

# A New History of English Studies at Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań (2005-2012, 2012-)

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*lat lat tradycji anglistyki w Poznaniu*  
*years of English Studies in Poznań*



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*The School of English made continued efforts  
over a number of years to become an indepen-  
dent faculty*

of Adam Mickiewicz University. On December 15, 2011, the Rector of the University issued a regulation establishing the *Faculty of English (Wydział Anglistyki, or WA)*, which would officially begin functioning on *September 1, 2012*. The Faculty of English thus became the fifteenth faculty of Adam Mickiewicz University, the only such faculty in Poland and one of the few worldwide.

Let me first trace back the years leading directly to the creation of the Faculty and then outline its state of the art as of 2014.

## *2005-2012*

*In 2005, I took over as head of the School of English* from my distinguished predecessor, mentor and friend, Professor Jacek Fisiak. Responsibility was passed on to me for his outstanding creation: a prestigious, world-renowned and well-recognized centre of English studies in Poznań, universally associated with its creator. Simultaneously, many changes were taking place around it, including the unprecedented development of the internet and multimedia, an

increase in students and academic mobility, the internationalization of research, the introduction of the Bologna process and new financing streams for science, a growing reliance on external funding, new and constantly revised legal regulations for universities in Poland, and many others. The task at hand was to adapt the School to these new dynamics and challenges and, at the same time, continue and expand the heritage of my esteemed predecessor.

*We focused on interdisciplinarity* in research and teaching, expanding local and international teamwork, obtaining external grants, developing our research and teaching infrastructure, IT, multimedia and e-learning, increasing the early involvement of students in research activities, extending our international network of collaboration and exchange, and introducing new forms of teaching and promotion. We also improved and modernised numerous administrative and management processes, including budget planning, in anticipation of upcoming needs.

*As a result of these actions, the School of English was prepared to obtain the status of a faculty* and start a new period in its history. In the years 2005-2011, the School received excellent assessments from accreditation committees (PKA and UKA), as well as the highest evaluation possible from the ministry. In 2005, the Interdisciplinary Centre for Speech and Language Processing (CSLP) was founded, and in 2011 the Language and Communication Lab (LCL) came into being. All four of our journals improved their status, with P*Si*CL being listed in the JCR and the other three in the ERIH. Work was carried out on eleven major European projects, as well as on several dozen nationally funded ones. Over this period, 121 PhDs, 13 post-docs and 6 professorships were conferred. Approximately 80 PhD students were hosted by the regular PhD programme (both full-time and part-time). In 2011, an interdisciplinary PhD programme in Language, Society, Technology and Cognition began funded by a European grant in collaboration with two other AMU faculties, hosting 20 students. In addition, three post-graduate programmes were offered, and 33 Erasmus agreements were signed with foreign partners. The Faculty's teaching offer included 9 B.A. and M.A. programmes in English, a full-time B.A. in Dutch, as well as a wide variety of specialisations, including Academic English, English translation/conference interpreting, Celtic studies, South African studies (the only such programme in Poland), Anglo-American studies (in cooperation with the AMU Institute of History) and Russian-English programme (in cooperation with the AMU Institute of Russian). A substantial part of the programmes were supported by the Moodle e-learning platform. We continued and intensified conference participation by the members of our academic staff and doctoral students (approx. 150 trips a year), and organised a number of international conferences,



including both cyclical (e.g. PLM, MESS, LIES, YLMP) and hosted (e.g. New Sounds 2010) conferences, and numerous other meetings (e.g. Dutch seminars). Approximately 150-200 publications authored by our staff members appeared annually. We hosted between 30 and 40 guest lectures and spent nearly 100,000 PLN on books. There was a substantial increase in participation by our staff members in councils, advisory boards, academies, professional organizations, and journal editorial boards, both in Poland and abroad, as well as in university management.

*Expanding the School of English into a Faculty* was a direct consequence of both its exceptional and excellent tradition reaching back to 1903 and its dynamic development in recent years.

## 2012-

*As the Faculty of English, we have become more independent* in all aspects of our activity, i.e. in our research, teaching, resource management, and co-operation with non-university entities. For many years, the School had met the standards required of a faculty: granting doctoral and post-doctoral degrees, running independent Ph.D. and M.A. programmes, and having a large and excellent teaching staff and a large number of students.

*As of 2014*, we currently employ 170 staff, and have 1400 students and 80 participants in PhD programmes, 16 departments and 7 smaller divisions, and 14 reading groups. Two of these divisions were founded within the structure of the new Faculty: the Centre for Educational Technologies and Language Processing (CETLAP) and the Centre for English Teacher Training. The latter was formed as a result of a partial takeover of the former teacher training college by the university.

*In the years 2012-2014*, 24 doctoral degrees and 5 post-doctoral degrees and one professorial title were conferred, 337 works were published and 305 conference and other scholarly trips have been undertaken by the staff members.

*The programmes of study* offered have been expanded to include such new threads as **Conference interpreting, Anglophone Canada – literature, culture, language; English in the European Union; English and multicultural communication in Europe** (with Viadrina University) while more programmes are in preparation, e.g. **Australia and New Zealand – literature, culture, language; In-**

ternational relations and English (with the Faculty of Political Sciences and Journalism) English and Ukrainian and English and Chinese (with the Faculty of Modern Languages).

*All courses* are now by rule supported by the e-learning platform Moodle. The number of Erasmus partnership agreements has been raised to 42.

*Nearly 40 projects funded* by national and European agencies are being conducted at the Faculty with staff members as PIs or collaborators. The number has been rising steadily: from 28 in 2012, and 35 in 2013 to nearly 40 in 2014. In addition to regularly held cyclical conferences, a number of new events have been organized by the Faculty: EUROSLA was hosted in 2012, ECIEC 32 (East Coast Indo-European Conference) and RaAM Researching and Applying Metaphor Seminar in 2013, and SLE will be hosted in the autumn of 2014. New cyclical meetings have been started this year, as well: REAL (Re-Examining American Literature, Student Symposium), PCCS (Poznań Conference of Celtic Studies) and Poznań Historical Sociopragmatics Symposium.

*The journals edited at the Faculty of English* are steadily increasing their international prestige. P*Si*CL, listed by JCR, increased its IF from 0.052 in 2010, and 0.138 in 2011, to 0.176 in 2012. Since 2012, P*Si*CL has been published by de Gruyter Mouton. In S*JR* (S*C*Imago Journal Ranking), P*Si*CL holds first place among Polish linguistic journals, with an IF of 0.127 in 2010, 0.109 in 2011, and 0.224 in 2012. S*AP* holds the fourth position with an IF of 0.102 in 2012.

*There has been a substantial increase in citations* from the publications of the academic staff of the Faculty, with citations rising from just over 2000 in 2009 to 4840 in 2013; the number has thus more than doubled within the last 4 years.

*We have been constantly improving our infrastructure*, both in the sense of buildings (including a major renovation of the Collegium Novum building and partial renovation of our second location in Collegium Chemicum) and equipment (for both teaching and research purposes). State-of-the-art eye-tracking facilities, obtained in two grants, are our most recent acquisition.

The Faculty of English maintains ties with potential employers of our graduates in the public, private, and NGO sectors, and with the graduates themselves. We have established contacts with schools in the area, offering open lectures, organizing competitions, and extending patronage over numerous events and school classes.

*We value and respect our students* and make efforts to provide them with high standards of teaching and administrative support. The Faculty of English is proud to have won in 2013 a prize awarded by the Student Parliament of AMU, known as Przyjazny Dziekanat UAM (Friendly Dean's Office; we won 3rd place after competing for the first time!).

*Also, last year, in 2013, the Faculty received two excellent assessments by the Polish Accreditation Committee (PKA)* (for 'philology' and 'English philology'). Moreover, KEJN (Committee for Evaluation of Research Units) upgraded the Faculty to category A following our appeal.

*The Faculty's mission* entails both the continuation of its outstanding tradition, originated by Professor Jacek Fisiak, and the development of its potential in new directions. We want to extend the range of our activities to address the contemporary challenges faced by all universities. We plan to continue our team and task-based work, to pursue our interdisciplinary approach to research, to offer diversified multidisciplinary teaching for Polish and international students, to involve our students in research, to cooperate in research and teaching with faculties and universities both in Poland and abroad, and to collaborate with institutions outside academia. The Faculty of English is intent on increasing AMU's worldwide visibility. As a faculty in which all research activity and teaching takes place in English, we wish to help establish our University firmly on global ranking lists.

*The Faculty of English must continue* to obtain the highest rank in university assessment procedures. We must redouble our efforts to further improve our standing as a centre of academic excellence, so that being a staff member of the Faculty of English at Adam Mickiewicz University will be synonymous with the highest quality of scholarship, and being a Faculty of English graduate will be the mark of a first-rate education.



*The WA graduate profile reads:*

With their knowledge of the lingua franca of the modern world, graduates of the Faculty of English are ready to take up the challenges today's world presents and can readily upgrade their skills autonomously. WA educates students to handle cross-cultural communication successfully and without prejudice. They are also trained to be open to other languages, multilingualism, and the equality of societies, languages and cultures. A sense of tolerance and respect for foreign languages and cultures makes it easy for our graduates to establish new contacts with people from all around the world.

WA candidates / graduates are open to interdisciplinarity in education, science and other fields. WA trains students to perform specific jobs but their career choices are by no means limited. WA graduates are specialists in the modern humanities, experts in linguistics, literature and culture, who can work well in a team and who are open to knowledge from different fields without creating artificial divisions or barriers. Our graduates are ready to work for the benefit of their society – in science, education, medicine, media, business, politics and many other disciplines.

*WA means Wyjątkowa Anglistyka* ('exceptional Faculty of English').

I'd like to express my gratitude to all the staff members of the Faculty and all our friends who contributed to the creation of the Faculty of English at AMU in Poznań!