

Item 10.d Hispanic studies

This report is based on ongoing discussion in the discipline, and on updates from representatives of professional associations in Hispanic Studies. Updates were received from AHGBI, WISPS, and SLAS. The main points that have been raised are about cuts to ODA funding; the impact of lockdown and COVID on academic research and departments; and the impact of Brexit and loss of the Erasmus scheme on the Year Abroad.

AHGBI

1. ODA cuts, and resultant cuts to GCRF and Newton funding, with particular concern for how this disproportionately affects Modern Languages research and researchers, given that our research is predominantly overseas; and also affects members in our own subject area, due to large proportion of our members being Latin Americanists
2. Impact of lockdown and COVID on departments: this has been suggested for discussion at forthcoming AHGBI Spanish Reps meeting, which will take place after the UCML Spring Exec, so we don't know the exact outcome of the discussion, but it is anticipated that it will be around the pressures on departments.
3. Impact of lockdown and COVID on research projects, with particular concern for EDI issues. Again, for discussion at forthcoming AHGBI Spanish Reps meeting. AHGBI did quite a lot of work on this last year when they responded to the REF COVID-19 Timetable Consultation in May 2020, so some of the issues are anticipated here – last year AHGBI noted their concerns regarding very serious EDI implications for certain constituencies, particularly women and anyone with caring responsibilities, which will have a long-term impact on their research productivity and profile.
4. Arts and Humanities Alliance shared folders: shared Google folders have been set up by AHA as the most effective way to pool and discuss various initiatives by member organisations: one for documents for internal sharing; the other for outward-facing material. It would be useful to discuss whether there is a way to streamline this across all the language subject associations – e.g., so that we aren't each sharing the same document with AHA.
5. Impact of Brexit on the Year Abroad: this has been suggested by AHGBI members as an issue of concern. UCML is doing excellent work on this, and AHGBI are keen to continue liaising with UCML on this.
6. Turing Scheme: AHGBI members have suggested it would be good to share knowledge on this, particularly on whether this might facilitate our students going to places outside Europe, which are particularly relevant for Hispanic Studies (notably Latin America, but also could be Lusophone Africa or other non-European locations)
7. Revised GCSE Qualification Consultation: AHGBI are aware of the forthcoming AMLUK work in responding to the consultation, and we will also be preparing our own response.

WISPS

1. Brexit and YA: the Turing Scheme does not replace European exchanges in the same manner and does not prioritize languages. It is seemingly tied to UK business interests.
2. Recruitment to languages in general (despite Hispanic Studies doing ok): the lack of funding for exchanges threatens to make languages a minority subject for the well-off.
3. The continuing decrease of students taking exams in languages at secondary schools.
4. Recruitment of Overseas students and the NHS surcharge which is extremely expensive and so excludes excellent students who are not well-off: they may win research scholarships, but still have to find thousands in health charges up-front as part of their visa applications, making PhD scholarships the domain of the wealthy (compared to excellent Latin American students in many cases)
5. The outsourcing of visa applications for study in the UK, the high fees, and the long wait times disadvantage students.
6. Lack of job security and precarious employment. This has a huge impact on mental health and stability of income.

SLAS

1. Turing Scheme/ the loss of Erasmus
2. The loss of ODI funding for UKRI which will have devastating impacts on existing projects.

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