UCML Executive

Friday, 12th Jan, 2024

Report from the Vice-Chair (Research)

REF 2029

On December 7th the REF announced it would be delayed by a year to 2029 in recognition of the complexities for HEIs in the preparation of HESA data, in breaking the link between individuals and institutions, and in the reworking of institutional Codes of Practice. The ‘Initial decisions next steps document December 2023’ document also set out a welcome recognition of the need to ensure that removing minimum and maximum outputs that can be submitted by individual researchers does not disincentivise inclusivity.

Research/working with government

Researchers whose work has policy implications, or who have ideas/proposals for policy, have the option to contact the APPG via UCFL: https://university-council-for-languages.org/languages-research/ucfl-and-all-party-parliamentary-groups/

Open Access/ Learned Societies

On November 29th I attended a meeting with British Academy and Learned Societies which aimed to collect information in order to prepare a response to Research England’s call for consultation in January about the impact of Open Access. Key points to emerge included:

- Most learned societies have one journal, most are open access.
- OA poses a threat to equity in terms of academics being able to pay the associated costs, especially ECAs, academics on casual contracts, retired academics, independent scholars, scholars in the Global South.
- Open Access has led to reduced revenue (no incentive for members to keep paying membership).
- Smaller learned societies will have most difficulties (smaller pool of academics in a position to produce – and fund- articles, smaller access to large research grants which cover these costs).
- A loss in journal income has an impact on the activities of learned societies. Journal income can create a 'charitable ecosystem' to sustain other activities – conferences, small grants, PGR grants, UG prizes. These activities may be (or have been) scaled back.
I attended the ILCS Advisory meeting on Dec 8th. Charles Forsdick made the important point that we need multiple messages for multiple interlocutors when promoting languages. We discussed the possibility of different stakeholders in the meeting co-funding a media package to promote languages.

The book series is going to finish as the ICLS has moved to focus on activities that can only be done there and other bodies are able to carry out this activity. In the Summer, there will be the launch of a new series ‘Understanding Languages, Cultures and Societies’ which focusses on an integrated study of languages and cultures and societies. Cross-cultural and cross-language publications will be sought.