

Item 10h: East Asian Studies

British Association for Chinese Studies (BACS)

1. *BACS Interim Statement on the Implications of China's New National Security Law for UK Universities*

BACS has issued an interim statement [all emphases in original] on the implications of China's New National Security Law for UK Universities at <http://bacsuk.org.uk/bacs-interim-statement-on-the-implications-of-chinas-new-national-security-law-for-uk-universities>

The statement notes that “China’s new National Security Law of 1st July 2020 brings forth new considerations and challenges for employees in UK Universities as line-managers, mentors and teachers.” The statement “aims to alert **management and academics in the UK higher education sector to the challenges that the New Security Law poses to them in carrying out their professional responsibilities** to (1) safeguard academics and students and (2) safeguard the principle of academic freedom, which is fundamental to the credibility, professional ethics and brand value of UK universities and of Britain more generally.

The statement further notes:

Teachers and students on China-related modules (in Chinese politics, society, history, archaeology, international relations, film and literature) could therefore find themselves **deemed criminals** because of their verbal or written statements pertaining to many topics such as Taiwan, Hong Kong, social movements, the Party-state’s handling of coronavirus, ethnic unrest, ethnic identities, language policy, state surveillance, the implications of President Xi extending his term indefinitely etc. When passing through Hong Kong or China, teachers and students of any countries’ citizenship could find themselves arrested based on evidence from lecture notes, recorded lectures, or recorded class discussions because these include content that the Party-state deems subversive. The risks are especially high for individuals from mainland China and Hong Kong who study at or who previously studied at British universities.

And that:

Universities need to **clearly re-state their pledges to academic freedom and to actively uphold academic freedom** in the light of the National Security Law.

The British Association for Chinese Studies Council is commissioning a professional research report into the implications of the National Security Law for the UK Higher Education Sector.

2. *Announcement of BACS Early Career Researcher Prize Winner*

The winner of the ERC prize for 2020 is Dr Angela Becher of the University of Liverpool for her article on “The Digital Illusion: New Media Artists Exploring the Phenomenology of Space.”

BACS states: “This article was selected from a field of ten stellar submissions covering innovative topics in media studies, literature, contemporary politics, and history, demonstrating the robustness and vitality of early career research on China, broadly defined.”

3. *BACS Annual Conference and AGM*

The 2020 BACS conference, scheduled for 9-11 September 2020 at the University of Birmingham, has been postponed for 12 months. The conference is now planned to be at Birmingham on 8-10 September 2021, with the AGM taking place on 9 September.

British Association for Japanese Studies

(Report received from Dr Christopher Hood, BAJS President)

1. *Covid-19 Impact on UG teaching*

The Japan Foundation’s support, and the focus on Japanese language support rather than Japanese Studies support, meant that BAJS didn’t need to get overly involved with support for UG teaching in the light of the Covid-19 epidemic.

2. *BAJS AGM and conference*

BAJS had to make its AGM online only & its conference for next September has been postponed by 12 months due to the pandemic & also the knock-on impact of the European Association for Japanese Studies postponing its conference from this August to next year.

3. *Joint East Asian Studies Conference*

Due to the changes noted in item 2, BAJS has had initial discussions with BACS & BAKS about the timing and format of the next Joint East Asian Studies Conference which was due to be in September 2022 on the standard 3-year cycle.

4. *Annual Workshop*

BAJS is still running its annual workshop, in collaboration with the Japan Foundation, for PGR students in 2021, but it will be online only.

5. Japan Forum

BAJS now in the process of appointing a new Chief Editor for its journal Japan Forum and is also negotiating a new contract with the publisher – which comes at a critical time in terms of the impact of Open Access policies. The journal accounts for about 95% of the Association's income and is used for funding postgraduate activities and additional events.

6. *Change of Honorary Secretary*

Dr Jennifer Coates has taken over as the new Honorary Secretary of BAJS.

British Association for Korean Studies (BAKS)

(Report received from Dr Sojin Lim, BAKS Secretary)

1. *Joint East Asian Studies Conference*

As noted in the BAJS report, BAKS is involved in discussions with BAJS and BACS about when and where to hold the next Joint East Asian Studies Conference, but there is no consensus yet.

2. *Covid-19 impact on year abroad*

BAKS notes that many universities are struggling with how to manage programmes with built-in year abroad components. All three universities which run year abroad programmes in Korea (SOAS, Sheffield and UCLan) have had to hibernate or partially offer their year abroad programmes for the time being.

3. *Covid-19 impact on student enrolment*

BAKS notes that Covid-19 has led to a major downturn in student enrolment at many UK HEIs with uncertainty regarding 2021 enrolment; and that even if Covid-19 is less of a threat next year, the onset of a global recession does not bode well for humanities subjects (in relation to the point on employability below).

4. *Concern over employability metrics*

BAKS notes that the increased focus on employability as a way to measure quality and standards in UK HEI is a big problem for universities with a large percentage of students taking up jobs outside the UK after they graduate. This includes many Korean Studies graduates.

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