UCML Exec Committee

3rd April 2020, 13:00–16:00 by Teams

UCML
UNIVERSITY COUNCIL
OF MODERN LANGUAGES

Item 10f: Italian

Italian report for UCML Exec

This report is based on ongoing discussion in the discipline, and especially with representatives of the two main professional associations: Society for Italian Studies in the UK and Ireland (SIS), Association for the Study of Modern Italy (ASMI).

1. On 11.03.2020, SIS launched on its website a section with resources to support Erasmus students in Italy (http://italianstudies.org.uk/2020/03/11/4182/), although most British university students are now back in the country. They are now working to collect a set of digital resources for teaching and learning (in progress), in order to support the move to online activities.
2. Planned events in the Italian Studies community have been either cancelled or postponed (e.g. ASMI summer school, postponed to a date to be confirmed in the Autumn, and SIS Themed Conference at the University of Kent, postponed to 10-11 September 2020).
3. Longer term worries are exponentially amplified in the current situation: low recruitment of UG, PGT and PGR students, a stagnant job market, as well as precarious jobs for younger colleagues and casualisation of existing jobs.
4. The restructuring of Modern Languages at Nottingham Trent University continues to raise many concerns, both for the whole area and, more in particular, for less taught languages such as Italian. What happened at Hull, where the ML unit was restructured with the exclusion of Italian, has set a very worry precedent.
5. SIS has launched a call for candidatures for a SIS Postdoc / Early Career Academic representative in the Exec, and the name will be confirmed at the June 2020 Exec meeting. The SIS ECA Rep will represent the society also in the UCML group discussed in January.
6. ASMI and SIS are looking forward to the results of the UCAS granularity project led by UCML, as reliable data for JH students (i.e. the majority of Italian UG students) are not available otherwise, and yet their analysis can be of invaluable help in understanding what can be done to support high school students in choosing ML subjects, including less-taught ones that are not available at school level, and/or perceived as élite subjects.

Gigliola Sulis (Leeds, 31 March 2020)