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UNIVERSITY COUNCIL OF MODERN LANGUAGES

A and AS level trends in Modern Languages 2002-2016

Following is data in main languages as listed by JCQ and published on 18 August 2016 – A levels and AS levels, followed by an analysis of conversion rates from AS to A level in French, German and Spanish.

1. Fluctuations in number of pupils studying a language at A Level

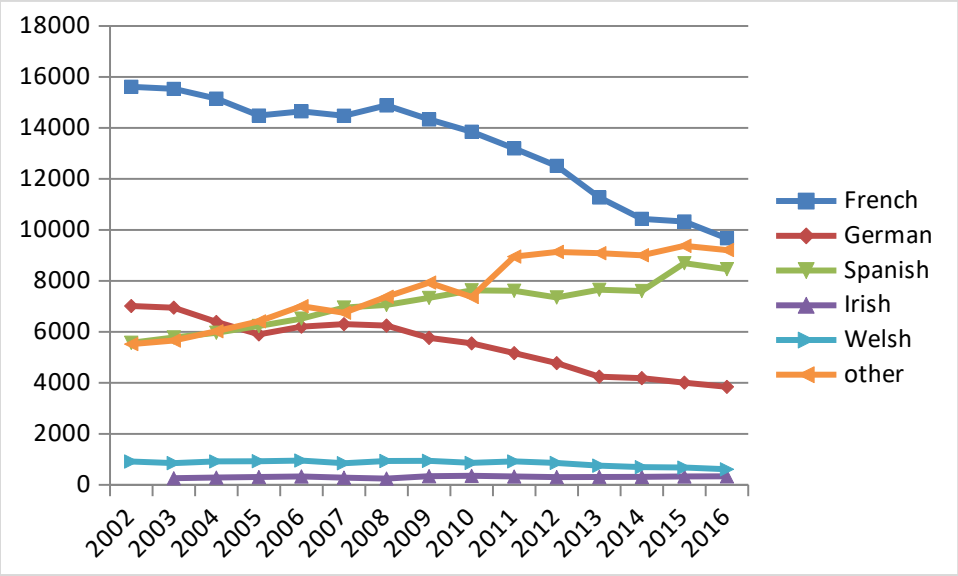
A levels								
Year	**French**	**German**	**Spanish**	**Irish**	**Welsh**	**other**	**total**	**Fr Ge & Sp only**
2002	15614	7013	5572		914	5523	34636	28199
2003	15531	6950	5781	258	852	5660	35032	28262
2004	15149	6390	5966	286	919	6023	34733	27505
2005	14484	5901	6230	306	927	6412	34260	26615
2006	14650	6204	6520	329	953	7009	35665	27374
2007	14477	6303	6951	281	847	6752	35611	27731
2008	14885	6245	7055	248	934	7377	36744	28185
2009	14333	5765	7334	339	941	7932	36644	27432
2010	13850	5548	7629	352	861	7370	35610	27027
2011	13196	5166	7610	328	917	8953	36170	25972
2012	12511	4773	7351	304	859	9136	34934	24635
2013	11272	4242	7651	310	752	9087	33314	23165
2014	10433	4187	7601	313	692	9007	32233	22221
2015	10328	4009	8694	330	678	9375	33414	23031
2016	9672	3842	8460	331	610	9209	32124	21974
% change 02-16	-38.06%	-45.22%	51.83%	28.29%	-28.40%	66.74%	-7.25%	-22.08%
% change 15-16	-6.35%	-4.17%	-2.69%	0.30%	-10.03%	-1.77%	-3.86%	-4.59%

The most recent picture emerging from the latest set of A Level data shows results consistent with the downward trend in languages across the majority of our disciplines nationally. Unfortunately both French and Spanish numbers continue to fall; their falling rate for 2016 is higher than it was for the previous year. Likewise, and unlike the trend shown for 2015, in 2016 the take-up for Spanish does not seem to continue to grow; however, numbers for Spanish are falling at a slower rate compared to figures for French and German. In the latest data released by JCQ, unfortunately French features at number 6 in the list of most decreased subject A-Level entry (for further details, see http://www.jcq.org.uk/examination-results/a-levels/2016/gce-trends-2016).

Other languages are enjoying a slower decline in figures compared to the three main languages (and excluding Irish, which, on last year's figures, shows an increase in uptake by 0.30%) when comparing them with results obtained in 2015. JCQ provides a detailed list of uptake for other languages which shows, overall, a drop in figures from 9375 to 9209 entries. A closer analysis reveals that most of these losses are attributable to Chinese and Russian whereas other languages show stable figures. Some other languages, encouragingly, show an increase in entries such as Italian (from 823 to 868

entries), Arabic (652 to 749), and Turkish (from 535 to 577). Data on other languages can be accessed in the Other Modern Foreign Languages Entries 2015-2016 document.

Fluctuations in A Level languages at a glance



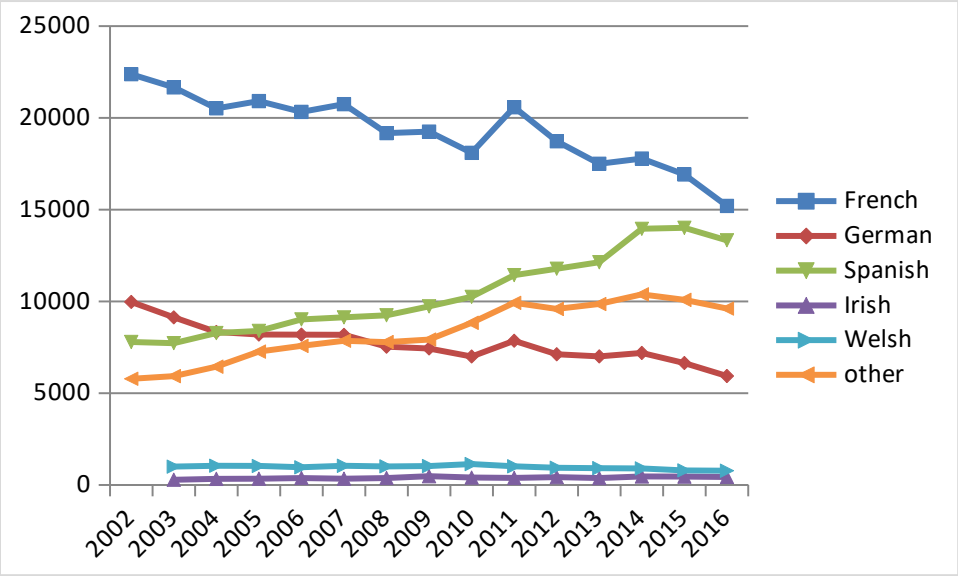
2. Fluctuations in number of pupils studying a language at AS Level

AS levels								
Year	**French**	**German**	**Spanish**	**Irish**	**Welsh**	**other**	**total**	**Fr Ge & Sp**
2002	22377	9973	7787			5785	45922	40137
2003	21663	9130	7727	284	998	5927	45729	38520
2004	20514	8333	8278	333	1049	6445	44952	37125
2005	20913	8195	8394	344	1037	7267	46150	37502
2006	20321	8192	9021	381	963	7577	46455	37534
2007	20747	8179	9131	341	1045	7858	47301	38057
2008	19167	7533	9247	378	1013	7782	45120	35947
2009	19247	7437	9730	479	1033	7919	45845	36414
2010	18096	7001	10250	406	1140	8836	45729	35347
2011	20579	7859	11433	385	1015	9923	51194	40256
2012	18721	7119	11781	430	936	9591	48578	38051
2013	17501	7006	12136	374	917	9857	47791	36643
2014	17781	7193	13958	461	901	10382	50676	38932
2015	16917	6645	14009	454	796	10086	48907	37571
2016	15200	5935	13331	437	778	9610	45291	34466
% change 02-16	-32.07%	-40.49%	71.20%	53.87%	-22.04%	66.12%	-1.37%	-14.13%
% change 15-16	-10.15%	-10.68%	-4.84%	-3.74%	-2.26%	-4.72%	-7.39%	-8.26%

Results for the number of pupils studying languages at AS levels are mixed. Overall, results mirror the figures for A-Level uptake. However, Spanish, continues to grow and shows a staggering 71.20% growth rate since 2002 (down by 4.84% on last year's figures), closely followed by a similar growth in 'Other languages' (66.12%, but down -4.72% on last year).

Unfortunately, both German and French have seen a similar decrease of -10.15% and -10.68% respectively on last year's figures. These figures confirm that the introduction of the EBacc does not seem to have had the expected positive impact on take-up figures for these languages (in 2014 French increased by 1.6% and German by 2.67%) as their increase sadly seem to have been confined solely to the introduction of the new qualification.

Fluctuations in AS languages at a glance



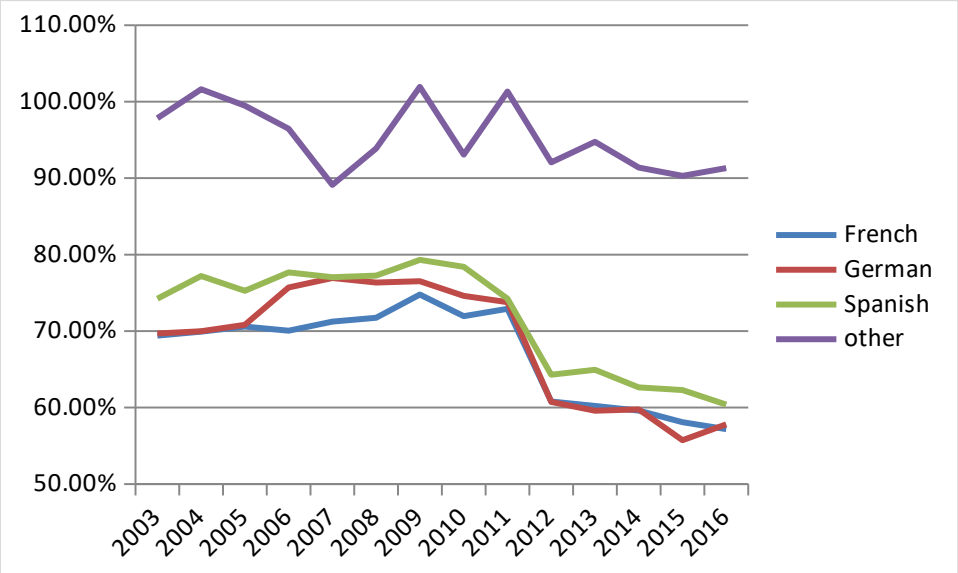
3. Conversion AS to A level

% AS students who took A level in following year								
Year	**French**	**German**	**Spanish**	**Irish**	**Welsh**	**other**	**total**	**Fr Ge & Sp**
2003	**69.41%**	**69.69%**	**74.24%**			**97.84%**	**76.29%**	**70.41%**
2004	**69.93%**	**69.99%**	**77.21%**	**100.70%**	**92.08%**	**101.62 %**	**75.95%**	**71.40%**
2005	**70.61%**	**70.81%**	**75.26%**	**91.89%**	**88.37%**	**99.49%**	**76.21%**	**71.69%**
2006	**70.05%**	**75.70%**	**77.67%**	**95.64%**	**91.90%**	**96.45%**	**77.28%**	**72.99%**
2007	**71.24%**	**76.94%**	**77.05%**	**73.75%**	**87.95%**	**89.11%**	**76.66%**	**73.88%**
2008	**71.75%**	**76.35%**	**77.26%**	**72.73%**	**89.38%**	**93.88%**	**77.68%**	**74.06%**
2009	**74.78%**	**76.53%**	**79.31%**	**89.68%**	**92.89%**	**101.93 %**	**81.21%**	**76.31%**
2010	**71.96%**	**74.60%**	**78.41%**	**73.49%**	**83.35%**	**93.07%**	**77.67%**	**74.22%**
2011	**72.92%**	**73.79%**	**74.24%**	**80.79%**	**80.44%**	**101.32 %**	**79.10%**	**73.48%**
2012	**60.79%**	**60.73%**	**64.30%**	**78.96%**	**84.63%**	**92.07%**	**68.24%**	**61.20%**
2013	**60.21%**	**59.59%**	**64.94%**	**72.09%**	**80.34%**	**94.75%**	**68.58%**	**60.88%**
2014	**59.61%**	**59.76%**	**62.63%**	**83.69%**	**75.46%**	**91.38%**	**67.45%**	**60.64%**
2015	**58.08%**	**55.73%**	**62.29%**	**71.58%**	**75.25%**	**90.30%**	**65.94%**	**59.16%**
2016	**57.17%**	**57.82%**	**60.39%**	**72.91%**	**76.63%**	**91.30%**	**65.68%**	**58.49%**

When looking at the number of pupils progressing from AS to A Level, results are mixed. Despite the fact that the overall conversion rate for pupils studying to take a language AS qualification further to A-Level has dropped very slightly from last year (-0.26%), some positive news be gathered especially for German. Not only is German showing an increase on last year's uptake figures (2.09%) – German

is also the language with the highest rate of conversion overall overtaking Irish, Welsh, and the group of other languages (Irish 1.33%, Welsh 1.38% and other languages 1% respectively).

Conversion AS to A level at a glance



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