



Policy Plan 2025-2026 Study Association Babel

Board XXI - “Less babble, more Babel”

Dear Babelaars,

This document stands as the official catalogue of the policy plan for the academic year of 2025/2026, brought to you by Board XXI of Study Association (SV) Babel. During this time, the board will aim to oversee the successful implementation and upkeeping of the policies that are listed in the following pages.

We hope that, throughout this year, our ideas are reflected in smooth running for Babel and we wish all of our members a wonderful year,

Board XXI

Cory Kae Lissenburg - Chair

Karoline Diosa Ruiz - Vice-chair & Treasurer

Raymond Dias - Secretary

Vesta Schoenmakers - Commissioner of Internal Affairs



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1. Introduction Week

As of writing this document, the introduction week is quickly approaching. There are 41 guaranteed and 19 uncertain students, and 11 people have shown availability to be mentors.

They have already been divided across the four tutor groups. With the exception of one of these, the mentors will take a bilingual approach to the introduction week, speaking mostly in English, as that is the common language among everyone.

The purpose of the mentors besides guiding the new students from one activity to the other is to establish a connection between the first years and older students right at the start of the year, as well as tell them about Babel. Shortly before the introduction week, the incoming students will receive an introduction booklet similar to the previous years' booklets, which will include the full introduction week schedule, small introductory sections on their mentors and instructions on how to sign up to be a Babel member if they wish.

We recognise the importance of providing a welcoming introduction week and wish the new first years a good experience with joining Babel and with Linguistics.



2. Committees and Societies

This year, every committee will have at least one overseeing board member, not to control committee activity but to facilitate communication between committees and the board. Cory has been assigned to oversee the Accie and Introcie, Karoline the Reiscie, Beeldcie and Introcie, Ray the Starcie and Babcie and Vesta the Accie, Babcie and Starcie. We plan on holding a meeting with the advisory board before the Switch GMM wherein these roles will be recapped, as well as checking on committee activity and relevance during our future weekly board meetings.

As of now, we have noticed that most Babel societies seem dormant but we are unsure how to increase society traction. We hope that with the larger number of new students this year, new members will join societies and that their enthusiasm will encourage more events and meetups, similar to the DnD society, which has managed to remain relevant for almost a year since its creation.

This year, we are also expecting more attendants at the committee and society markets, which will be held during the introduction week on Wednesday, September 3rd. This could potentially increase the number of sign-ups this year.



3. Social Safety and Mental Health

The board acknowledges the importance of social safety and mental health in a student association environment. During the upcoming year, we aim to foster a welcoming environment for all Babel members, and promote the many ways in which any social problems could be acknowledged and tackled. These include:

3.1) Confidants

This year, there will be two new confidants, whose names and contact details will be listed in the introduction booklet handed out to new students before the introduction week. These two people will also be introduced in the Whatsapp linguistics group chat. We are also planning on reintroducing them at the beginning of the third block, as a reminder.

3.2) SVO Contacts

In case a member doesn't feel comfortable speaking with a confidant and feels like their experience is of a bigger scope than the association, we will also provide the names and contact details of the Faculty board members of relevance. This information is available on the Utrecht University website, but highlighting it will hopefully be more convenient for new students and be more efficient in reaching more people who might need it. Among these Faculty board members are, for example, Kristella Hak, the humanities career officer; Maarike Wouda, the wellbeing trainer who also specialises in procrastination; and Wouter Oomen, the most relevant contact for dealing with inappropriate behaviour.

On September 24th 2025, at least one member of the board will attend the Meta SVO Board Switch. We hope that, by getting to know SVO board and Faculty board members, as well as board members from other Humanities associations, we foster good relationships with them and make sure that we are up to date on the contacts that we share with the new students.



4. Social Media Management

While some platforms have proved to be more popular with Babel members than others, social media in general seems to be a good way for the board to make announcements, send out reminders and share pictures from Babel events. Because of this, we intend to keep the Babel social media up to date throughout the year. While insight from the entire board will be taken into consideration, Ray and Karoline specifically are tasked with social media management to make sure it is done consistently.

4.1) Whatsapp

The Babel Whatsapp community seems to be the most useful for the board to communicate with active members as well as each other. The announcements posted there will continue. This platform is also the one used the most by committees and society members to communicate.

4.2) Instagram

The Babel Instagram account, as it was this past year, will serve more towards last-minute event reminders and an archive of pictures from Babel events. It also seems like a good way for inactive members to keep up with the association. Essentially, the Instagram will also continue being used and upkept, as it serves purposes that complement the Whatsapp functions nicely.

4.3) LinkedIn

As opposed to being of interest to members, the LinkedIn is more so used as a professional account, but we intend to keep updating it as well.

4.4) Facebook

As of now, the Facebook account does not seem to serve a specific purpose. The page also does not appear to be visited often, whether by members or other organisations. For these reasons the board is unsure whether to continue updating it. For now, it will be prioritized less than Babel's other Social Media pages, but if the necessity arises the page could be revived.



4.5) The Website

i) Renovation

Prospective Linguistics students can be forwarded to the official Babel website via the UU website, and some have even used it as a way of first contact with the association, but the website is under construction as of now. Board XXI believes in its potential to be not only a way for potential new members to reach out, but also a reliable source of information that is easy to navigate, so our plan is to get it back up and running. On the website we also aim to include a feedback system (see section 10), links to useful UU website pages and such relevant information.

ii) Merchandise

The board currently has new ideas for possible Babel merchandise and feedback about the current merchandise. While this wouldn't take priority, we plan on renovating the designs on the merchandise page (to be more abstract and/or minimalistic) and, if members show interest, make to order, to avoid overproduction and waste of funds. If we also advertise the website a few times throughout the year after its renovation, members are more likely to see the merchandise.



5. Memberships

5.1) Membership Fees

The annual flat membership cost this year is 20 euros per member. This has to be paid upfront during sign-up, and Ray is responsible for checking and updating the members list. If a member has not renewed their membership or paid the 20 euros by October 3rd, they will be removed from the list.

Additionally, members are responsible for paying out of pocket for participation in certain activities, such as trips, pooling or covering their own tab at monthly drinks. For larger transactions, especially for trips, we plan on continuing to offer the option of paying in several installments, but keeping the maximum number of installments fixed from the very beginning and announcing this number alongside the trip, but making this number quite lenient to start with. We feel that announcing an increase in the number of possible installments over time not only takes up unnecessary space in the announcements chat, but gives off the impression that the board is desperate for sign ups, which might discourage members who were considering signing up for said trip.

5.2) Membership Cards

The board is considering delving into possible plans to implement membership cards. Though this would mostly be done in order to make membership management easier and more straightforward, this project takes a lower priority, and we will continue using the excel document for now. We mostly have two main plans of action as to how to tackle this task:

i) Using an Existing Program

There are several platforms that offer a simple membership management system for associations and organizations, some of them for no fee, such as Admidio. Throughout our board year, we plan on trying out some of these platforms by making membership cards for ourselves, checking their management system for expired memberships or lifetime members, and if we see fit, pass this tool onto the board that will succeed us.

ii) Making Our Own Database

This is simply another idea as to how to approach membership cards, for the simple reason that it could turn out cleaner than the current Excel file. If this turns out not to be the case, we will not spend too much time on it.



6. New Events

Alongside the occasional pooling, ice skating and monthly drinks, we plan on trying to implement new events. Some of our current ideas are bowling and laser tag, though realistically we should aim to organize activities that are free of charge.

We could also relate the organization of these events to certain societies, but invite all members. For example, set up movie nights with the movie society, discussion meetings with the book society or workshops with the art or the crochet and knitting societies. If we manage to get a reliable number of members to come to these events, we believe this could help society traction.

Additionally, we enjoyed the idea of the barbecue that was organized last year, and we wonder whether we could incorporate barbecues, potlucks and similar events bi-annually or during break weeks, as a community-gathering alternative to monthly drinks, since some members might feel more at home or more encouraged to attend events in a non-drinking-related environment.

7. Sponsors

We are aware of the importance of the Babel sponsors and have already renovated the contract with Poolcafé Hart Van Utrecht, and plan on continuing the partnership with Grand Café de Beuntjes.

The board is also currently in the first stages of considering additional partnerships with smaller businesses such as Dynasthee and Alan and Co. These partnerships are currently still in the brainstorming stage, though, and nowhere near guaranteed.



8. The Babelkamer

Upkeeping and highlighting the Babelkamer as a welcoming community space is important as it is introduced to the new students on their very first day of year 1 during the city tour. While it is already a comfortable, well-decorated space, we have some ideas as to what we could introduce to the Babelkamer to make it feel more homey.

8.1) Plants

If we go through with it, there are several ways to go about making the Babelkamer a greener space, one of which is bringing in real house plants, similar to Planthony. If we got more real plants, though, we would have to establish a watering schedule for them. If this is too much to manage, we could also either buy succulents, which are lower maintenance and could be kept healthy with the occasional watering once a week or so by a specific board member during their room hours. Finally, we could also just get fake plants, though real plants would help air out the space a little more.

8.2) Clock

Vesta is very insistent about putting a clock in there.

8.3) Lights

We also had the idea to get new smaller lights (an office lamp or LEDs, for example) to install in the Babelkamer. While the current main light in there isn't too harsh, it is bright and overhead of the room, and can be overstimulating for people with sensory issues and/or light sensitivity. Because there's only one source of natural light, turning the lights off can also be bothersome for people in the room who need it to work or read, so with this idea we are attempting to reach a happy medium for everyone.

8.4) 'Colourless Green Ideas' Box

Something that has been mentioned already in previous Babel Policy Plans is the "Colourless Green Ideas" box, which would be kept in or near the Babelkamer for members to leave messages, feedback, ideas, questions, etc.



9. Feedback System

Besides the 'Colourless Green Ideas' box, we plan on implementing a reliable feedback system, mainly on the renovated Babel website, as aforementioned, wherein members could leave messages for the board, including their thoughts or feedback on events, exam preparation sessions and really anything they wished. It is important that, if this is implemented, members have the option to send the messages anonymously.

We do not feel that this will be a difficult or time-consuming thing to implement, so we plan on dedicating some free time into it when we can, especially if it reinforces the fact that the board is keen on having members' best interests in mind and wanting to listen to their input.

