

# UCML Executive Committee

Friday 2 November 2018      12.30 – 16.00  
Monnet Room, Europe House  
32 Smith Square, London SW1P 3EU



## Slavonic and East European (SEE) Languages

### 1. Handover of roles

When I took up the UCML role in Summer 2018, I had a helpful meeting with my predecessor Matthias Neumann to clarify what the role involves and what he sees as the most urgent tasks for the field.

### 2. BASEES Committee

For the past three years, Matthias was combining his UCML post with the very demanding role of chief organizer of the annual BASEES\* Conference. Matthias was therefore serving two co-opted roles on the BASEES Committee: UCML representative and conference organizer. These roles have now been disaggregated and I have been co-opted to the BASEES Committee as UCML representative. Now that these two roles are filled by different people, it is hoped that we will have a greater capacity to expand the remit of the UCML role.

### 3. State of the Field in Higher Education

During my discussion with Matthias, we mentioned that there is a lack of overarching information about the state of the field of SEE in secondary schools and in higher education. During 2018-19, I plan to create a 'state of the field' document outlining the current provision of SEE in higher education. I believe there are currently 13 universities in the UK that offer full degree programmes (joint and/or single honours) in SEE. I plan to make contacts at each university and learn more about their programmes, how they are evolving, and explore way in which they might collaborate more closely with BASEES and UCML for the health of the language as a whole. The report will also consider provision of language teaching outside a formal degree named programme (i.e. language centres, evening programmes etc.). Stephen Hutchings, a past president of BASEES, has agreed to send me a report that he completed on the state of the field a few years ago, and has kindly suggested that i could use this as a starting point.

#### 3b. Closure of Russian at Bath

Howard White has written to me about the phasing out of Russian at University of Bath, an issue that has been discussed before at UCML. The University argued that Russian was unsustainable as it

recruited 12 students over the past two years (20 students in a JH programme, or 10 FTE is the University's minimum to run a programme).

He further explained that the decision to cut Russian had been justified by a proposed expansion to include Mandarin Chinese; however, such an expansion has not developed. Bath's decision to deprioritize languages has resulted in a downturn in admissions figures, and, while the University management team have expressed a continued commitment to language provision, Howard White suggests that there is a risk of further cuts, given that the University gave similar assurances regarding Russian just one year before the decision to close the department.

#### **4. State of the Field in Schools**

I plan to create a 'state of the field' document for Schools provision of SEE in 2019-20, the second year of my UCML tenure.

On schools provision, it is worth noting that 'A' Level Russian saw a small increase in entries in 2017-8, with scores increasing by 3.4 per cent, from 1,122 to 1,160.

#### **5. A selection of forthcoming events in the field (not comprehensive!):**

'Music and 1968', Annual study day of the Study Group for Russian and Eastern Europe Music, University of Bristol, 9 November 2018

Study Group on Eighteenth-Century Russia, Annual Study Day, 4-6 January 2019 at High Leigh Conference Centre, Hoddesdon, Hertfordshire.

Annual BASEES Conference, 12-14 April 2019, Robinson College, Cambridge.

'Technologies of Mind and Body in the Soviet Union and the Eastern Bloc' Symposium, University of Nottingham, 17-18 May 2019

'Histories of Religion and Homophobia in Eurasia', 11-12 April 2019, St Antony's College, University of Oxford

Connor Doak

24 October 2018

\* BASEES = British Association for Slavonic and East European Studies, the main academic association for our field in the UK.