

Item 10e: Lusophone Studies

Portuguese Studies in UK HE. Mapping Survey for UCML. December 2020 Prof. Hilary Owen

Total HEIs contacted - 23 [33% of UK Modern Foreign Language Departments according to the survey: *Language Provision in UK MFL Departments 2018*, pp. 11-12]

[Microsoft Word - LanguageProvisioninUKMFLDepartmentsSurvey2018FinalVersionForPublication.docx \(university-council-modern-languages.org\)](#)

Total respondents to this survey - 21 (91.3%) (see appendix A)

Academic Staffing

1 or 1.5 full-time permanent academic staff on research and teaching contracts: **6**

2 or more full-time permanent academic staff on research and teaching contracts: **13**

0 full-time permanent academic staff (i.e. language teaching staff only): **2**

Language Teaching Staff

Fewer than 1 full-time language tutor: **4**

1 or more full-time language tutor(s): **17**

Hybrid and/or cross-listed content modules mixing Lusophone and Hispanophone topics

No content courses fit this description: **6**

One or two content courses fit this description: **11**

Most content courses fit this description: **2**

n/a: **2** [language-only programmes]

External Funding Support

Instituto Camões Centre: **5**

Instituto Camões teaching subsidies, grants, event support: **9**

None: 7

Student Numbers 2019-20 (given as number ranges)

Numbers completing 1st year in degrees where Portuguese is compulsory

0-10: 9

11-20: 9

21-30: 2

31-40: 1

First Year Entry Numbers for Portuguese + subjects *other* than Spanish

0-10: 12

11-20: 1

N/A or could not disaggregate the figures: 8

Approaches to post-*ab initio*/heritage speaker Portuguese teaching

Offering specific post-*ab initio*/heritage speakers' course: 7

Teaching post-*ab initio*/heritage speakers in level 2 courses or similar: 7

N/A. 7

Names for Highest Recruiting Degrees

Spanish, Portuguese and Latin American Studies: 4

Spanish and Portuguese: 5

BA in Modern Languages [and Cultures]: 7

Hispanic Studies: 2

Other: 2

Research Leave

Most academic colleagues reported being awarded the standard allocation of sabbatical for their institution. Cover arrangements usually involve hourly-paid teaching and/or staff covering all of their own content teaching in one semester. Where there is no specific Portuguese administrative cover available, this sometimes leaves full-time or part-time language-teaching staff with sole responsibility for the degree during staff sabbaticals. This was felt to be cause for concern.

A small number of academic colleagues reported ongoing practical impediments to securing sabbatical leave usually associated with being the only member of academic staff in Portuguese and/or their institutions halting all non-externally funded leave arrangements.

Administration and Work Allocation Models [WAMS]

Increased administrative centralization, especially in degrees such as BA Modern Languages, means the language-specificity of these roles is generally disappearing. Some reported that their WAMS do not possess the granularity to capture work done for Portuguese Studies. Where subject-specific Portuguese administration is not included in WAM models, 'programme-related strategic and operational matters are dealt with by Portuguese staff without workload compensation'.

Political Climate for Portuguese Studies

Most felt it was too soon to evaluate the full effects of Brexit and Covid-19. Many respondents reported a change in the general national climate regarding the value of learning modern languages, both in the public at large and in their own institutions. It is noted in the culture of HE institutions (the perceptions and actions of students, teachers, researchers and of the administration). This particularly affects the languages such as Portuguese, perceived to be 'less widely taught'.

Many reported the disruption to year abroad caused by Erasmus uncertainty, the political regime in Brazil, and now the Covid pandemic.

Scottish institutions noted that a significant impact of Brexit there will be (previously non-fee paying) EU students having to pay full international fees from 2021.

Regular attendance at association conferences

ABIL [Association of British and Irish Lusitanists] **21**

TROPO **10**

REBRAC **7**

WISPS [Women in Spanish and Portuguese Studies] **6**

SLAS [Society for Latin American Studies] **6**

APSA [American Portuguese Studies Association] **3**

MLA [Modern Languages Association] **2**

*AHGBI [Association of Hispanists of Great Britain and Ireland] **2**

LASA [Latin American Studies Association] **2**

AIL [Associação Internacional de Lusitanistas] **2**

BRASA [Brazilian Studies Association] **2**

*AHGBI membership nonetheless remains relatively high among Lusitanists.

Suggested ways in which UCML could be helpful to Portuguese Studies

Admissions Statistics and Visibility

A major, long-expressed need for Portuguese concerns the availability of detailed, granular HESA and UCAS recruitment figures for Portuguese recruitment nationally. A major challenge in Portuguese is numerical semi-visibility or invisibility. We eagerly await the results of the 'UCAS Granularity Report' and the UCML collaboration with the British Academy, enabling us to see where languages sit at sub-degree level and where they do not figure in the name of a degree programme.

Schools Outreach and Survival Strategies

A vital function continues to be helping us to ensure the survival of the field in political and educational settings which are not favorable to the study of foreign languages and cultures. Many in Portuguese expressed the need for help and greater systematization with outreach into schools and encouraging language take-up, especially of the so-called 'lesser taught' languages, and also stronger outreach to

Lusophone heritage communities in the UK. [See ‘Routes into Languages’: [Routes into Languages – University Council of Modern Languages \(university-council-modern-languages.org\)](https://www.university-council-modern-languages.org/) See also the UCML document on: ‘Surviving and Thriving: Developing a Tool Kit for Languages in Difficult Times.’]

Year Abroad

It was felt that UCML has a fundamental role to play in advocating for and protecting the Year Abroad experience as part of Modern Languages programmes. For Portuguese this is particularly important because the vast majority of students studying the language at UK universities are beginners. [See UCML ‘Supporting Virtual Mobility’ [Year Abroad: Supporting Virtual Mobility – University Council of Modern Languages \(university-council-modern-languages.org\)](https://www.university-council-modern-languages.org/)]

Future directions and discussion points for Portuguese in the UK

Decolonizing the Curriculum

The majority of respondents endorsed the need to decolonize the teaching curriculum, including in language learning, as well as creating more inclusive publishing channels, practices and journals. In practice this translated into, for example: teaching more on black and Asian writers from Lusophone Africa and Asia, as well as Native Brazilian histories and cultures, and to think beyond a conventional Portugal/Brazil binary. Also noted was the issue of underrepresentation of BIPOC scholars in publications, funding bids and editing roles

On a practical level, relevant factors include availability of suitable primary and secondary materials. A key obstacle to including non-canonical authors and pre-1900 texts by women and afro-descendant writers in pre-final year teaching is the lack of translations into English which it turns highlights the lack of funding for non-commercial translations (e.g., of pre-1900 texts and other categories).

Language Teaching

One suggestion was the possible development of a network to share best practices in the field of Portuguese language teaching and learning, with a special focus on the creation of distance/online interactions. There was a similar call for mutual support in the development of blended learning resources, particularly for the beginners’ cohort, which is very much textbook based. Would it help to work through TROPO to develop this in collaboration and at national level, rather than having piecemeal institution-level arrangements? [See also UCML and OU, ‘Moving your language teaching online’ toolkit].

Relations with Spanish

In terms of undergraduate recruitment and survival, Portuguese Studies continues to depend heavily on its relationship with Spanish degrees and its identity as ‘logical next step’ from Spanish. How should we strengthen and develop our structural and historic relations with Spanish? How should Portuguese manage the survival balance between ‘hybridized and/or cross-listed modules’ and ‘retaining autonomy and specificity for Portuguese’?

BA Modern Languages degrees

Many departments are moving to ‘BA in Modern Languages’-style degrees, often permitting take-up of three languages. How well does Portuguese fare as ‘third language’ on the BA Modern Languages? Do these changes increase pressure for

Portuguese as small one- or two-person units, competing with other larger and/or better-resourced, language areas?

Undergraduate entry tariffs

Twenty of the twenty-three institutions which offer degrees where Portuguese is named, are Russell Group. Most Russell Group institutions have high A level entry tariffs for MFL. How do we work with this to ensure strong recruitment?

Portuguese Graduate Mapping

A mapping exercise was suggested to capture who the UK graduates in Portuguese studies are, why they chose Portuguese, what they are now doing career-wise, what they enjoyed studying, what they would have liked to study, etc. this holistic perspective could be useful to enhance the provision of Portuguese studies in the UK and to demonstrate the 'value-added' factor that Portuguese brings to employability.

Cross-institutional Seminars

One idea suggested was a cross-institutional seminar of sorts for UG and/or PG students. Where Portuguese/Brazilian Studies seminars tend to be very small at individual universities, there might be space to create one UK-wide series of events and encourage everyone to join regularly.

ABIL

It was noted that a lot currently hinges on ABIL, including the biennial conference and also the mailing list run by the ABIL secretary, whose efforts we all appreciate. It would be good to increase support for ABIL, e.g. to keep their website updated and continue encouraging graduate students and ECRs to attend conference. Perhaps fund or encourage the creation of a platform for teaching materials on Lusophone authors in translation.

Appendix A. Universities that responded

1. University of Birmingham
2. University of Bristol
3. University of Cambridge
4. Cardiff University
5. University of Chester
6. University of Edinburgh
7. University of Exeter
8. University of Glasgow
9. King's College London
10. University of Leeds
11. University of Liverpool
12. University of Manchester
13. Newcastle University
14. University of Nottingham
15. University of Oxford
16. Queen Mary, London
17. Queen's University Belfast
18. University of Sheffield
19. University of Southampton

20. University College, University of London
21. University of Warwick