

UCML Executive Committee

Friday 4 December 2020 2-4pm

Via Zoom



MINUTES

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

Nicola Bermingham	Hispanic	NB
<i>Joe Carson</i>	<i>Scotland</i>	<i>JC</i>
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	Project Co-ordinator	JI
Sharon Jones	Northern Ireland	SJ
René Koglbauer	Schools Liaison	RK
Emmanuelle Labeau	French	EL
El Mustapha Lahlali	Middle Eastern studies	ML
Liam Lewis	Early Career Academics	LL
Hilary Owen	Lusophone	HO
Marina Rabadán-Gómez	IWLP	MRG
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

AHA	Arts & Humanities Alliance
AHGBI	Association of Hispanists of Great Britain & Ireland
AHRC	Arts and Humanities Research Council
APPG	All-Party Parliamentary Group on Modern Languages
AUPHF	Association of University Professors and Heads of French
BA	British Academy
BAKS	British Association of Korean Studies
BERA	British Educational Research Association
CDA	Collaborative Doctoral Award
CLIL	Content and Language Integrated Learning
DAAD	Deutscher Akademischer Austausch Dienst
DECSY	Development Education Centre South Yorkshire
DTP	Doctoral Training Partnership
EAP	English for Academic Purposes

EASSH	European Alliance for the Social Sciences and the Humanities
ECA	Early Career Academic
ERC	European Research Council
ILAS	Institute of Latin American Studies
IMLR	Institute of Modern Languages Research
IoP	Institute of Physics
ML	Modern Languages
MOOC	Massive Open Online Course
NI	Northern Ireland
Ofqual	Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation
REF	Research Excellence Framework
RiL	Routes into Languages
SLAS	Society for Latin American Studies
SHAPE	Social Sciences, Humanities and the Arts for People and the Economy
SIG	Special Interest Group
UCAS	Universities and Colleges Admissions Service
UKRI	UK Research & Innovation
YA	Year Abroad

1. Welcome and apologies for absence (5 mins) CG

Apologies were received from JC. CG extended welcome to new representatives elected since the Summer Plenary: Nicola Bermingham (Hispanic Studies) and Liam Lewis (ECAs).

2. Minutes (10 mins)

Executive Committee meeting of 4 April 2020 CG

2.a Accuracy and approval

No points were raised.

2.b Matters arising not covered elsewhere on the agenda

- §2b Ofqual to be chased. Gender action details have been added to the website. UCML banners on the back burner until face-to-face events can restart.
- §4 UCML Survey: this has been delayed but is being progressed now. Themes: returning to questions from previous surveys to give a longitudinal view, but also questions on Covid and Brexit. CG and VW will meet in a week to discuss, with a view to launching report in 2021. Note to add question on EU funding. Potentially working with an intern.
- §5 Research pages of the website have been updated.
- §10h Reports on Chinese Studies have been added to the website.
- §12 UCML YA group has been extremely active since April. See reports from the Chair and VC Communications for more details.

§15i Details of subject library groups have been circulated to subject reps.

Annual General Meeting of 10 July 2020

CG

2.c Accuracy and approval

No points were raised.

2.d Matters arising not covered elsewhere on the agenda

§4aiii AHA has yet to be contacted about sharing experience of challenging climate.

Action: JD to follow up as UCML's AHA rep to offer contact about responding to challenges.

§10a Raised with APPG. VW suggests adding this to UCML survey.

Discussion of Officer's Reports (30 mins)

3. Chair's Report

CG

3.a *Lobbying*: CG has begun a project addressing equivalent or lower qualifications with colleagues at Birkbeck. The proposal hopes to encourage the inclusion of ML in a new permissive regime for subsidised micro-courses in further education.

3.b *UCAS Granularity Project*: BA have done a first sifting of data. A meeting will take place before Christmas to work through this with a view to turning the data into a report. CG notes colleagues especially in Italian and Portuguese are keen to receive this data and that UCML hope to get this done early in the new year.

3.c *Institutions under Pressure*: CG notes a number of departments are contacting her for support around institutional challenges to ML which is a concern. CG working actively with a number of institutions and notes UCML are doing our best to fight restructuring, but notes too that we can only intervene when approached to avoid complicating local situations.

3.d *MOOCs*: The YA MOOC project has been a success and we might want to consider continuing this cross-sector working around MOOCs and maintaining Futurelearn partnership. There is now a dedicated page for MOOC project should this be of interest: <https://university-council-modern-languages.org/year-abroad/ucml-mooc-project/> OGC notes funding has been crowd-sourced by universities on a sliding scale, and UCML will cover the rest.

4. Report of Vice Chair Languages & Intercultural Education

VW

4.a *GCSE and A level grades*: VW's report focuses on specific languages but should colleagues wish to see details for other languages they are welcome to follow the links in her report.

4.b *RiL*: several committee meetings have taken place thus far including a recent helpful presentation from MFL Mentoring Cymru which RiL hopes to develop in England in some way. VW notes a question on RiL would be useful in the survey as a way of encouraging departments to join/re-join. VW also notes that EL has joined the RiL sub-committee as a CLIL representative with a view to bringing the CLIL approach to RiL in recognition of how they can be mutually enriching.

- 4.c *Gender Action*: the project is in the process of changing hands from IoP to DECSY.

CG thanked VW for her work on these wide-ranging areas and projects.

5. **Report of Vice Chair Research**

JD

Oral report

- 5.a *REF*: there were no new nominees received after our most recent calls. Panel members have just been confirmed for REF and can be accessed on the REF website. JD notes that two former UCML Executive colleagues are on the Languages and Linguistics panel.
- 5.b *EASSH General Assembly*: this was held in September. The Director General spoke to funding from ERC. Plan to maintain if not increase funding available. Details were received on where this funding was allocated (by country etc). This cannot be shared publicly but can within UCML, so colleagues interested in this are welcome to contact JD.
- 5.c *IMLR*: asked us to stress their range of online resources. Keen if UCML would wish to write about research matters to contribute to their online living languages publication. All events are being recorded. IMLR has also asked for new ways to amplify their community contribution.
- 5.d *ECA Context*: JD has been focusing on this recently and draws attention to the UCML ECA SIG which has just launched a mentoring scheme. JD invites colleagues who would be interested to serve as a mentor to contact Hannah Scott who is coordinating the scheme (ecasn.contact@gmail.com). A research partner JD worked with on a CDA has won a contract for MoD staff learning foreign languages. They are keen to have expert linguists support the setting, delivery, marking and moderation of assessments. JD suggests this could be something to explore in the Winter Plenary or some other event, as the organisation is keen to go via UCML to ensure they source experienced linguists. UKRI issued a response today indicating they had listened to feedback from DTPs and students about phase 2 COVID funding, but these concerns have not been taken on board. Funds will not be sent to DTPs but directly to universities and criteria remain unclear. UCML have contacted SLAS, AHA, and AHGBI and will submit letters to make concerns known. JD also adds that DTPs have underspends they were previously allowed to disperse, but this development means they are prevented from using this from now on as funds are to be dispersed by institutions not DTPs.

Action: JD to liaise with subject associations to exert pressure.

- 5.e *Work Experience*: JD asked whether UCML might arrange to support schools with languages departments to offer work experience to students with the organisation for e.g. website editing? CG suggests there might be safeguarding concerns around working with school students but we are already formulating plans for undergraduate/postgraduate interns.

Action: JD to contact RK to think about a proposal

6. **Report of Vice Chair External Engagement & Communications**

EC

- 6.a *Social media*: There has been a lot of virtual interest around the ECA network, and EC asks for thoughts from the committee on whether the ECA SIG could

have its own social media accounts. She also suggests more social media accounts (e.g. Instagram) or social media 'takeovers'. MC notes that social media reps interviewed at Durham suggested that Instagram was the way forward.

Action: ALL to consider ECA social media presence and this will be taken back to the ECA group. EC to consider a UCML Instagram account.

6.b *Strategic Forum for the Humanities:* EC has attended meetings of this group on UCML's behalf and at the most recent meeting presented the UCML toolkit for surviving and thriving in the context of recent news of threats to Humanities departments.

7. **Hon. Secretary's Report**

MC

MC also attended the year abroad student focus groups and noted these meetings were inspiring and gave a good idea of how students were feeling about both the year abroad and also online teaching.

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

OGC

8.a *Subscriptions:* We are in a good position but some departments have left us due to the closure of ML activity. OGC notes too that the new allowance to be flexible on subscriptions has helped us retain some members. OGC proposes that for language sections where it is a language unit rather than a formal department that we ask for much smaller amounts. Colleagues agreed this proposal. Good news is that institutions who were former members have re-joined this year alongside some new subject associations.

Action: OGC to work on a new subscriptions system that reflects the current climate.

8.b *PayPal:* The new PayPal account is now live and has been added to the website so subscriptions can be paid directly this way. This will hopefully make subscription processes much easier.

8.c *Accounts:* OGC proposed that CG be added to the UCML bank accounts, which was agreed by the committee.

8.d AF proposes that we make the UCML logo available to institutions that are members to be put on their websites.

Action: JI to look into sending the logo to subject associations.

9. **National reports (10 mins)**

9.a Northern Ireland

SJ

9.a.i *NI Membership:* SJ has met with Ulster whose situation with ML is complex, but hopes to be able to bring them back into the fold.

9.a.ii *BERA:* SJ notes that BERA seem keen to work with UCML and this could be explored as a partnership. CG is very keen for this to take place, and asks SJ to contact them proposing a meeting with CG and VW.

Action: SJ to contact BERA to propose a meeting.

9.a.iii *UCML Devolved Funding:* OGC reminds colleagues that there is £500 set aside annually in the UCML budget for NI that can be used to organise events subsidised by UCML.

- 9.b Scotland JC
9.c Wales LWO

9.c.i *Language Trends Wales*: This year a different format to usual report, but includes a number of interviews with stakeholders including CG.

9.c.ii *Routes Cymru*: pivot online has been successful. Routes Cymru have received £10k to produce a video to encourage students to take up ML at GCSE and A-level. CG extends congratulations to Routes Cymru colleagues on the receipt of this funding.

9.c.iii *MFL Mentoring Cymru*: LWO reports that the project goes from strength to strength and is now working on a post-16 languages recovery report.

CG extended thanks to both SJ and LWO (and to JC in absentia) for their sterling work.

10. Reports from other Executive members (20 mins)

- 10.a Area studies FW
10.b French studies EL

AUPHF has rebranded to become AUPHF+, so no longer aimed uniquely at 'leaders' but is open to anyone interested in French Studies.

- 10.c Germanic/Low countries studies AF
10.d Hispanic studies NB

10.d.i *ILAS closure*: NB drew colleagues' attention to a petition against the proposed closure. CG has met with Jo Fox on this issue, but notes this is still in consultation. It looks likely that changes will occur, but there might be ways for the School of Advanced Study to continue to provide support in some capacity. CG has offered UCML support on this issue.

10.d.ii *Moving conferences online*: a number of associations have done this and NB wonders if there might be an opportunity to share best practice? CG agrees with this idea and suggests this could be something we include in the Winter Plenary.

- 10.e Lusophone studies HO
10.f Italian studies GS
10.g Middle Eastern studies ML
10.h East Asian studies DH

BAKS has raised a question about graduate outcomes, suggesting collecting this data from graduates moving overseas might be more difficult, thereby negatively impacting ML disciplines where graduates are internationally mobile.

Action: CG will take this to SHAPE colleagues to see if there is potential to support a more nuanced approach.

- 10.i Slavonic & East European studies CD
10.j Linguistics FF
10.k IWLP (including the UCML/AULC report) MRG
10.l English Language Teaching AD
10.m Translation & Interpreting BR
10.n Schools Liaison RK
10.o Early Career Academics LL

11. **BREAK OUT ROOMS discussion: 'Perspectives on being a UCML Representative' (30 mins)**

ALL

- Group 1: Online induction useful. Middle/liaison person, but perhaps ways of making this work both ways (reporting in *and* out). More of these events but some smaller, looser meetings to keep conversations going.
- Group 2: Representatives are perhaps not as pro-active when finishing and sending reports which then prevents people from reading the reports with enough time to give feedback at the meeting. Makes constituents wonder what happens with their submissions. Chat function within Teams to be used throughout the year, perhaps? Also discussed continuity between reps and learning from predecessors what they did. Should be formalised that there is some form of handover document. CG notes that reports go back to 1990s but might this be too outdated as a format? Might we use reports to tweet out but use the meeting for discussion instead? CG suggests we retain reports, but not structure the Executive Committee meetings around those reports.
- Group 3: Do reps represent themselves or UCML? Listening to your societies, how much do we feedback what UCML does? We should continue events that bring regions together, the relationship between EAP and languages, relationship language teaching and scholarship and UCML mission, the fact that much of language teaching is carried by staff on insecure contracts.
- Group 4: Ramp up work to support ECA colleagues. Move away from report-based meetings and suggested perhaps limiting to oral reports that are minuted and that can then be fed back to subject associations. Role descriptors should be amplified. Wondered also about how to get subject associations more involved in UCML.

Action: CG, MC and JI to work on providing a UCML presentation template and change role descriptors

12. **Advance planning of Plenary Workshop of 15 Jan 2021 (10 mins)**

All

This will take place online again. Two projects: RiL (showcase work of one region, e.g. Spelling Bee). LWO was contacted by Charles Burdett about possibly profiling the 'Recreating Modern Languages' toolkit. CG proposes a language champion awards scheme that might be launched by a celebratory Winter Plenary. MC also suggests a session thinking about 'Where next for Modern Languages?'. LL cautions that the ECA context is very challenging at the moment and wonders if too positive an approach might be jarring for some colleagues facing significant challenges. CG suggests breakout rooms that allow attendees to choose in a parallel sessions approach. CG suggests a 'change' agenda to link everything. JD suggests a session with ECA colleagues that brings in partners keen to work with them. JD also suggests that if we have awards, they should be nominated not self-nominated to help protect diversity. OGC notes that UCML has regions and diverse constituents and a celebratory plenary should bring in all constituents. Broad agreement among the group that the focus be on problem-solving with a celebratory, inspirational ending.

Action: CG and JI to put together a plenary programme for review

13. **Any Other Business (5 mins)**

all

Funding for Language Teacher Posts: AF and Nicola McLelland have written a letter to the German Ambassador on DAAD posts. Waiting to send based on feedback from

London's DAAD office.

Action: AF to check whether letter can be forwarded to CG, and UCML will ask Baroness Coussins to raise this in House of Lords.

14. Future dates

all

<u>date</u>	<u>event</u>	<u>venue</u>
15 January	Winter Plenary (Business Meeting)	<i>by Microsoft Teams</i>
5 March	Winter Steering Group	<i>by Microsoft Teams</i>
16 April	Spring Exec	by Microsoft Teams
9 July	Summer Plenary (AGM)	<i>by Microsoft Teams</i>
?? October	Autumn Steering Group	TBC
?? November	Winter Exec	??