

UCML Executive

Friday, 26th May, 2023
11am-1pm via Zoom.

UCML EXECUTIVE MEETING 2023

M I N U T E S

Nb Reports can be found at <https://university-council-modern-languages.org/2023/05/23/ucml-executive-committee-meeting-friday-26-may-2023/>

Apologies

Initials: see Attendance List below. Other acronyms:

Emma Cayley	Chair	EC
Marcela Cazzoli	Hon. Secretary	MAC
Liz Wren-Owens	Vice Chair Research	LWO
Vicky Wright	Vice Chair Languages and intercultural Education	VW
Fransiska Louwagie	Vice Chair External Engagement and Communications	FL
Liam Lewis	UCML Project Coordinator	LL
Nicola Bermingham	Hispanic Studies	NB
Sarah Bowden	Germanic & Low Countries Studies	SB
Adam Fergus	Slavonic & Eastern European Studies	AF
Luís Gomes	Lusophone Studies	LG
Ed Welch	Scotland	EW
Carlos Sanz Mingo	Wales	CSM
Anna Lise Gordon	Schools Liaison	ALG
Emmanuelle Labeau	French Studies	EL
Gigliola Sulis	Italian Studies	GS
Binhua Wang	East Asian Studies	BW
Ursula Lanvers	Linguistics	UL
Ruba Khamam	Middle Eastern Studies	RK
Marina Rabadán Gómez	Institution-Wide Language Teaching	MRG
Begoña Rodríguez de Céspedes	Translation & Interpretation	BRC
Ashley Harris	Early Career Academics	AH

James Illingworth (Year Abroad SIG) (JI)
 Mark Critchley (Languages Gateway) (MC)
 Charles Burdett (ILCS) (CB)
 Olga Gomez-Cash (Interim Treasurer) (OGC)
 David Cowling (DC)
 Becky Muradás-Taylor (BMT)
 Christine Schallmoser (CS) (AULC-UCML SIG)

Acronyms

AHRC	Arts & Humanities Research Council
ALCS	Association for Low Countries Studies
ALL	Association for Language Learning
AMLUK	Alliance of Modern Languages, Area Studies and Linguistics Subject Associations UK
APPG	All Party Parliamentary Group on Modern Languages
AULC	Association of University Language Centres
BA	British Academy
DfE	Department for Education
ECA	Early Career Academics
HE	Higher Education
HEI	Higher Education Institution
IMLR	Institute of Modern Languages Research
IWLP	Institution-Wide Language Programme
ML	Languages
NCLE	National Consortium for Languages Education
NICILT	Northern Ireland Centre for Information on Language Teaching and Research
OWRI	Open World Research Initiative
QAA	Quality Assurance Agency
REF	Research Excellence Framework
RiL	Routes into Languages
SCILT	Scotland Centre for Information on Language Teaching
SIG	Special Interest Group
UCAS	Universities & Colleges Admissions Service
UCMLS	University Council of Modern Languages Scotland

1. [Welcome, apologies & announcements](#)

Apologies received from Sky Herrington Sharon Jones, Ruba Khaman (late) and Chi Zhang.

EC extended a warm welcome to new members and honorary members and SIG leads.

2. Minutes of last meetings

- 2.ab TBC LL investigating where we can find minutes from previous meeting. LL to correct date on agenda of Winter Plenary to 13 January.

3. Officers' reports

3.a. Chair EC

- 3.a.i *New UCML Posts*: The role of Project Coordinator is now held by Liam Lewis (formerly held by JI and Mary Newman, to whom thanks are extended), and LL was the previous ECA Representative. EC extended welcome to the new ECA Rep, AH. EC extended gratitude to Marián Arribas-Tome for her work in the role of the Honorary Treasurer. UCML is currently advertising for the roles of Honorary Treasurer and the new Membership Secretary, which will help with the role of Hon. Treasurer. Thanks extended to Olga Gomez-Cash as Interim Treasurer over the past few months.
- 3.a.ii *Summer Plenary*: This will take place on 14 July 2023 at Senate House (ILCS, London). It will include a business meeting in the morning, and in the afternoon a number of sessions and parallel panels, including on Translation Studies, a meeting for the ECA SIG, and 'Revitalising Language Learning' with the new DfE NCLE initiative run by the Institute for Education at UCL, with input from Scottish SCILT and Antonella Sorace (Edinburgh).
- 3.a.iii *Mentors*: EC requested that the Exec canvas for mentors and advertise the ECA mentoring scheme widely to colleagues, especially in Italian Studies and Hispanic Studies, in which mentors are currently underrepresented. The contact is Kate Foster in the ECA SIG.
- 3.a.iv *Postgraduate bursaries*: EC requested that the Exec advertise the PG bursaries widely since the deadline has been moved to 01 July 2023.
- 3.a.v *Durham conference on Location of Languages and Cultures*: EC congratulated the conference organisers of the 'Where Are We Now: The Location of Modern languages and Cultures' conference at Durham University (19-21 April 2023), including panel organisers for the Routes roundtable on mentoring and ambassador programmes.
- 3.a.vi *British Academy Strategic Forum for the Humanities*: EC noted current engagement between UCML and this forum, and will report back on future meetings at the Summer Plenary.

- 3.a.vii *UCML-British Academy Strategic Committee (SCLHE)*: EC invited expressions of interest from the committee for a working group focused on school teaching under this committee for Languages in Higher Education (jointly chaired by UCML and BA).
- 3.a.viii *Policy paper on Home and Languages with BA/LAGB*: There is a current consultation, campaign and policy paper on this theme. EC extended thanks to those who have been involved in this project, including CB, SH, and VW.
- 3.a.ix *Campaign for Translation Studies*: This will be the topic of one of our plenaries in the summer of 2023.
- 3.a.x *Languages Gateway*: EC encouraged further awareness of this scheme to all Exec Committee members.
- 3.a.xi *Health of disciplinary field*: Letters of support to UEA have been sent to the former acting VC, with a standard response received. Similar contractions have occurred at De Montford and Coventry (more on this below). UCML have been asked to prepare a briefing for the APPG on Language Degree programme closures.
- 3.a.xii *SIGs*: EC welcomes the new UCML-AUCL SIG as part of UCML's 7-part SIG family. EC raised a question about the remits of some of the SIGs, such as HoDs SIG (chaired by DC and Helen Abbott), and whether there would be any overlap between them, but thanked all members of SIGs for their continued activity and help.
- 3.a.xiii *Routes into Languages*: UCML continue to be happy to support this project.
- 3.a.xiv *AULC/UCML report*: This report needs more results from a survey, which did not have a large uptake (21 responses). EC asked for advice on how we might design future surveys to increase uptake. HoDs sig and AULC SIG could be instrumental in persuading people to respond to these surveys.
- 3.a.v *Name change consultation for UCML*: EC and LL will aim to present a concrete proposal, either to change or not to change the organisation's name, to the Executive Committee at the UCML Summer Plenary 2023.

Points raised

CB requested that we join up as many of our initiatives with ILCS as possible. ILCS has created a blog to be sent out on 30 May to reflect on the Durham 'Where are we now?' conference (with Naomi Wells and Joseph Ford). CB asked to continue structured conversations about connections between research and general landscape of education. ILCS has a new seminar series called 'Thinking Strategically' (first seminar on 30 June 2023) to look at the work of fellows on the future of languages. This initiative includes representation from some UCML members. This will be followed up at the AMLUK conference to think about what we do with Impact case studies. ILCS

will also be hosting another event on 18 October with Wendy Ayres-Bennett on how to talk to policy makers. EC thanked CB for ILCS's continued collaboration on these initiatives, and advertised BMT and VW's forthcoming event on Widening Languages.

Action: UCML to advertise future event on Widening Participation on social media.

3.b Vice-chair Research

LWO

- 3.b.i LWO to be involved with the first of the ILCS's 'Thinking Strategically' events, mentioned above by CB, responding to fellows' reports.
- 3.b.ii *Policy journal response piece*: LWO thanked fellows of ILCS for input into drafted paper, which should be published at the end of May 2023.
- 3.b.iii *Doctoral training programmes*: LWO pulled out some key points about doctoral funding from the AHRC report, which recommends items to inform future decision making at the AHRC, and placed this in the context of wider postgraduate research funding nationally.
- 3.b.iv *Postgraduate bursaries*: The next round of the UCML PG bursaries is coming up this summer. The bursaries support recent PhDs to disseminate their research beyond the academe. Previous projects were on the Year Abroad and folk tales. LWO requested that Executive Committee members advertise these widely to their institutions and colleagues.

3.c Vice-chair Engagement & External Communications

FL

- 3.c.i *Social media announcements*: FL issued a general reminder that UCML are active on Twitter, and that we welcome requests to cover in-house events as well as key external events. Any interaction with UCML's account is always welcome.
- 3.c.ii *Mailing lists*: UCML are using emailing lists more systematically to reach out to members and institutions who are not active on social media.
- 3.c.iii *UCML Website*: FL's report includes graphs and statistics showing trends on website and Twitter activity. Work on the website continues with LL as the webmaster, and this is a continuous process.
- 3.c.iv *ECA Liaison*: FL continues to be the ECA SIG liaison, and to work closely with the co-chairs of the SIG. FL supported sign-ups from colleagues to the ECA mentoring scheme.

- 3.c.v *Advocacy*: FL noted that UCML's letters of support do receive positive reception, and that work in this area is appreciated by colleagues. Lack of clarity about institutional internal policies and agendas sometimes makes it difficult to write letters of support.
- 3.c.vi *Translation Studies*: Work continues on debunking the misunderstandings about TS in a report prepared with colleagues in this area, to be released this summer and presented at the Summer Plenary.
- 3.c.vii *Consultations on Chinese and Japanese programmes*: UCML received an email concerning consultation on Chinese and Japanese A-levels. These are open and have been advertised on Twitter.

3.d Vice-chair Languages & Intercultural Education

VW

- 3.d.i *Trends in languages*: A-levels. VW's report includes a full breakdown and analysis of the results of FFT Education Datalab reports, including data on A-levels. The results are encouraging when Modern Languages are combined, although there are some significant declines in Humanities subjects being taken at A-level. The most recent Datalab report on requirements for entry into A-level suggests that more is being demanded of students taking A-level languages. The issue of severe grading is still something we need to keep an eye on, as are high grade entry requirements. VW suggested this could be something that Routes could address.
- 3.d.ii *Routes*: Previous sub-committee meeting in February 2023 and Open meeting in June, which will be an open meeting to any partners and Routes universities. The group hosts monthly meetings with student ambassadors and contributions from NI, Wales, and Scotland partners. Routes has held conversations with organisers of the 'Mother Tongue Other Tongue' competition, and a national competition celebrating languages is being organised. VW hopes that the new Routes website will be populated this summer. Hopefully the UCML website and Routes website can complement each other as we move forward. The old website is still being used to recruit for events.
- 3.d.iii *Gender Action*: The Gender Action initiative has received Ignite Partnership (Lewis Hamilton and Mercedes F1 team-funded) funding to promote gender equity, especially in STEM subjects. Another Datalab report on the gender Action approach concludes that there has been a positive change in STEM subjects, but that in Languages the proportion of female students has increased in many subjects. This could be something that Routes could help to address to show that Languages and Cultures are for everyone.
- 3.d.iv *On Statistics*: More surveys are needed with questions targeting the number of students taking more than one language.

Points raised

MC suggested that IWLPs do not compete with each other and regularly share information between institutions. MC suggested that the same information for degree programmes would be valuable. DC suggesting this could be a task for the HoDs SIG. Becky Muradás-Taylor pointed out that there is no way to get that data through official means (from UCAS data) because of the generic nature of programme titles or module codes. VW suggested that pathway data would be the way forward. LWO asked VW if Datalab data was for England or UK, as the report states UK Languages. VW clarified that the data is for England but VW to check this on report. DC suggested that if we target management levels at the HoDs, we may be more successful in sharing information. MRG agreed with DC that sharing information is a task for the HoDs SIG but offered to collaborate from IWLP surveys and the AUCL SIG to bring together different strands of information.

Action point: VW to put a survey together and collate the data from various reports discussed in the report.

VW to clarify the national/regional coverage of Datalab data.

3.e Hon. Secretary

MAC

- 3.e.a. *Roles:* Welcome to AH (ECA SIG) and CS (AULC-UCML SIG). New roles mentioned above are currently being advertised.
- 3.e.b. *Small Grants:* News about Small Grants will be available in the Summer Plenary report.
- 3.e.c Summer Plenary questions should be addressed to MAC.

3.f Hon.Treasurer

LL/OGC

- 3.f.a Olga Gomez-Cash, as Interim Treasurer, noted we have a steady flow of income. The bank accounts are still in a solid position and money is being used to support projects at the heart of UCML. Use of Paypal has declined in recent times.
- 3.f.b LL, EC, and OGC now have access to the bank accounts. OGC working with the former Treasurer to release funds in the Paypal account.
- 3.f.c Outstanding Small Grants are all paid up.
- 3.f.d Change of bank card caused Microsoft subscription to run out. This has been resolved but OGC requested anyone with outstanding payment requests to contact LL.

- 3.f.e The new Membership Secretary role should reduce some of the burden on the Honorary Treasurer position.

Points raised

James Illingworth noted that official documentation (Standing Orders/Constitution) need to be updated to reflect changing roles at the Summer Plenary.

Action point: LL to reformat Constitution and Standing Orders with new SIGs and members of the committee for these to be agreed and confirmed by the Executive Committee at the next AGM.

4. Reports from Nations

4.a Wales

CSM

- 4.a.i *Routes Cymru*: CSM introduced the launch of student toolkit at the Centre for Student Life at Cardiff University, commissioned by LWO. Full details of projects and publications are in the report.
- 4.a.ii *MFL Mentoring Cymru Project*: This project has been funded for 2 more years to support government strategy. This includes a new project for primary schools to promote reading in primary schools with Routes ambassadors.
- 4.a.iii *Congratulations*: To Claire Gorrara (previous UCML Chair) for her *Chevalier dans l'Ordre Nationale du Mérite* award.

4.b Scotland

EW

- 4.b.i *General updates*: Still drawing on the resources of SCILT, inspired by Claire Gorrara's initiative over a number of years. EW thanked MC for putting the word out on the Languages Gateway.
- 4.b.i *Scotland's Languages Explorer Programme*: Languages often find themselves in competition with other subjects in Scotland, and this programme continues to help alleviate the problems that arise from that process. A phase two of the programme is starting to expand the programme across the whole of Scotland, which is a positive development.
- 4.b.iii *Senior Phase Modern Languages Workshops*: These skills sessions aim to give students a taste of language study at university, and plans are under way to expand their reach across Scotland. Due to cost pressures, some SCILT programmes have had to be put on pause, e.g. for mobility scheme to complement gaps with Turing.

Points raised:

EC congratulated EW on all of the above work, and noted that UCML looks forward to hearing more on these projects.

4.c Northern Ireland

- 4.c.i. Report taken as read in absence of author.

5. Other oral reports**5.a Slavonic and Eastern European Studies****AF**

- 5.a.i *Recruitment*: General picture is generally in line with other languages, and therefore not what colleagues might expect at the current time.
- 5.a.ii *Year Abroad*: Remains tricky with students in Baltic countries and central Asia, but there are some successes despite shifting attitudes. The Year Abroad is sometimes considered an inconvenience (especially financially) rather than an opportunity. Universities are also questioning the higher cost of some courses with integrated YA.
- 5.a.iii *Connections with Ukraine*: Many Slavonic departments have collaborations or connections with Ukraine. Degree programmes in this area are still some time in coming.
- 5.a.iv *Meeting held last October (partly funded by UCML)*: This was a space to start exploring the challenges we face, such as the rapid readjustment in Russian to Russophone Studies. Many of the conceits emphasising Russian distinctiveness are now being rephrased due to this readjustment. Languages and linguistic expertise is also an issue. Decolonisation initiatives are worth being seen in comparison with other languages where language specialism and canons have been rethought in past years. The question of current research was also raised, as Russia remains inaccessible to anyone on university business, which will become a long-term issue.
- 5.a.v *Sustained dialogue*: Continued dialogue via Russian Teachers group (an association of schoolteachers) as work in progress.

5.b Linguistics**UL**

- 5.b.i *Cross-sector work*: A future BAAL symposium could be a good location for continued dialogue on languages research across sectors. glenn.hadikin@port.ac.uk is the person to contact if you are interested in contributing to this.

5.c German & Low Countries**SB**

- 5.c.i *Annual Heads of German UK meeting:* In addition to the report, SB noted that Bernadette Holmes gave a useful talk on the NCLE. Participants felt positively about this initiative, but there is a slight concern that work is being duplicated, or that work will end up reaching places that are already doing German. The GIMAGINE side is being led by Andrea Pfeil at the Goethe-Institut, if any colleagues want to contact her. She is apparently keen to hear from colleagues.

Points raised:

CB agreed, suggesting that there are not enough students coming to a discipline in which we all believe. CB suggested that cross-sector messages need to be better coordinated. The initiative by Lei Wei and Bernadette Holmes (NCLE) is an ideal focal point for this type of collaboration.

5.d Hispanic Studies

NB

- 5.d.i *Advice on reporting and follow-up:* Raise a point and seek advice about writing reports. Closure of LSE Latin and Caribbean Centre. What is the best way to engage with and support them.
- 5.d.ii *Advocacy/support for departmental closures:* EC noted that UCML Chair and VC Engagement and Comms are good points of contact for creating plans of action to support departmental and centre closures.

Action point NB to cc in EC and FL to future emails to President of the Society for Latin American Studies.

5.e Schools Liaison

ALG

- 5.e.i *Supporting students into teaching:* It is a good time to get students interested in considering becoming teachers with DFE funding and support. ALG encouraged members to get students interested in funding schemes to become teachers. EC noted that UCML are very happy to receive items for social media posts.

5.f. Translation Studies

BRC

- 5.f.i *Summer Plenary:* At the Translation Studies plenary there will be a report with 4 panellists (academic, professional, policy makers), including points stipulated in report. EC confirmed that the Translation Studies plenary will not be a parallel panel.

5.g. IWLPs

MR

- 5.g.i *Survey results:* A recent survey looking at numbers of students by language on IWLPs shows that we can see a rise in Japanese and Korean, and a small decline in Chinese and Arabic. Most of the other languages continue to be the same. The total number of students seems to be lower, but the number of

institutes reporting was also lower. The average number of students per institution remains stable.

- 5.g.ii *Structural changes*: MR noted that in recent years we have seen trends for IWLPs to be merged into academic departments. This brings new challenges, but also more opportunities for collaboration.
- 5.g.iii *Intro of new SIG*: The AULC-UCML SIG will be a communications space for IWLP sharing of successful stories and collaborations. MR suggested this was key working together on the national languages strategy. Ideally, the co-chairs would like different representatives from each institution—someone representing the academic department and another representing the IWLP. The SIG is already using JISCmail for participants of almost 30 institutions.

5.h. East Asian Studies

BW

- 5.h.i *Debates on Confucius*: BW wished to highlight one point from the report on East Asian Studies. BACS notes the ongoing debates about Confucius Institutes in the UK. They believe that this discussion must not lose sight of the importance of securing and building provision of Chinese language and China-related education in the UK at a time when China's global significance continues to grow.

5.h. Lusophone Studies

LG

- 5.hi.i *Apologies for late report*.
- 5.h.ii *New National Cultural Institute*: LG wished to announce the creation of a new national cultural institute, the Brazilian 'Instituto Guimarães Rosa'. This comes closely with the opening of a new General Consulate for Brazil in Scotland (in Edinburgh), to cover NI, Scotland, Isle of Man, and northern England. Together with the Brazilian Embassy in London, they are keen to hear from HEIs regarding fruitful collaborations to promote Portuguese, including support for cultural events and support for translations of Brazilian authors.

6. Oral reports from SIGS

6.a Widening Participation Languages Network

BMT

- 6.a.i *Membership*: Group is doing good work on sharing knowledge with 20 members. Events lead to shared knowledge about what local institutes are offering.
- 6.a.ii *Closures*: De Montford is losing French and Spanish. One reason for this may be that language students were not showing up in internal data, making Languages look less healthy than they were. Coventry had a global languages

programme that had been in decline for a while without much news. Their institution-wide languages programme is also closing.

- 6.a.iii *Good news:* cold spots and closures research shows that the North, East, and South-west have large areas where there are no lower tariff languages.
- 6.a.iv *State-of-the-field:* Birkbeck is not a member of the network and do not publish their entry tariff. UEA is just above the tariff of the network, but if they close languages then there is a massive cold spot in East Anglia. If anyone can put BMT in touch with people from these institutions this would be helpful.

6.b Year Abroad SIG

JI

- 6.b.i *Code of Best Practice for the Year Abroad:* This has now been developed by the SIG, and was inspired by ECA SIG and Geographical society.
- 6.b.ii *Research:* Research from the SIG on the post-pandemic Year Abroad will be released later this year.

7. Other business

- 7.a EL noted that there have been positive changes at Aston University.
- 7.b LL noted that if SIGs would like to update their pages on the website, to contact him at contact@ucml.ac.uk

ATTENDANCE LIST (27)

Surname	First Name	Initials	Member Organisation
Bermingham	Nicola	NB	Liverpool/Exec
Bowden	Sarah	SB	KCL/Exec
Burdett	Charles	CB	ILCS
Cayley	Emma	EC	Leeds/Exec
Cazzoli	Marcela	MAC	Durham
Cowling	David	DC	Durham
Critchley	Mark	MC	AULC
Fergus	Adam	AF	Sheffield
Gomes	Luis	LG	Glasgow/Exec
Gomez-Cash	Olga	OGC	Lancaster
Gordon	Anna Lise	ALG	St Mary's
Harris	Ashley	AH	Stirling
Illingworth	James	JI	Cardiff/Exec
Khamam	Ruba	RK	Leeds
Labeau	Emmanuelle	EL	Aston/Exec
Lanvers	Ursula	UL	York/Exec

Lewis	Liam	LL	Liverpool/Exec
Louwagie	Fransiska	FL	Leicester/Exec
Muradás-Taylor	Becky	BMT	Leeds
Rabadán-Gomez	Marina	MRG	Liverpool/Exec
Rodríguez Céspedes	de Begoña	BR	Portsmouth/Exec
Sanz Mingo	Carlos	CSM	Cardiff
Sulis	Gigliola	GS	Leeds/Exec
Wang	Binhua	BW	Leeds/Exec
Welch	Ed	EW	Aberdeen/Exec
Wren-Owens	Liz	LWO	Cardiff/Exec
Wright	Vicky	VW	Southampton/Exec