UCFL Executive

Friday, 12th Jan, 2024

Report from the Scotland Representative

1. Scotland’s Languages Explorers Programme (SLEP)

After last year’s successful pilot in North East Scotland, the second phase of our language mentoring programme, developed in partnership with SCILT, is underway. Colleagues at SCILT have coordinated the national rollout of the programme, including recruitment and training of student mentors and enrolment of participating schools. We have students from five Scottish HEIs (Aberdeen, Dundee, Heriot Watt, OU Scotland, Stirling) working with S2 and S3 secondary students in 28 schools across Scotland, from South Ayrshire to Thurso. Mentoring sessions will conclude by February, coinciding with subject selection for the Senior Phase. An increase in uptake of languages into S4 amongst mentees is the central KPI of the programme. More details can be found on the SCILT website:


As ever, we are very grateful to colleagues at SCILT for their support and work on the programme, which they are taking forward as one of their key initiatives for the coming years.

2. Senior Phase Modern Languages Workshops

This year’s round of online workshops for Senior Phase students (Higher/Advanced Higher) from across Scotland took place between September and December 2023, with input from six Scottish HEIs (Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Stirling, Strathclyde). Sessions focused on different skills (translation, cultural and critical analysis, grammar and language) 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. SCILT and partner HEIs are planning to introduce a second set of workshops for the AY 24/25 iteration of the programme. Interest in the programme remains strong, with students joining from across Scotland.

3. Languages at Aberdeen

Languages colleagues at Aberdeen are immensely grateful for the sustained support and advocacy from national UCFL and other stakeholders across the UK as we challenge the proposed changes to languages provision at Aberdeen. Following a meeting of the University Court in December, which rejected the initial proposals put forward by senior management, various concessions have been made, including to recruitment to undergraduate degrees for AY 24/25, and work is underway to develop a revised set of proposals for presentation to Court in February. However, despite some positive movement there is still substantial uncertainty about the future shape and nature of languages provision at Aberdeen.

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