

Item 10n: Schools Liaison Report

GCSE/A level

The report by the Vice Chair Languages & Intercultural Education sets out the Summer 2020 examination results in detail. In August 2020, Ofqual announced their decision of changes to the Summer 2021 GCSE examinations, these include the removal of the requirement to use words outside the vocabulary list and additional optional questions in the writing assessment. The more controversial decision - for the summer 2021 examination **only** - has been that the GCSE language grade will not include 'Speaking'. A GCSE learner's speaking ability will be assessed through ongoing teacher assessment (rather than an oral examination). This endorsement is reported as separate grade (Pass, Merit, Distinction or Not Classified). Schools and examination centres do not have to submit any evidence alongside the endorsed grade. Following public consultation, Ofqual have issued the approved assessment criteria in November 2020. Whilst other nations, have recently announced cancellation of Summer 2021 examinations, the DfE announced on 3rd December a 'package of exceptional measures' for GCSE and A-level examinations in England. This package includes; a) more generous grading than usual, in line with national outcomes from 2020, b) advance notice of some topic areas covered in GCSE, AS and A level, c) exam aids will be provided in some exams, d) additional exams in July for students who missed exams due to illness or self-isolation. Further guidance on subject specific measures and topic areas will be announced in January 2021. The Association for Language Learning developed a [guidance webpage](#) on all Covid related changes for language teachers and language departments.

Initial Teacher Training and Teacher Supply

As a consequence of the pandemic, applications to Initial Teacher Training (ITT) programmes increased significantly across most subjects, including languages. The positive recruitment coupled with a number of schools opting out offering ITT placements has led to some ITT providers struggling placing their students. The DfE is working with schools, ITE providers and subject organisations to support trainee teachers in finding appropriate placements.

Despite this successful recruitment round, the ITT language community has raised concerns about recent policy developments that may have a detrimental impact on future initial teacher training recruitment. Unsurprisingly, a high proportion of trainee teachers are EU citizens. From 1st January 2021, students from EU countries will not be considered as home students. This together with the reduction of ITT language bursaries from £26k to £10k, the withdrawal of the British Council scholarship scheme (£28k scholarship) and the uncertainty regarding Subject Knowledge Enhancement funding has brought the sector together. UCML countersigned a letter to Minister Gibb, in which the language community, led by the Association for Language Learning, raises their concerns and invites for a dialogue. A response is still awaited. Furthermore, UCML and other organisations endorsed a submission to the Migration Advisory Committee, led by the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Modern Languages. The submission urged the Migration Advisory Committee to include two key constituents on the Shortage Occupation List, i.e.: Public Service

Interpreters and Translators as well as teachers of all modern foreign languages. Unfortunately, 'only teachers in maths, physics, science (where an element of physics will be taught), computer science and Mandarin) have been included in the final version of the [Shortage Occupation List](#). For Scotland, nursery, primary and secondary school teachers in Gaelic have been included, too.

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