

Faculty of Humanities, Utrecht University

Description of the Chair in Translation Studies

December 2018

1. Introduction

The chair in *Translation Studies* (1.0 fte; full-time) will be established in the Department of Languages, Literature, and Communication of the Faculty of Humanities, Utrecht University. Depending on the particular profile of the candidate selected, the chair will be attached to one or another of the sections within the Department.

2. Focus of the chair

The chair will be responsible for teaching and research in the field of Translation Studies. Translation studies has emerged in the last four decades as a new area of interdisciplinary academic research within the broader field of languages and cultures. It involves the theoretical and empirical study of the ways in which communications in one language or medium are actively transferred to another, as well as the development and critical evaluation of new tools and methods for the optimisation of such procedures. Findings have profound theoretical implications for our understanding of cultural transfer and intercultural relations, as well as practical implications for the management of such processes in a multilingual Europe and beyond.

The discipline has emerged and been further developed at the intersection of literary studies, linguistics, sociology, and cultural studies, the latter specifically with reference to intercultural mediation and transcultural patterns of diffusion. In recent years, the use of digital tools as an aid to human translation as well as the rise of machine translation has meant a further extension of the field in the direction of Digital Humanities, computational linguistics and artificial intelligence. There has also been a growing interest in the role of informal translation alongside translation in institutional settings.

The field currently encompasses both the study of translation in cultural fields (literature, audio-visual subtitling) and of translation in professional settings (public administration, law and medicine among others). The Chair may be specialized in either of these areas, but should have an excellent knowledge of at least one of the modern languages that is taught within the department (Dutch, English, French, Spanish, German or Italian). Furthermore, the Chair is expected to have state-of-the-art knowledge of the field as a whole and a capacity to initiate and supervise new lines of research. An ability to use Dutch as a working language in translation studies, or a clear commitment to acquiring such a command is considered an asset.

In addition to ongoing research in the field of literary and professional translation as outlined above, emerging areas of research in the field include:

1. Machine translation, human/machine interactions in complex systems, and the use and impact of digital tools;
2. Cultural transfer, including digital methods for studying patterns in the dissemination of literature and other texts across linguistic borders;
3. Cross-medial translation, involving the transposition of content from language to image and v.v.;
4. The sociology of translation: crowd-sourcing and collaborative translation; multilingualism and translation; translation policy.

3. National and International Positioning

The Utrecht Chair in Translation Studies is unique in The Netherlands, as it is the only academic chair in the field. Currently, the Chair is linked to the German section of the Department, with a focus on literary translation (Duitse letterkunde alsmede vertaalwetenschap; appointed in 2001). In developing the field of Translation Studies in the Department, the new chair will no longer have an automatic connection to German so as to leave for the possibility of combinations with other languages. The chair is expected to

oversee teaching and research in the field of Translation Studies as a whole, while developing his/her specialisation into a new line of research. Whatever his/her specific area of specialisation, the new chair will be expected to have significant expertise in the field of literary translation so as to be able to continue the department's history of teaching and research in this area.

No other University institution in the Netherlands currently has a designated chair or a specialist graduate programme in translation studies. The vocational college *ITV Hogeschool voor Tolken en Vertalen* (Utrecht) has a 'lectoraat' in translation studies as do other third-level vocational institutions. In Belgium, there are several centres for translation studies: KU Leuven (Prof. Reine Meylaerts, Prof. Lieven D'Hulst); Vrije Universiteit Brussel (Prof. Rita Timmerman), Universiteit Gent (Prof. Sonia Vandepitte); Universiteit Antwerpen (Prof. Aline Remael). Within the broader European context, there are centres of translation studies in, for example, Vienna, Barcelona, Heidelberg, Rome, London, Leeds and Warwick; and a European Society for Translation Studies (EST). The new chair is expected to have a strong network in both the academic and the professional arenas (including contacts with organisations and agencies in the field of translation).

4. Position in the Department of Languages, Literature, and Communication

Within the Department of Languages, Literature, and Communication (TLC) the chair will have a key role in the strategic development of Translation Studies in Utrecht both in teaching and research.

The Department of Languages, Literature, and Communication (TLC) brings together expertise in the fields of specific Languages (Celtic & Classics, Dutch, English, French, German, Italian, Spanish) as well as those of Linguistics, Comparative Literature and Communication Studies. It is responsible for undergraduate programmes in each of these 10 areas. It is also responsible for 3 Research Master programmes (*Linguistics*, *Comparative Literary Studies*, *Nederlandse Literatuur en Cultuur*) as well as (from 2019) for 7 other graduate programmes. Four of the master programmes are interdisciplinary, bringing together different specialisations in the field of modern languages, literature, and linguistics: *Literature Today*, *Meertaligheid en taalverwerving* [Multilingualism and language acquisition]; *Interculturele Communicatie* [Intercultural Communication], and (as of 2019), *Literair vertalen* [Literary Translation] and *Professioneel vertalen* [Professional Translation]. The titles given in Dutch indicate programmes in which Dutch is the primary language of instruction. The profile of these interdisciplinary programmes reflects the common concern of the department as a whole with issues pertaining to cultural difference, cultural exchange, interculturality, and multilingualism from a cognitive, cultural, and social perspective.

The Department is host to the transnational Expertise Centrum Literair vertalen: <https://literairvertalen.org/>.

The research within the department is clustered in two Research Institutes: the Research Institute for Cultural Inquiry (ICON), which organizes research in the fields of media, arts, and culture both in TLC and in the sister Department of Media and Cultural Studies (MCW); the Utrecht Institute for Linguistics OTS (UIL OTS) which organizes research in applied and theoretical linguistics. The Chair of Translation Studies is expected to develop collaborations that bridge the two Research Institutes while having a primary affiliation with one in particular.

Teaching

The Chair will teach in the field of translation studies and will be responsible for overseeing and further developing the undergraduate elective and the master programme *Vertaalwetenschap* (Translation Studies). As of September 2019, Utrecht will transition to a new 90 EC graduate programme in translation studies (*Vertaalwetenschap*) following formal accreditation in 2017. This graduate programme will consist of two interlocked programmes, one in literary translation (*Literair vertalen*); the other in professional translation (*Professioneel vertalen*); both using Dutch as their target language. These programmes build on almost two decades of translation studies in Utrecht and represent an extension (from 60 EC to 90 EC) of the existing one-year programme. Cooperation with the KU Leuven (Belgium) is envisaged as an integral part of this new graduate programme; graduates of the literary

translation programme will have attained the international standards set out in the PETRA-E Framework; graduates of the professional translation programme will meet the standards of the EMT (European master's in translation) The graduate programme will bring together expertise in translation studies with language-specific expertise in English, French, Italian, German, and Spanish. The chair will have a key role in coordinating the work of colleagues in these different language areas.

Research

The chair will be charged with developing research capacity and new research lines in the field of Translation Studies within Utrecht. These new research lines will be expected to cut across existing research groups and create synergy between, on the one hand, research in the fields of literature (as carried out in the interdepartmental Research Institute for Cultural Inquiry) and, on the other hand, research in the field of linguistics as carried out in the departmental Research Institute for Linguistics (UIL-OTS).

There is also a potential for new collaboration, with respect to cross-medial translation, with researchers in the field of media studies within the interdepartmental framework of ICON.

Management

The Chair will be responsible for the supervision of the staff involved in the translation programme. S/he will also be expected in due course to play a role in advancing departmental strategies for the further development of interdisciplinary programmes involving the different modern languages.

5. Profile

We are looking for excellent candidates with an international reputation and a demonstrable capacity to shape the strategic direction of translation studies. The chair will be able to

- initiate and stimulate graduate and undergraduate teaching within the Department of Languages, Literature, and Communication on topics relating to Translation Studies;
- initiate, stimulate, and supervise research within the Department of Languages, Literature, and Communication in state of the art Translation Studies;
- contribute to the visibility of the field of study both within and beyond the Faculty of Humanities and the Dutch academic world;
- apply successfully for research funding;
- initiate, and participate in, activities aimed to disseminate academic knowledge to the wider public;
- demonstrate outreach, openness and the ability to build bridges between diverse approaches and colleagues;
- provide guidance and coaching to younger colleagues;
- able and willing in due course to contribute to the management of the Department of Languages, Literature and Communication and the Faculty of Humanities.

6. Required competences

The chair has wide-ranging expertise and qualities in a field of translation studies. S/he is able and willing to deliver excellence in teaching, research, and administration. The position will involve 60% teaching and 40% research, including related management tasks.

Specifically, with regard to research, the successful candidate will

- have excellent qualifications, evident from leading publications on themes relevant to the chair;
- will preferably have some practical experience as a translator;
- have a proven ability to form his/her own line of research within the framework as described above;
- have supervisory skills, evidenced by the coaching of young researchers, especially PhD students;
- have a successful track record in attracting substantial research funding from external sources, or shows the potential and willingness to do so;

- be experienced in interdisciplinary cooperation;
- have skills and experience with regard to use and impact of research tools in field of Digital Humanities;
- have an international orientation, evidenced by international research networks, as well as a commitment to working within the Dutch context;
- have a strong network in the academic and professional field of translation studies.

With regard to teaching, the successful candidate will

- be a teacher who is motivated and able to motivate others;
- have experience in course and curriculum development;
- have excellent didactic skills;
- be able to use Dutch as a working language in translation studies or, in the case of non-Dutch speakers, be willing to acquire the relevant language skills within a period of two years;
- have an excellent knowledge of at least one of the modern languages that is taught within the department (Dutch, English, French, Spanish, German or Italian)
- be competent in English.

With regard to administration, the successful candidate will

- be motivated to take on administrative responsibilities within the department and the Faculty of Humanities;
- have all relevant organisational and practical skills to do so;
- have relevant experience with administrative responsibilities;
- have strong leadership and social skills;
- be a team player who knows how to motivate people.

Qualification system for education and research at the UU

Utrecht University has developed its own qualification system for education and research. This means that the successful candidate will be required not only to hold a PhD in a relevant discipline, but also to meet the requirements for Utrecht University's senior qualifications in research and teaching. Candidates from outside the university may submit a teaching and research portfolio, on the basis of which the dean, at the request of the Advisory Appointment Committee, may award senior qualifications prior to the proposed appointment.