



# Policy Plan 2024-2025

## Study Association Babel

*Board XX — “Breaking Bab(el)”*

*Dear Babelaars,*

*The following document outlines the policy plan of Study Association/Studievereniging Babel for the academic year 2024-2025. The current board of Babel during this period consists of:*

*Philip Kreuning, Chair*  
*Dana Pérez van Beek, Secretary*  
*Yana Galarza Kourilovitch, Treasurer*  
*Ivo da Silva, Commissioner of External Affairs*  
*Martin Dobrev, Commissioner of Internal Affairs*

*This policy plan will detail how Board XX will run the association and what their aims are during their board term.*



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## 1. Association

Study Association Babel was officially established on January 14th, 2004. SV Babel is the study association for the bachelor, master, and minor programmes in linguistics, the master Multilingualism & Language Acquisition, and the minor Language Development at Utrecht University. Babel's namesake is the story of the tower of Babel, although some say it is an abbreviation of 'baken in het bestaan van een linguïst', which roughly translates to 'b(e)acon in the being of a linguist'.

## 2. Goals

### a) Collaborations

#### *i) LANGU collaboration*

Board XX believes that the five linguistics study associations, LANGU (Leiden, Amsterdam, Nijmegen, Groningen, and Utrecht) would benefit from increased collaboration. For instance, the associations can collaborate on topics such as joint activities, allowing students to more easily access electives at other universities by combining respective expertises, and providing (future) (master) students information on linguistics related programmes at the LANGU universities.

#### *ii) Inter-faculty collaboration*

To foster interdisciplinary collaboration and networking, Board XX is planning to collaborate with other associations in the Faculty of Humanities. The aim is to create a vibrant social atmosphere through joint events, such as language cafés with other language related study programmes. Furthermore, sharing ideas and experiences will be encouraged by hosting small events. Finally, students could gain valuable insights into available minors through co-organized events, aiding them in exploring their academic paths. By fostering connections and sparking innovation, collaboration could strengthen the Faculty as a whole.

### b) International Linguistics

The Board XX strongly supports the internationally-minded orientation of linguistics and Babel as an extension thereof. By fostering international collaboration with foreign linguistics associations and welcoming international students, Board XX aims to provide comprehensive information and support to students. This includes helping those who wish to go abroad for exchanges or pursue master's degrees by offering guidance on application processes, sharing insights from partner associations, and facilitating connections with peers abroad. Additionally, Board XX would like to assist international students coming to the Netherlands by organising orientation events and providing resources to help them integrate smoothly.

## 3. Introduction Week

Like last year, the IntroCie will be tasked with the organisation of the Introduction- and Break Week. During that time, the board plans to promote babel through activities, such as a culture



shock workshop, a committee- and society carousel and -market, and visiting Babel's host locations.

## 4. Branding & Website

It has been ten years since Babel has refreshed its brand. Over the past year, two prospective Board XX members, also part of the BeeldCie, collaborated with Board XIX on rebranding Babel's identity. Board XX, will continue to work on this initiative.

### a) Logo

As part of Babel's refreshing new branding, it also got a new logo. This new logo closely incorporates the Dom tower from the previous branding and the linguistic icon, the wug (big thanks to Dr. Berko Gleason for allowing Babel to incorporate it into our branding!). The logo will be incorporated in most aspects of Babel, such as promotional material and merchandise.

### b) Website

Babel's website is also being given a fresh coat of code: dead pages are being revived, the event calendar is updated often, and both English and Dutch translations will be provided on all pages. The goal to achieve is a website that is easier to navigate and access, with more valuable information, hopefully increasing traffic to the site. Finally, the digital colourless green idea box will be moved to the 'links' section of Babel's website. These ideas are now posted anonymously, and are open for all website visitors to view and vote on.

## 5. Communications & Announcements

### a) Website

The website is the primary source of information, related to Babel and the study programmes, for prospective and current Babel members. Therefore, every activity, publication, or miscellaneous information shall be placed on the website. Together with the BeeldCie, the board will work on adding relevant information and keeping this up-to-date.

### b) WhatsApp

Last year, Babel created a WhatsApp community to keep all committee and society group chats together and accessible. The WhatsApp community also has an announcement section for last-minute updates, and reminders and links to announcements that have been made on the website. Babel will continue the usage of this community this academic year, with regular 'clean-ups'.

### c) Instagram

The Instagram page will be used to place announcements, reminders, updates, and look-backs. Both stories and posts are used for these announcements. Posts will be made regularly, aiming for weekly posts. Even without an announcement to post, the board will



encourage the BeeldCie to create posts with entertaining and educational posts to keep Babel's media presence active.

#### d) LinkedIn

Babel's LinkedIn page will be revived and updated. The board will hand over access to this page to the Starcie so that they can regularly update it and post job, internship, and academic opportunities for linguistics students, as well as updates regarding Babel.

## 6. Committees & Societies

### a) Committee and Society Carousel and Market

During the introduction week, the Board organises the committee and society carousel, similar to the course carousel. Each committee gives a brief description, providing students with a clear and consistent foundation of information. Additionally, the board will explain that some committees offer a relatively low-commitment way to contribute to Babel (this also depends on the amount of committee members, of course). For those who found joining the board too demanding, a committee might be the perfect fit, as they have both active and passive periods.

Students who are interested after the carousel can then come by personally during the committee- and society market to ask any specific questions to current members of the respective committees and societies.

### b) Active Committees

Babel has had many committees in the past. The currently active committees include the IntroCie (IntroTee), BeeldCie (MediaTee), ReisCie (TravelTee), StarCie (StuTee), BabCie (BabelTee), and AcCie (ActiviTee).

### c) Committee Setup

The Board aims to have each committee run independently, as per the standing rules, to help ease the workload. This means each committee must have at least a Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer. Of course, the more members there are, the less workload there is for individual members. The Board may set deadlines or give tasks to committees, and the committee independently chooses how to allocate their time and energy to complete their obligations on time. Each committee will have at least one Board member aiding in the communication between the Board and committee. This Board member should be present at (important) committee meetings to relay information on projects and deadlines set by the Board.

### d) Committee Participation

Babel members that wish to be active in the association may join a committee as a general member for a term of one block. However, those who are appointed Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer must remain for at least one semester. Should a member occupying any of these positions wish to step down, it is their responsibility to find a replacement.



### e) Active Societies

Babel will support the continuity of the currently active societies and encourage the formation of any new ones. The current societies are the Language Learning Society, Music Society, Book Society, Cooking Society, Crochet/Knitting Society, LGBTQ+ Society, Movie Society, and Plant Society.

### f) Society Setup and Participation

Societies are groups set up by members who wish to participate in an interest or hobby together. They are free to plan activities and provide relevant committees, such as the ActiviTee, with ideas for larger activities for Babel. Members are free to join (or leave) societies at any moment.

## 7. Babel Chamber

### a) New Room

Due to renovations taking place at D21, Babel has moved its chamber to KNG80. There is new furniture and the room itself is much bigger than the original chamber. This brings new opportunities for the look and feel of the Babel chamber. Rest assured, Dolfijn, Haai, and their companions will be well taken care of, with a new, designated home in the Babel Chamber.

### b) Look and Feel

There will be a ‘Cabinet of Convenience’ filled with snacks, beverages, personal hygiene products, emergency kits, and cleaning supplies for all Babel members to make use of when spending time in the Babel chamber. Next to that, a ‘quote wall’ will also be set up (a large dry-erase board on the chamber wall) so that members can write fun and impactful quotes they have heard during their time with Babel.

### c) Colourless Green Ideas

Next to the aforementioned digital idea box, a real-life Colourless Green Idea Box will be placed inside the Babel room for handwritten suggestions, like last year. This box will be checked once per month and the ideas will be posted by the board onto the website. All ideas will be discussed and considered in Board meetings, and a log of all ideas will be kept for future Board considerations.

## 8. Academics

### a) Exam training sessions

As in previous years, Babel will continue to provide exam training sessions for first-year students. This year, the Association will reach out to professors to assist in these training sessions. During these Exam Trainings, professors will play a supportive role without taking



over. They will review and provide feedback on the training materials prepared by StarCie members to ensure accuracy. During the sessions, professors will be available to answer challenging questions and offer deeper insights during a dedicated Q&A segment. Their presence will provide additional support and expertise, allowing StarCie members to lead the training and gain valuable skills in public speaking and presenting.

Board XIX wished to also provide the upper years with exam training sessions. The Board XX would like to continue this initiative.

## b) Conventions

The board endeavours to provide students with opportunities to attend nearby linguistics conventions, conferences, symposiums, lectures, and seminars at minimal or no cost. Efforts will be made, with help from the StarCie, to secure grants and funds, such as the ones provided by Vidius and U-fonds (U-fund/STUF) to subsidise the entry fees for these events, making them financially accessible for Babel members. Non-members are welcome to attend, but will be required to pay any entry fees set by the events. These events offer students valuable insights into the field of linguistics and provide opportunities for networking and professional growth.

# 9. Funding & Sponsorships

## a) Memberships & Fees

In the past years, Babel has had a contribution of 25 euros for 3 years of membership. While Babel being very cheap is great for our members, it causes Babel's funding to be extremely limited. Therefore, the membership will be changed to an annual fee of 20 euros with an optional, but automatic, renewal at the end of each academic year (unless the fee has not been paid). This annual fee is in line with the membership fees of our sister associations. This increased funding allows Babel the opportunity to plan bigger and better activities for its members, as well as giving students the option of signing up for only one year at a time. Setting the commitment bar to join Babel lower, which could also increase sign-ups compared to previous years. These changes will only apply to new Babel members from August 2024 onwards. Current members' memberships will remain active until the end of their original contract.

## b) Membership Cards

The board plans to introduce a brand-new membership card system. This system would also manage the membership database and membership fee reminders. The aim of having a membership card, apart from it just being cool, is to give members the ability to present it to Babel's partners and sponsors to receive the benefits that Babel aims to provide to its members.



### c) Sponsors

Babel recognises the value of and contribution of its sponsors. The board plans to find a new host pub, closer to the city centre, to host the monthly drinks, language cafés, and other Babel activities. The Board also aims to provide discounts for Babel members when presenting the membership card. Furthermore, potential sponsors that can provide other advantages to our members will be researched and contacted with the goal of making a Babel membership even more attractive.

### d) Miscellaneous Funding

#### *i) SponsorKliks*

Babel partners with SponsorKliks, which means that anyone can help Babel financially without the need for a monetary donation. When someone uses Babel's SponsorKliks links to purchase something online, the shops pay commission for it without adding extra costs to the consumer. Babel will receive part of that commission, which is to be reinvested into the association. Board XX aims to raise awareness of this method of supporting the association.

#### *ii) Funds and Grants*

The Board will have committees and societies look into applying for funds and grants to make activities and trips more financially accessible for members. While some of Babel's activities and trips will also be open to non-members, non-members will pay the full, non-discounted price. To encourage membership, we will emphasise the exclusive advantages of being a member, such as significant discounts on activities and trips, access to members-only events, priority registration, and additional networking opportunities. These benefits, along with the membership card perks, will clearly distinguish members from non-members and encourage more people to join Babel.

## 10. LANGU-Day

This academic year, it is Babel's turn to host LANGU-day. The board intends to make this day a more hands-on, interactive day focussed on education, networking, and immersion into the student culture of Utrecht. Examples include an interactive lecture/seminar, a city scavenger hunt, and having lunch at places that are popular among UU students. A committee will be set up to plan and coordinate the LANGU-day.

## 11. Social Safety

Whenever an unsafe or uncomfortable situation occurs, the Babel board is the first point of contact and will always be available to discuss a suitable approach to any issue. Such situations could involve everything from being treated unequally, bullying, power abuse, to sexually inappropriate behaviour. Should an issue arise where the victim is uncomfortable with discussing the matter with one or more board members, Babel also has two confidants with whom members can confidentially share their issues. The contact details for these people will be embedded in the signature of every email sent out to members, and posted on



the website. Through the university, members also have the option to discuss problems anonymously with a confidant who is not involved with the association.

## 12. Board

Babel runs most effectively when the board consists of five people. Board XX will start looking for new board members once the spring semester starts, as this is far enough into the academic year that members and students will have got an idea what Babel is about. As Babel may not always be in a position where we can recruit five board members, we will, as aforementioned, also focus on shifting some responsibilities to the relevant committees or even societies.

### a) Transition of the Board

The Board finds it to be important that the next board is informed of any issue(s) the previous board(s) have experienced during their term so that they can work on further improvements during their board year. Board XX aims to create comprehensive documentation that is easy to find and read, specifically tailored to each role within the association. Furthermore, the Board will sit down with the candidate board and discuss any matters that may be of importance to the succeeding board. Individual board members will train their successors in their respective positions. Lastly, if a member expresses early interest in becoming a member of the board, they will be invited to meetings and discussions before the official recruitment and training periods start. This way, a person can get a behind-the-scenes view of the process, which could facilitate a smoother transition to a new board.

### b) The Board and Association Continuity

In the event that a board cannot be formed, such as due to lack of interest or other circumstances, current board members will be encouraged to extend their tenure temporarily until a suitable succeeding board is found. If this is not feasible, an interim board comprising committee members will be established to maintain governance functions. In the absence of viable interim leadership, the organisation will explore the possibility of pausing the current association and transitioning its responsibilities to an appropriate succeeding organisation or merging with a similar entity to preserve its mission and objectives. These measures aim to provide a structured and pragmatic approach to maintaining organisational continuity during periods of leadership transition.

## 13) Evaluations

### a) General & Committee Evaluations

At the end of the academic year, a complete evaluation will occur. During this evaluation, committee members will be able to provide feedback concerning their respective committees. Additionally, all association members will also receive an evaluation form to give everyone the possibility of providing feedback and to assist the Board in writing a well-rounded annual report to be presented at the GMM. This will also provide the Candidate Board with up-to-date information regarding what issues they may face.



## b) Policy Plan evaluation

At the end of each semester, evaluation forms will be sent out with the intent to provide each member with the possibility of providing feedback. At the end of the first semester, the Board will evaluate the current state of the policy and may adjust it to be in line with the current needs and wishes of the members. After this evaluation, any changes will be presented at the General Members Meeting.

