

# UCML Executive Committee

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



## 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 colleagues working in Hispanic Studies. This report also highlights key ongoing issues previously raised by subject associations AHGBI, SLAS and WISPS.

### International work:

- **Visa requirements** place an undue burden, both bureaucratic and—in a linked fashion—financial on *lectores* who arrive from outside of the UK and who pre-Brexit did not face such obstacles. For example, the cost in money and time of passing the narrowly available English testing for skilled workers seems like an undue burden when the *lectores* are assigned to teach Spanish, and colleagues in the hiring process should decide what level of English is required.
- Several colleagues have mentioned that their university's interpretation of **tax law** has made hiring researchers or postdocs based in Latin America, but paid in the UK, difficult. Also, research trips of over 6 months for staff/students are also now raising tax issues. It's not clear if this is because of a change to HMRC regulations or because of how universities are interpreting guidance. All of these issues taken together make international work much harder.
- The loss of **ODA funding** has continued to be an issue.

### PGRs and ECRs:

- There is continued difficulty for **PGR students** in doing fieldwork/coping with the disruption to fieldwork and there are questions about what this will mean for that generation of

students. The disruption also meant that it's been harder for PGRs to build their social/work networks, which could have repercussions as they move into the ECR stage.

- **Early Career Academics:** AHGBI will be looking to strengthen their work in that area in terms of support, guidance and a broader analysis of the sector

#### **Health of the discipline since the start of the pandemic:**

- There are key issues about the health of the sector in the ongoing aftermath of the **Covid-19 pandemic**. AHGBI are discussing what can we do as a sector to protect our discipline, locally and nationally and as part of wider advocacy networks.
- **Recruitment** to UG programmes with Spanish is still strong across the sector but as part of a JH combination rather than SH. Portuguese is struggling a lot more nowadays. It increasingly only exists as a JH combination with Spanish and numbers here are also dropping. This will impact on the existence of programmes that include Latin American Studies.
- Area studies, and Latin American Studies as a subset of area studies, is permanently under pressure. The old **centres of Latin American Studies** set up in the 60s have been largely dismantled, with the Institute for Latin American Studies at SAS being downgraded to a (really very small) centre (that still manages to be very active) located at the IMLR over the course of the last year.
- From a broader point of view, and thinking of the work of Language Acts and Worldmaking, a major issue is how the discipline manages in the context of the seemingly inevitable decline of **students coming through traditional routes**. A lot of work has been done in this area, but there are specific questions about how we maintain and strengthen HE programmes without a) ML uptake in schools and b) our adding inadvertently to the damage in schools through the (necessary) increase in ab initio