This brief report reviews activities since the last meeting.

**The UK Languages landscape**

1. **Purchasing additional UCAS data**
   Given the impact of the Report on Granular Trends in Modern Languages in UCAS Admissions Data which reviewed degree combinations with languages between 2012-2018, we have now purchased the latest data sets (2019 to the 21/22 academic year). We will again be restricted to the publication of 100 data points (i.e. any one point made in a report is counted as ‘one’ whether it draws on one or more pieces of data). We will be working closely with the British Academy as before to produce an updated report.

2. **AULC / UCML annual surveys.**
   As with the last joint survey, we are collaborating with AULC in order to draw as detailed a picture as possible of the UK languages landscape. This time we sent separate surveys to fully capture the variety of provision.

The main objectives for the UCML survey were:

- To establish where degrees with languages are / are not available
- To identify trends (e.g. which languages at what levels; increase / decrease in take-up) in different languages over the last 5 years
- To identify trends in UG degree content (e.g. focus on sustainability, decolonising the curriculum, teaching of translation and interpreting) and titles
- To establish how languages are included in PG programmes
- To understand the ongoing influence of the pandemic on our practices
- To understand ongoing issues around travel abroad (due to Brexit and the pandemic)
- To identify trends in the take-up of study abroad and any changes in the typical requirement to spend a substantial period of study abroad.
- To continue to promote Routes into Languages as a brand and to identify common outreach activities (in particular the use of student ambassadors) where institutions can work effectively together.

Following an approach from the BA and the formation of the informal Home / Heritage / Community Languages Advisory Group hosted by the British Council and the Association for Language Learning, we also sent out an appendix to the survey asking about institutional policy on qualifications in home,

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heritage and community languages to establish whether admissions policies include restrictions on the acceptance of A levels and equivalents in these languages.

The UCML surveys were sent out to 71 Heads of Languages in Spring, 2022 and there were 21 responses\(^2\). It was hoped to have fully analysed the data for the UCML survey in time for the plenary meeting in July but unfortunately this was not possible given other competing deadlines. The full report will be made available over the summer period.

Some initial headlines from the survey are given below:

- Questions 7/8 sought to identify **trends over the last five years** in the range and level of languages being offered in UK HEIs within ML and related degree programmes. Respondents were asked to indicate whether numbers were increasing, stable or declining.
  - There was a very **mixed picture of increase and decline across institutions** for each language (see appendices for a more detailed view of all languages in the survey). Over 28 languages were listed as available in one or more institutions although for a number of languages, the only response was that the trend wasn’t known or was unpredictable.
  - In French for example, just under 11% (10.6%) reported slight or significant increases in numbers, just under a third (31.6%) reported stable numbers whilst **nearly half (47.4%)** reported a slight or significant decline in numbers. 10.5% reported that the trend wasn’t known or was unpredictable.
  - In German, just over 5% (1 respondent) indicated a slight increase, 21% indicated stable numbers (4 participants) whilst **63.2% reported a slight or significant decline in numbers**. 10.5% reported that the trend wasn’t known or was unpredictable.
  - In Spanish, **31.6% reported a slight or significant increase** in numbers, the same number (31.6%) reported stable numbers whilst over a quarter (26.4%) reported a slight or significant decline in numbers. 10.5% reported that the trend wasn’t known or was unpredictable.
  - In Portuguese and Italian, **41.7% and 46.2% of respondents respectively indicated that numbers remained stable**. Another third indicated that numbers were declining in Italian (30.8%) whilst just under 11% indicated that Portuguese numbers were falling and 8.3% indicated a slight increase.

- The majority of respondents in Question 11 answered that most, if not all languages were **offered as ab initio**. This will be a very different picture from even 5 years ago and no doubt reflects the impact of a decline in A-level numbers. In question 12, which asked which languages were taught beyond CEFR B2 there was a slightly different pattern since not all universities offer the possibility of studying beyond B2 for all languages. It was indicated that staffing levels are a key factor here.
- Question 13 asked about any **planned or recent changes in undergraduate degree titles** and it is possible to see a distinct move to the use of Modern Languages in the degree title and a move away from named language degrees. Just over half of all respondents indicated this was the case in their institutions. The reasons for this seem to be multiple but are often driven by administrative considerations.
- Question 15 asked about the **undergraduate offer in translation and / or interpreting** and all but 2 institutions responded that their programmes included one or both.

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\(^2\) There is still time to respond to the survey if there has been no response for your HEI – please go to https://forms.office.com/r/5q5VdijWVgg for the main survey and to https://forms.office.com/r/qGQvhDyaE2 for the Home, Heritage and Community Languages survey.
15. Do you offer dedicated modules in translation and/or interpreting in your undergraduate ML programmes?

- 16 respondents said they offer translation
- 5 respondents said they offer interpreting
- 2 respondents said they offer neither translation nor interpreting
- 5 respondents said other

There were 18 responses to Question 17 which asked about PG programmes which include languages in some way. There were a variety of responses (see image below), however 14 respondents mentioned that Translation was part of their offer and 2 mentioned that they had no PG programmes which included a language. See image below for an overview of responses.

- Question 18 asked how respondents saw the future for ML in their HEI where: 1 = VERY POSITIVELY and 5 = VERY NEGATIVELY. Although the average mean score was 2.55, there was a very mixed picture with 4 respondents giving a score of 1, and 3 respondents giving a score 4 and one giving 5!

- Questions 28 and 29 asked about changes in take up a period of residence abroad. 13 respondents felt that numbers remained stable while 3 felt that numbers were decreasing. Looking ahead, 11 respondents felt that there will be (5 respondents) or might be (6 respondents) changes in the typical requirement to spend a substantial period abroad as part of an ML degree programme while 9 disagreed.

3. The 2022 Language Trends Survey
For those that have not yet seen the recently published 20th annual survey of language trends in schools in England, these are the key findings:

- There is a great deal of variation in the amount of time devoted to languages in different primary schools across the country. Some pupils receive less than 30 minutes per week.
- The trend in all school types is that an increasing number of schools are reporting no international engagement.
- Data show that the government is not on target to meet its EBacc targets for numbers of pupils taking a GCSE in a language.
- Spanish is now firmly established as the most popular A level language in England.

See also the Language Trends Wales 2021\(^4\) report and the Language Trends Northern Ireland 2021\(^5\) report. The one foreign language which features relatively strongly across all three reports seems to be Spanish. This in line with the relative stability of Spanish numbers in HE appearing in the UCML survey.

**Promoting Languages**

- **Routes into Languages**

  As I reported at the January plenary every English region was represented at the first UCML Routes sub-committee meeting of the new year, 2022, alongside Routes Cymru, the national networks for Translation and Interpreting and for the first time Northern Ireland were represented through NICILT and Scotland through SCILT. This is a great achievement, given the lack of funding and it is rewarding to see new university partnerships springing up in the English regions. We held further meetings in May and July 2022. Routes is now benefitting from the appointment of Sky Herington as UCML’s national Routes Coordinator. She has been talking to Directors and Co-Directors across the local English regions, many of whom are new to the role where activity in a region has been relatively dormant for a while.

  We are taking forward plans to set up a national (English) training scheme for UG ambassadors / mentors and have set up a small working group which has met twice so far. The current plan is to develop a web-based ‘Toolkit’ using existing and new resources which can be used by individual regions / universities to run short training courses. These could be run as in-person courses or online. Several regions have continued to run training courses which were originally coordinated at national level when Routes was a funded project. Later plans include the development of a MOOC and potentially an end of year online national event for UG ambassadors who have worked throughout the year – the event would include an awards ceremony. Plans also include RIL accreditation and could be awarded by UCML and / or the local HEI.

  We are also planning a potential soft re-launch across the Routes networks around the European Day of Languages on the 26\(^{th}\) September using the power of social media. It has been suggested that we first put together a communication plan. Other news includes the development of a brand new Routes website with support from the technical team at Southampton,

  Routes was contacted by the British Academy’s Higher Education and Skills policy team, and we have made a contribution to an updated paper on research into what works in languages mentoring. We are also developing a short thematic report on existing Routes activities for the DfE following a conversation with them about the 2022 Schools White Paper\(^6\) which includes a plan to set up a network of language hubs for schools from 2023 (paragraph 68).

- **National Centre for CLIL: Learning through Languages UK**

  I attend the regular meetings of this group on behalf of UCML.

- **Gender Action** ([https://www.genderaction.co.uk/](https://www.genderaction.co.uk/))

  I am on the steering group for GA and attend their regular meetings on behalf of UCML.

**Other activities**

I have attended several meetings of the Languages Cultures and Societies Subject Benchmark Advisory Group and am on a working sub-group looking at defining principles for an inclusive curriculum and


\(^5\) [https://nireland.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/m003_01_language_trends_ni_report_final_web_v2.pdf](https://nireland.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/m003_01_language_trends_ni_report_final_web_v2.pdf)

pedagogy. I am also representing LCS on the Linguistics Advisory Group. These meetings have been very fruitful and very positive.

VW, July 2022
Trends over the last five years in the range and level of languages being offered in UK HEIs within ML and related degree programmes (n=21).

Key: Option 1 = Increased significantly (>10%); Option 2 = Increased slightly (1-10%); Option 3 = Stable, Option 4 = Decreased slightly (1-10%); Option 5 = Decreased significantly (>10%)
Option 6 = Trend not known or unpredictable

The picture is very mixed and seems to vary from institution to institution. There is little stability it would seem (option 3). The numbers answering for each language are not given here.