

UCML Executive Committee

Friday 3rd April 2020, 1:00-3:00pm

Via Microsoft Teams



MINUTES

EXEC MEMBERS (alphabetical order of surname; *apologies italics/inset*)

<i>Sarah Bowskill</i>	<i>N. Ireland</i>	<i>SB</i>
Caroline Campbell	IWLP	CEC
Joe Carson	Scotland	JC
Emma Cayley	VC Communications	EC
Marcela Cazzoli	Hon Secretary	MC
Alexander Ding	ELT	AD
Connor Doak	Slavonic & EE	CD
Jo Drugan	VC Research	JD
Federico Faloppa	Linguistics	FF
Allyson Fiddler	Germanic & Low countries	AF
Olga Gomez-Cash	Hon Treasurer	OGC
Claire Gorrara	Chair	CG
Derek Hird	E. Asian	DH
James Illingworth	Admin Assistant	JI
René Koglbauer	Schools Liaison	RK
<i>Par Kumaraswami</i>	<i>Hispanic</i>	<i>PK</i>
Emmanuelle Labeau	French	EL
El Mustapha Lahlali	Middle Eastern studies	ML
<i>Hilary Owen</i>	<i>Lusophone</i>	<i>HO</i>
Begoña Rodriguez	T&I	BR
Gigliola Sulis	Italian	GS
Frances Weightman	Area Studies	FW
Liz Wren-Owens	Wales	LWO
Vicky Wright	VC Education	EP

OTHER ACRONYMS

AdM	Ana de Medeiros (former VC Comms)
AHA	Arts and Humanities Alliance
AULC	Association of University Language Centres
BA	British Academy
BACS	British Association for Chinese Studies
BC	British Council
CSJE	Claire St John Eve (former Administrative Assistant)
DTP	Doctoral Training Partnership
ECRs	Early-Career Researchers
MLs	Modern Languages
NS	Naomi Segal (former Hon. Secretary)
PGRs	Postgraduate Researchers
RiL	Routes into Languages
UCCL	Universities' China Committee in London
UKRI	UK Research and Innovation
UUKI	Universities UK International

1. Welcome and apologies for absence**CG**

Apologies: PK, HO, SB.

2. MinutesExecutive Committee meeting of 8 Nov 2019**CG***2.a Accuracy and approval*

No points were raised.

2.b Matters arising not covered elsewhere on the agenda

§2b Languages Strategy to be launched, possibly May 2020 depending on Covid-19 situation.

§2d *Ofqual and severe grading:* A group has been convened to discuss GCSE languages and is due to report. RK believes that an announcement will be made after Easter. Government has made an announcement today to say schools must provide evidence from classwork. RK will circulate a press release after the Exec meeting.

Action: RK

§4iii *UCAS granularity report:* Harriet Barnes at BA has offered to support us in our analysis of the data (alongside a data analyst). This would allow us to see where languages sit at sub-degree level and where they do not figure in the name of a degree programme.

§5ii *Impact case studies with data sets in languages other than English:* JD has had discussions with Charles Forsdick and Susan Hodgett, who are fully confident that outputs in languages other than English will be assessed fairly (by drawing on individuals with expertise in the language area in question). *Covid-19:* a postponement of the census date is not a straightforward solution, but there will be sensitivity around impact case studies where the impact might not now be able to be captured by the census date. These are ongoing discussions across all REF panels. DH noted that qualifying impact abroad in certain locations might be more difficult than others, but JD confirmed that CF and SH are cognisant of this and believe that the system is flexible enough to address these questions.

§6iii *Gender action group:* a paragraph should be placed on our website to detail our engagement/interaction.

Action: VW and JI

§8iii *UCML banner and leaflet:* these have been designed and are waiting to get them printed.

Action: JI and EC

§8iv *UCML subs for vulnerable departments:* we have agreed that OGC would look at reducing or waiving fees for small ML departments/units at risk of no longer delivering language programmes.

§13iii *UCML Small Grants:* one of the OWRI projects has gifted UCML a £5000 grant to enable full support for the Small Grants initiative.

§14 *Gender Action Champion:* VW has taken over from AdM.

- §15i *Website*: fully developed. Thanks to JI for work on the website during the Covid-19 crisis.

Plenary Business Meeting of 17 January 2020

CG

2.c Accuracy and approval

No points were raised.

2.d Matters arising not covered elsewhere on the agenda

- §6b UCML has received support from a number of organisations for our letter to Government about Erasmus+; a response from Michelle Donelan was received reinforcing current official position on Erasmus+. Developments beyond Brexit, however, are very much to be confirmed.
- §7i A letter was sent to Ofqual regarding the Pre-U Chinese qualification; response was received confirming that it will be discontinued. DH mentioned that he and FW had received a letter from Nick Gibb who has asked officials in his department to speak to Ofqual about any possible options regarding Pre-U Chinese which might be potentially positive. CD pointed out that Pre-U programme withdrawal is not languages specific but that Pre-U is being withdrawn altogether (i.e. all subjects).

3. Chair's Report

CG

- 3.i *Lecteur/lectrice programmes*: CG has approached UUKI about lecteur/lectrice programmes, with concerns that salaries will not meet Brexit visa thresholds. Response yet to be received.
- 3.ii *RiL*: documents have been sent to lawyers. Thanks extended to VW for collating the required documentation.
- 3.iii *Sunderland*: Response has been received from Prof David Bell at Sunderland. This took the form of a personal letter which, although sympathetic, was clear in that languages will not be re-introduced or maintained at Sunderland.

4. Report of Vice Chair Languages & Intercultural Education

VW

UCML Survey: VW had discussions with Carlos Montoro and Inma Alvares (Language Acts) and Elena Polisca regarding the UCML Survey; the conclusion is that questions from last year would work well, as well as questions about online delivery. The aim of the survey will be to encourage positive thinking about opportunities to adapt our teaching. An added consideration is to ask about support for incoming Erasmus students (e.g. mentoring). *Shared resources*: capturing materials being generated might also be worthwhile. CG reiterated how invaluable the survey is in terms of keeping track of sector/resource development. VW hopes to have questions ready to share with Exec by the end of April. CG is keen for the Exec to feedback on this. RK suggested that universities might be thinking

about cutting costs in the current context. An exploration of the after-effects of Covid-19 might be important and UCML might have a role to play here. VW also mentioned that she will liaise with AULC to ensure our survey does not overlap with theirs.

Action: VW

5. Report of Vice Chair Research **JD**

5.i *REF 2021:* deadline for nominations for REF assessors for outputs and impact case has been extended. We have already received two nominations, but the extension allows us to send another email calling for more.

5.ii *REF 2027:* AHA keen to get responses on ongoing REF 2027 discussions. There are concerns about open access/online licences and ECRs.

5.iii *ECRs:* it has been agreed that we will continue working with the ECRs after a successful presentation and discussion during the Winter Plenary. Due to Covid-19, this group will be particularly vulnerable so it will be imperative to work with our new SIG. Also due to Covid-19, the ECRs panel discussion at the Durham conference has been cancelled. CG supported the suggestion of an ECR post within the Executive Group: to discuss with JD and the Chairs of the Early Career Academics SIG.

Action: CG

5.iv *Website:* Once trained on the website, JI will add material to the Research section.

Action: JI

5.v *EU Funding:* Identify how far MLs researchers benefit from EU funding in advance of Brexit to know if there are any particular areas where loss of funding streams would be concerning. JD suggests that any colleagues with any awareness of these details to get in touch. CG suggests that VW adds a question about this to the UCML survey.

Action: VW

6. Report of Vice Chair External Engagement & Communications **EC (AdM)**

6.i EC thanked AdM for a thorough handover and for all her work in the role.

6.ii *Twitter:* UCML now has 3853 followers on Twitter; EC is live tweeting the meeting.

6.iii *Year Abroad:* EC has spoken to Thomas Dearing at BC and they are looking at ways to work with UCML on the Year Abroad.

7. Hon. Secretary's Report **MC (NS)**

7.i MC noted that we will soon be advertising for a new NI rep and IWLP rep.

7.ii MC, CG and RK extended warm thanks to NS for her commitment to UCML and all her work.

8. Hon. Treasurer's Report **OGC**

8.i OGC extended warm thanks to CSJE for support in her admin assistant role.

- 8.ii Over £4000 in subs have been received since the start of the year.
- 8.iii Subject Associations are an area we need to work more thoroughly with. Only one has a direct debit, so working with UCML subject reps to chase these is a priority.
- 8.iv We are keen to provide financial support to the ECRs SIG to enable this to be as robust as possible.
- 8.v MC asked about the possibility of using the British Academy as a venue for future meetings. CG believed this would be possible given the BA's mission to support learned societies.

9. National reports

9.a Northern Ireland **SB**
No report had been received.

9.b Scotland **JC**

9.c Wales **LWO**

RiL Wales/Cymru are looking into developing online provision further so they can continue their useful support to the community should the current situation persist. VW hopes RiL England can follow suit under the UCML umbrella.

10. Reports from other Executive members

10.a Area studies **FW**

10.b French studies **IL**

10.c Germanic/Low countries studies **AF**

10.d Hispanic studies **PK**

10.e Lusophone studies **HO**

10.f Italian studies **GS**

10.g Middle Eastern studies **ML**

10.h East Asian studies **DH**

Publication of three really useful reports on Chinese Studies produced by BACS with support from UCCL (on Studies/Funding/Employability). DH to send these to JI to be added to UCML website.
Action: DH, JI

10.i Slavonic & East European studies **CD**

10.j Linguistics **FF**

10.k IWLP (including the UCML/AULC report) **CEC**

10.l English Language Teaching **AD**

10.m Translation & Interpreting BR

10.n Schools Liaison RK

The Department for Education has confirmed that the Early Career framework rollout for teachers in the North East, Manchester, and Bradford area will go forward as planned.

10.i CD asked about support for PGRs in the current crisis, in cases when they are unable to complete or continue fieldwork. JD stated UKRI Research Councils have been told underspend from the first DTP block grants can be used to fund extensions where necessary.

10.ii HO has put together a questionnaire to send to Lusophone colleagues to identify the 'state of the area'. CG suggests other Exec colleagues do this in their language areas, to provide similar snapshots of their discipline that can feed into UCML discussions/strategy. CEC suggested annual AULC survey is also useful here.

Action: CG to send to all subject reps.

11. Advance planning of Plenary Workshop of 10 July 2020 All

<u>Time</u>	<u>Session</u>
10.00-10.30	Registration and coffee
10.30-12.00	AGM
12.00-13.00	Lunch
13.00-16.30	Workshop theme/suggestions

The workshop could be postponed, cancelled, or become virtual if face-to-face is impossible. CG suggests that we move online to avoid too many meetings in the autumn period, avoid cancellation, and capitalise on the current awareness of the value of the digital. All colleagues agreed, though RK warned about screen fatigue; CG confirmed that any virtual plenary will recognise this and factor into timings.

Innovations in languages at universities was the initial potential focus, but CG suggests that we think about good/best practice in online teaching and development as a plenary focus. LWO noted a platform that allows breakout rooms would be necessary to make this work. CG proposes a workshop of 1hr30-2hr workshop that showcases best practice but allows us to think forward for online delivery. VW to establish a small sub-group to work on this and work with JI to set this up. Those who wish to be involved should contact VW. **Action: VW, JI, all.**

12. Responses to Coronavirus and ongoing support CG

12.i *Call for Year Abroad responses in MLs departments:* this yielded only 5 replies. Perhaps it has been a little early in the thought process for concrete answers.

12.ii *Creating an immersive Year Abroad experience in UK:* This is a sector-wide initiative led by Helen Abbott and includes UK Heads of ML. It will hopefully provide universities with a framework for a potential year abroad in the UK for the first semester/term. Universities could undertake this either individually or as a consortium. This initiative addresses the concern that smaller/more vulnerable departments will be under pressure to ensure rigour for students unable to go abroad. The option of moving students straight into final year, with no year abroad, is the least preferable option. It might be possible to extend this framework into the second semester/term if the Covid-19 situation does not improve by Christmas. UCML could be an honest broker in these conversations. RK suggested bringing in the

Association for Language Learning, which can help in this area at school level. BC (via Thomas Dearing) has been in contact with Helen Abbott with a view to providing an in-school immersive experience. VW asked if UUKi had been contacted about this and noted that the Year Abroad are not just MLs-specific. FW added that some institutions send students to the year abroad in their second year, something which would also need to be considered.

- 12.iii FF suggested lobbying the Government about the lack of information in foreign languages on Covid-19 from official channels. Translations should be pursued. We could use BR, FF and JD through UUKi to draft a letter to Gov to lobby for translation. JC has also said he can pursue Scottish government, with LWO in Wales and SB in Northern Ireland. AF suggested approaching Katrin Kohl, PI of the AHRC-funded *Creative Multilingualism* to see if they might wish to input into this. BR, FF and JD to draft letter to lobby for translation; JC, SB and LWO to send letter to national executives; AF to email Katrin Kohl.

Action: BR, FF and JD; JC, SB; and LWO and AF

- 12.iv FF mentioned a pass/fail model for the Year Abroad, but CG suggested putting another call out to see what plans have been put in place in institutions to assess the Year Abroad. VW suggests adding this to the survey. Call will be put out to Exec requesting feedback to CG and JI for anonymised details on year abroad assessment actions being undertaken.

Action: CG and JI

- 12.v HO raised the issue of home working in the time of Covid-19 and asked if UCML could pressure universities to recognise the problems this creates in the formulation of workloads. CG suggested that UCML might not be the best conduit for this as an ML specific association; however, UCML could formally support lobbying taking place in Higher Education.

13. Outcomes of UCML Small Grants allocation round 2

CG

- 13.i 9 applications were received, and we have made awards to 5 projects, equating to £1673.82. We have made it clear that we will continue to support projects which may need to be postponed or reformulated due to the ongoing Covid-19 crisis.

- 13.ii Round 3 opened with a deadline of 17th April

14. Update on SIGs

CG

- 14.i *ECRs SIG:* Steering Group was supportive of this subject to a slight reformulation of its mission. UCML wishes to endorse this with financial and logistical/administrative support. Given the current Covid-19 crisis and the potential repercussions that this may have for those on precarious contracts, this is a timely initiative. CG noted the potential of an ECR representative on the UCML Exec, to which the Exec agreed.

- 14.ii *AMLUK-UCML SIG:* This was also approved by the Steering Group. AF asked if this group feeds into any other overarching bodies. This is unclear so UCML would be a good platform for them to further their debates. Exec agreed.

15 Any Other Business

all

- 15.i *Library groups:* could put colleagues in contact with their respective library groups.

Action: CG and JI

- 15.ii FF reported that he is in the process of putting together details on languages assistants in schools. CG suggested FF work with VW to compile a document on this for the Plenary. RK pointed out that home schooling and language learning is increasing, and this captive audience would be good to capitalise on.

16 Future dates

all

CG and JI to discuss the UCML diary to think about alternatives (potentially shorter CPD events throughout the year). **Action: CG and JI.**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Event</u>	<u>Venue</u>
10 July	Summer Plenary (AGM)	ONLINE
?? October	Autumn Steering Group	by Microsoft Teams
?? November	Autumn Exec	??
?? mid-January	Winter Plenary (Business Meeting)	??
?? March	Spring Steering Group	by Microsoft Teams
?? April	Spring Exec	??