as part of the project with recommendations to Uzbek universities to use them.

## Conclusions and recommendations

- **It is recommended that HEIs reflect the importance of holistic EME development, provision, and training in institutional level policies.** This will help mainstream EME and resist tokenism. Such an approach will also support a discourse in which 'top-down' meets 'bottom-up'. Ideally, the discourse should shift from a perceived disjuncture between fixation on "the world top 1000" and "publications in Scopus journals" at one end of the continuum and teachers' fixation on "getting better at English to secure a job at a better university" at the other end towards a clearer understanding of the complexity of EME. If an institution can adopt the NILE model and commit to *EME as a pedagogy*, it would recognise the need to address EME *challenges* in teaching and learning practices and agree priorities in EME development, leading to a shared perspective across all key stakeholders.
- **It is recommended that HEIs standardise students' admission to EME groups through language proficiency tests.** Only in this way will teachers be able to address the challenges arising from teaching mixed-level classes, and students will also be better equipped to learn the content in English at the same pace.
- The fact that students enter the university with a certain level of English does not mean that they do not need any additional support with their English proficiency development. **It is recommended that HEIs support them in their language proficiency improvement not only through standard ESP or EAP classes but also with resources and**

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**extracurricular activities in English.** Teachers also need language support and EME professional development training support within the university.

- What is apparent from the survey results and interviews is that ‘one-size-fits-all’ professional training in EMI may need to be reconsidered to address more specific disciplinary variations and teachers’ professional needs. Professional development opportunities should be diversified to provide EMI teachers with support on the sources they can best deploy in class, the teaching methods they should apply to address discipline-specific skills, and what disciplinary literacies to focus on. **It is recommended that professional bodies in different professional areas address specific disciplinary needs and best practices in their professional training.** This is a national challenge that should be supported by relevant professional organisations.
- Since teachers are the most familiar with the norms and standards in their disciplines, with due support from their HEIs, **it is recommended that university leaders provide teachers with the decision-making right to initiate, request, and shape their EMI professional training within their departments, faculties, schools, and in collaboration with teachers of similar disciplines at other universities in the country and overseas.** For university leaders, it is also recommended to continue to engage with external stakeholders (including British Council) treating professional development as a shared responsibility.
- **It is recommended that the Ministry of Higher and Secondary Specialised Education consider establishing an EME Development Unit at sector-wide level to help to grow the EME training capacities within the country.** Such a unit could run professional development training, conduct EME research, disseminate the holistic approach to EME in the country, and monitor the work of EME programmes.





## **National Partner Institutions**

1. Andijan Machine-Building Institute
2. Bukhara State Medical Institute
3. Fergana State University
4. International Islamic Academy of Uzbekistan
5. Karakalpak State University
6. Namangan Institute of Engineering and Technology
7. Samarkand branch of Tashkent State University of Economics
8. Tashkent Institute of Irrigation and Agricultural Mechanization Engineers
9. Tashkent Medical Academy
10. Tashkent State Institute of Oriental Studies
11. Tashkent State Pedagogical University
12. Tashkent State University of Law
13. University of World Economy and Diplomacy
14. Urgench State University
15. Uzbekistan State University of Journalism and Mass Communication University
16. Uzbekistan World Languages University