

Item 4: Vice Chair Education (Languages and Intercultural Studies)

This reviews activities since the last meeting and starts with the most recent UCAS statistics.

1. The Languages landscape

- **2020 UCAS end of Cycle Report**

UCAS released end of cycle data on the 16th December, 2020 (a report focussing key trends in WP and sector wide data resources) which I reported on at the last meeting and has published further provider level data on the 4th February, 2021.

Subject data is available for both HECOS and JACS codes. HECOS (Higher Education Classification of Subjects) uses the Common Aggregation Hierarchy¹ (CAH) to 'provide a standardised hierarchical aggregation of HECOS codes suitable for the majority of uses'. CAH19 covers Language and Area Studies and is further sub-divided into English Studies (CAH19-01), Celtic Studies (CAH19-02) and **Languages, Linguistics and Classics (CAH19-03)**. The latter is then further sub-divided into 11 sub-groups from CAH19-03-01, (French studies) to CAH19-03-11 (others in language and area studies). The broad nature of the main CAH code does not seem particularly helpful to our subject area although the HECOS 'subject code identifiers'² themselves are relatively fine-grained at subject level and may provide useful data if this is reported. The CAH19 data shows³ that there was a drop in accepted applicants from **21,135 in 2019 to 20,195 in 2020** (-4.5%). These are the first two years for which HECOS is being used so the data should show a useful but very broad picture over time.

The JACS code data (see below) shows substantial drops in accepted applicant numbers for Groups Q, R and T over the ten years between 2011 and 2020. **There has been a decrease of just over 25% in Linguistics, Classics and related subject numbers, a 36% decrease in European languages, literature and related subject numbers and 37% in non-European Languages, literature and related subjects.** Of course, this data does not reflect recent changes away from single Honours subjects to combined Honours within the Languages area and with other subjects.

| Subject group (JACS3) | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 |
|---|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|-------|
| Group Q Linguistics, Classics & related | 12,635 | 12,030 | 12,460 | 12,525 | 12,575 | 12,245 | 11,745 | 10,840 | 10,240 | 9,465 |
| Group R European Langs, Lit & related | 4,570 | 4,065 | 4,005 | 3,780 | 3,820 | 3,505 | 3,425 | 3,060 | 2,935 | 2,920 |
| Group T Non-European Langs, Lit and related | 1,440 | 1,235 | 1,255 | 1,115 | 1,265 | 1,145 | 1,095 | 985 | 1,045 | 905 |

- **UCML survey 2020**

We have worked closely with AULC this year to build on the themes covered in previous years' surveys. We have received 57 completed surveys from a range of HEIs in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. At least three universities have submitted a separate application from the ML

¹ <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/support/documentation/hecos/cah-list>

² <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/support/documentation/hecos>

³ <https://www.ucas.com/data-and-analysis/undergraduate-statistics-and-reports/ucas-undergraduate-end-cycle-data-resources-2020/2020-entry-provider-level-end-cycle-data-resources>

Department and the IWLP provider so the total number of institutions covered is just over 50. We are working on the joint report and hope to publish it very shortly. It will cover the range of languages taught, the distribution of language provision across the UK as well as feedback on the impact of COVID on our working lives and the further impact of BREXIT on study abroad.

2. Promoting Languages

- **Routes into Languages**

Building on a question in last year's survey, we asked this year whether HEIs were contemplating expanding their activities in the area and there is much positive feedback on this. In terms of the transfer of Routes IPR from OfS to UCML, delays in Southampton are now solved with a few more details to be sorted out. The Routes Committee continues to meet regularly and the hope is to develop more activities in common such as the training of UG ambassadors.

- **National Centre for CLIL: Learning through Languages UK**

I attend the regular meetings of this group on behalf of UCML. There has been a series of 'expert' seminars this year focussing on CLIL which have been very well attended by teachers.



The full series of CLIL Monday seminars can be seen on the website (<https://learningthroughlanguages.org.uk/2020/10/15/clil-mondays/>). The resources side of the CLIL website is also being developed and now contains materials for English, French, German, Spanish and other multilingual resources. Given

- **Gender Action** (<https://www.genderaction.co.uk/>)

I am on the steering group for GA and attend their regular meetings. DECSY (Development Education South Yorkshire) has now taken over the management of the GA project since no other options have come forward. As one of the founding members, UCML will sign the transfer of IPR to DECSY once the details are finalised. There has been little activity around the **Gender Action Schools Award** since the beginning of the pandemic and there is an ongoing discussion around future funding sources to take the GA programme forward. It may be timely to do more to address the issue of **gender imbalance in our own subject areas** since the UCAS end of cycle reports contain comprehensive data which we could use to inform our actions. Some of the potential of this data is illustrated below for 4 randomly chosen JACS language related codes .

| | | | |
|------|---|-------|------|
| 2007 | Q1 - Linguistics | Men | 95 |
| 2007 | Q1 - Linguistics | Women | 275 |
| 2020 | Q1 - Linguistics | Men | 115 |
| 2020 | Q1 - Linguistics | Women | 400 |
| 2007 | R4 - Spanish studies | Men | 105 |
| 2007 | R4 - Spanish studies | Women | 210 |
| 2020 | R4 - Spanish studies | Men | 55 |
| 2020 | R4 - Spanish studies | Women | 135 |
| 2007 | T1 - Chinese studies | Men | 75 |
| 2007 | T1 - Chinese studies | Women | 60 |
| 2020 | T1 - Chinese studies | Men | 45 |
| 2020 | T1 - Chinese studies | Women | 65 |
| 2007 | Y - Combs of phys/math science with arts/humanities/languages | Men | 1760 |
| 2007 | Y - Combs of phys/math science with arts/humanities/languages | Women | 1190 |
| 2020 | Y - Combs of phys/math science with arts/humanities/languages | Men | 570 |
| 2020 | Y - Combs of phys/math science with arts/humanities/languages | Women | 460 |

3. Other activities

- **GCSE MFL content review**

I am taking the lead in developing UCML's response to the DfE's revised subject content review for GCSE MFL in French, German and Spanish, in consultation with other subject associations. The aims of the revised content are broad⁴ and include provision for a 'strong linguistic and cultural foundation for students who go on to study MFL at a higher level post-16' but the specifications are more specifically linguistic and refer to three main areas: 1. the **acquisition of vocabulary**, 2. **mastery of the specified grammar** in terms of both fluency and accuracy in 'oral and written modalities', and 3. **knowledge of sound / spelling relationships together with 'clear and comprehensible pronunciation'**. For the first time, the number of words that students should know will be specified: **1,200 lexical items for foundation tier**, and a **further 500 lexical items for higher tier**. This review will run alongside the OFQUAL review⁵ which is consulting on the necessary changes to assessment.

It would be good to see as many responses as possible to the consultation⁶ from language associations and individuals. The deadline is 19th May.

VW April, 2021

⁴ https://consult.education.gov.uk/ebacc-and-arts-and-humanities-team/gcse-mfl-subject-content-review/supporting_documents/GCSE%20MFL%20subject%20content%20document.pdf

⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/revised-gcse-qualifications-in-modern-foreign-languages/revised-gcse-qualifications-in-modern-foreign-languages>

⁶ <https://consult.education.gov.uk/ebacc-and-arts-and-humanities-team/gcse-mfl-subject-content-review/>