Item 4.b: Scotland

UCML Scotland has been working with colleagues in SCILT, Education Scotland and Scottish local authorities over the course of the year in developing outreach and promotional activities. We will be piloting a new Modern Languages mentoring programme in AY 2022/23 with schools in the Northern Alliance Regional Improvement Collaborative and mentors from the University of Aberdeen. Mentoring interventions will take place over a period of 4-6 weeks, focusing on S2 secondary students studying Modern Languages. Coordination, training and organisational support is being provided by SCILT, for which we are extremely grateful. Assuming a successful pilot, the aim will be to begin expanding the programme nationally from AY 2023/24 working with other HEIs and local authorities across Scotland. The Education Scotland ML Strategic Interest Group has endorsed the mentoring programme as part of its review on consolidating the implementation of the Scottish Government’s Modern Languages 1+2 programme.

SCILT is also leading on the coordination of a series of Senior Phase Modern Languages Workshops aimed at Higher/Advanced Higher students from across Scotland to run in autumn 2022. The scheme builds on successful workshops run jointly by SCILT and Glasgow in recent years. Sessions on different skills (translation, cultural and critical analysis, grammar and language) are being offered by six HEIs (Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Stirling, Strathclyde), with the aim of giving a taste of language study at university as well as tips and guidance to support students with their current studies. A mixture of in-person, blended and online formats to enable wide participation and uptake.

UCML Scotland representatives have met three times over the course of the year. A particular focus of discussions has been the challenges posed by Brexit to residency abroad and the recruitment of language assistants, particularly in relation to visa requirements. In relation to the latter, the UCMLS meeting in November 2022 was attended by colleagues from the British Council, who confirmed that their existing scheme can be used to recruit in-coming language assistants to work in HEIs. Colleagues at the University of Strathclyde have since worked successfully with the British Council to recruit their language assistants for AY 22/23.

Finally, we continue to await details of the Scottish Government’s proposed mobility scheme to complement the UK Government’s Turing programme, including the budget likely to be allocated to it. As things currently stand, it seems unlikely that the Scottish Government scheme will be operational before AY 2023/24.