

UCML Hispanic Studies Report
November 2022

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 and subject associations AHGBI and SLAS. Notably, the issues raised in previous reports persist. These can broadly be grouped under the following headings:

PGRs and ECAs:

- There is continued difficulty for PGR students in doing fieldwork and coping with disruptions to fieldwork. This is also a concern for the next generation of students.
- Opportunities for building networks have been limited for the current cohort of PGRs, and there are concerns about the repercussions this will have as they move into the ECR stage.

Funding/finances:

- The loss of ODA funding has continued to be an issue.
- The Turning Exchanges are not a good replacement for Erasmus and the short-term nature of the arrangements makes planning hard.
- Several colleagues 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.
- 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. But all of these issues taken together make international work much harder.

AHGBI Spanish Representatives meeting:

The Association of Hispanists of Great Britain and Ireland held their annual Spanish Representatives meeting on 4 November 2022. The minutes of the meeting will be circulated in due course. The main topics of discussion were as follows:

- Concerns were raised about the impact of Brexit on teaching, especially as regards securing placements for students on the Year Abroad and for students obtaining visas.
- As has been highlighted repeatedly, the lack of certainty surrounding the Turing Scheme makes planning difficult.

- There was a discussion about the impact of Covid on teaching and assessment practices, specifically about a shift seen across many institutions in moving from exams to coursework. Colleagues noted that it was important to reflect on the implications of this for language teaching and assessment specifically.
- The impact of the pandemic was also raised in relation to research. Colleagues raised concerns about the “long tail” of Covid, and how the long-lasting impact it has had on research remains to be seen. Shifts in institutional funding for research post-pandemic was raised in relation to this.
- Cutting across all of the above-mentioned points, colleagues noted the EDI implications of the impact of the pandemic on teaching and research.
- AHGBI is committed to ongoing work in supporting PGRs and ECAs, and will be announcing specific initiatives in due course. They will be recruiting a PGR and ECA representative to their Executive Committee to reflect the fact that the issues affecting these two cohorts are different.
- Colleagues in the AHGBI noted the importance of work being done by UCML (especially the Year Abroad Special Interest Group) and there was consensus that further/future collaboration and cooperation between AHGBI and UCML would be beneficial for the discipline and also ensure that we do not duplicate work.

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