



UCML
UNIVERSITY COUNCIL
OF MODERN LANGUAGES

05 February 2021

Dear Professor Tickell,

As the Chairs of the University Council of Modern Languages and Association of University Language Communities, we are writing on behalf of our member organisations across the UK sector to urge you to reconsider the proposed withdrawal of the new BA Languages and Intercultural Studies at the University of Sussex.

This is a degree that was designed to replace the Modern Languages degree which is in its final year at present. We understand that this decision is based on findings by a consultancy firm that did not consult with the department involved and would mean that the University of Sussex would no longer have a Languages degree program.

Recent developments at the national level give weight to the claim that the introduction of this degree could not be more timely. These include increasing recognition at government level of the nation's languages deficit, exacerbated by the challenges of Brexit; the consequent urgent need for more language specialists, and the move towards a National Languages Strategy, being spearheaded by the British Academy: <https://www.thebritishacademy.ac.uk/publications/towards-national-languages-strategy-education-and-skills/>. This is a vision that the establishment of the new BA programme at the University of Sussex would be uniquely equipped to deliver: multilingual, multicultural and with the relevant expertise in the emerging field of interculturality.

This new degree, with its highly innovative curriculum (which, in addition to the four main European Languages - German, French, Italian, and Spanish - also covers Latin America, Chicano Americans, Francophone Africa, and Asia, and the teaching of non-European languages) would put the University of Sussex at the forefront of moves to decolonize university curricula and aligns closely with the University's ambition to be a 'global' university. We cannot overstate the damage to the University's internationalization strategy and its reputation that the withdrawal of this degree would entail.

We would be very happy to meet to discuss how UCML and AULC can support the University of Sussex to reconsider this proposal.

Yours sincerely,

Professor Claire Gorrara (Chair), on behalf of the University Council of Modern Languages

Mark Critchley (Chair), on behalf of the Association of University Language Communities