

UCML Executive Committee

Friday 26 April 2019

12.30 – 16.00

Room C60b/c, InfoLab21
School of Computing & Communications
Lancaster University, LA1 4WA



Item 9b Scotland report

Some updates to previous report

A Committees on which UCMLS has representation

i. Wider Engagement Network: key thing to report here is that employers want graduates with language skills and the attendant cultural awareness.

ii. Special Implementation Group

a) continued funding of 1+ 2 to meet targets by end 2020-21. Anecdotal evidence suggests this is unlikely as there is a small but significant percentage of Primary Schools which are having difficulty developing L2 never mind L3. Considerably more have abandoned all pretence of providing an L3.

b) 1 + 2 to be rebranded – watch this space...

c) JC to collate an up-to-date document detailing Scottish Universities outreach activities.

B National Modern Languages Network meeting, Stirling, 7th February (Education Scotland)

JC gave a presentation followed by Q&A. Presentation has been sent with this report. What follows is what I might have said had I been able to be at the Exec meeting.

Note that slide 5 contains the first question of the diagnostic test used in the French Department in St Andrews to permit us to stream the First Level intake. It asks entrants to conjugate the auxiliary verbs *avoir* and *être* in the present and imperfect tenses and to give the past participles of both verbs. Most students having taken only Scottish Higher are incapable of completing this exercise, with some leaving it blank. It should be remembered that the Higher is the basis on which all offers of a place are made in Scotland's Universities.

Many pupils while at School have not gone on to Advanced Higher which is much closer to what we require in terms of previous knowledge. There are two main reasons for this, which are common to all State School MFL provision. The first, unfortunately, is a lack of staffing resource in Scottish State High Schools. The second is the misapprehension that chances of securing a place at University are greater if a different language Higher is taken the year after the initial Higher has been gained. In either case, the gap between the initial Higher and University entry can be fifteen to sixteen months, which is problematic.

At St Andrews we are seriously considering the creation of a Higher-only stream in French which we create *de facto* currently with the Diagnostic Exercise. That is not without its potential, very political, problems however.

Slides 6-9 give an overview of what students could expect in First Year at St Andrews.

Slides 10 & 11 offer a brief comparison of the different papers at French Higher in 1989 and 2018. Slide 10 is quite telling, while on slide 11 we can see what has disappeared from the Higher.

Slide 12 refers to elements of a document indicating which language skills should be taught / acquired at which level, which I am not even going to attempt to start boring you with.

The following Q&A was lively. It has been reported back to me that the session was much appreciated as it opened eyes wide.

One thing I picked up is that Italian is making a gradual return in some State Schools.

C And finally

For anyone who has a spare week and wishes to have some insight into how education is framed in Scotland, here is the link to the *Curriculum for Excellence*, from which you should follow the internal links.

[https://education.gov.scot/scottish-education-system/policy-for-scottish-education/policy-drivers/cfe-\(building-from-the-statement-appendix-incl-btc1-5\)/What%20is%20Curriculum%20for%20Excellence?](https://education.gov.scot/scottish-education-system/policy-for-scottish-education/policy-drivers/cfe-(building-from-the-statement-appendix-incl-btc1-5)/What%20is%20Curriculum%20for%20Excellence?)