

UCML Executive Committee



Friday 29th April 2022 10am-12pm
Via MS Teams

Item 10.h: East Asian Studies

Report of the East Asian Studies Representative

In order to reach out to the associations and the subject areas in different universities, I've contacted them via emails and circulated a questionnaire survey collecting relevant information.

From University of Cambridge:

Events and activities:

Pls see our full list of events at our website, all detailed here: <https://www.ames.cam.ac.uk/whats-on/east-asia-seminar-series-lent-2022>. This is just our Lent term Monday evening seminar series. We also have an upcoming week of rakugo/comedy events in Japanese and English: <https://www.ames.cam.ac.uk/shinoharu-rakugo-performance-japanese>

Issues and concerns:

The shutoff of travel to East Asia since 2019 has had a massive impact on cutting down the number of students that can go abroad for advanced language training, and this is also a problem for graduate students as well who have not been able to use their scholarships in their target countries. As the recent HEPI report also detailed for Chinese studies, the level and number of advanced Japanese and Chinese language learners is not at the height it should be in the UK. The UK is still woefully overly focused on itself and Europe to the exclusion of developing academic expertise in East Asia. Unless the government pushes this and gives support and vocalizes the need to understand East Asia, numbers will continue to drop.

Our faculty is not a language faculty. The Dept of East Asian Studies where Chinese, Japanese and Korean are taught is an area studies faculty. This is part of the problem. We are seen only as a sort of "service" section that teaches language but in reality, we teach about East Asia from all of its angles, including history and politics. In order to understand those topics you need a good level of foreign language skills, or you merely continue parroting western misunderstandings of East Asia.

British Association of Japanese Studies:

Events and activities:

The BAJIS Conference will be held in Manchester on 7-9 September 2022.

Issues:

The biggest challenge continues to be the restrictions for entry into Japan. While the daily limit has been increased, it's still well below the number that used to be allowed in and requires much more red-tape and expenses than in the past. The current restrictions are seen as being unjustifiable in the eyes of the academic community.

British Association of Korean Studies:

Events and activities:

Due to Covid we have not had any events apart from the continuous publishing of the European Journal of Korean Studies

Issues:

Covid has been the biggest obstacle to us BAKS running events, such as conferences and workshops. The Joint East Asian Studies Conference has been postponed to 2024.

There continues to be a lot of interest in Korea, but for visa/quarantine reasons scholarly exchanges are extremely difficult, except if held online.

While the forced move to online platforms has been welcome on some level, it has also brought a number of challenges.

Many academics have also struggled with keeping up their research due to archives and libraries being closed.

British Association of Chinese Studies:

There has been no response from the association to my emails or the survey, so I've contacted the subject areas in some universities.

University of St Andrews:

Chinese Studies Department Launch Events. A series of lectures, workshops and other activities end September and beginning October 2022.

Main issue: China's lockdown.