# Report from Area Studies by UKCASA

Over the past year, UKCASA has, in parallel with the Arts and Humanities Alliance and member associations, sent **letters of support** advocating for the value of Area Studies subjects to senior management at — sadly, the many and increasing numbers of — institutions which have announced redundancies and cut—backs thta affect Area Studies programmes and research.

After consultation with our membership, we submitted recommendations and suggestions to the **REF consultation** and we're pleased to see a number of points we raised taken on board after this process, in relation to the timeframe of the next REF exercise, the inclusion (or not) of PGR students, and the maintaining of the current panel structures. Colleagues on the UKCASA executive will be attending various of the **REF / Vitae consultation workshops** on People, Culture and Environment taking place over the next few months. An invitation encouraging UKCASA members to register interest in attending these events was also circulated.

We have also encouraged members to take part in the **British Academy / REF consultation on Open Access** (which closes on 17th June 2024). Because the proposed changes to open access regulations for the next REF are quite fundamental we are strongly encouraging robust responses to the consultation from our member associations.

UEA hosted the inaugural event for its '**New Area Studies Research Centre**' in November with a very successful one day conference entitled *New Area Studies: Under Construction*. The Centre is planning a **symposium in early October**. Entitled 'Imagined Geographies: From Past to Future' the call for submission of paper proposals is now live, with a deadline of 1st June. UKCASA members are encouraged to consider submitting a proposal. The CfP can be found on the Research Centre website here.

This April saw the publication the newly revised **QAA Area Studies Benchmark** (UKCASA President, Prof Nick Selby Chaired the Advisory Group revising the statement). The full version of the statement and a "basics" version can be seen here.

We are planning to hold a UKCASA meeting to discuss the state of the field and new developments in Area Studies before Christmas with our AGM in the New Year. We will be in touch with members about these events over the summer.

Professor Nick Selby