

# UCML Executive Committee

Friday 2 November 2018      12.30 – 16.00  
Monnet Room, Europe House  
32 Smith Square, London SW1P 3EU



## VC Education

### 1. JCQ results releases

In August JCQ released examination results for A-Levels and GCSEs.

- For A-Levels, languages had mixed results with a decline in French, German and, for the first time in a few years, Spanish (down on last year's figures by -7.9%, -16.5% and -4.02% respectively). The overall decline, however, has been partially offset by the gain from Chinese (8.6%) and other languages; the latter, to which Chinese belongs in terms of categorisation, have in fact seen a rise for three years running and are up by 3.06% on last year's data.
- As the AS qualification has been decoupled from A-Levels, the sector expected a sharp fall in students taking such examinations for languages. This is also the consequence of curricular reform for A-Levels: with the new qualification, fewer students are selecting a fourth subject in which, traditionally, languages tended to recruit quite well.
- GCSE: very positive news arrives from GCSE results despite the fall (-2.7%) of under-16-year-olds in the general population who enrolled for the qualification. Overall, and for the first time since 2013, all Languages entries for GCSE have increased by 0.58% when looking at year-on-year figures. This is a particularly relevant result for our sector when taking the previous point into account. The current situation looks particularly positive for German after having experienced the harshest fall in takers of all languages in 2017. The languages with increased entries on figures from 2017 are as follows: German 2.03%; Spanish 4.44%; Welsh (as a first and second language combined) 3.94%. In similar fashion to the situation for A-Levels, the highest entries can be found in Chinese, Dutch and Arabic.

This year it has also been interesting to note that the percentage of students obtaining A\*-A in A-Levels has increased nationally over all subjects combined: 26.4% entrants scored either an A or A\*, up slightly on 26.3% in 2017.

### 2. UCAS data: granularity project

Work on this project continues. Claire and I have been working together to try and find the most effective way to code all languages so that UCAS can send us data on the degree combinations we have requested.

### 3. Linguistics Survey

I have been in touch with Federico Faloppa re. the creation and distribution of a national survey for Linguistics. We are in the process of reviewing questions, which shall be circulated to the Exec for review and approval in due course.

#### 4. Languages mapping project

This is a project in which UCML is involved in collaboration with the OU (Inma Alvarez and Carlos Montoro), and Caroline Campbell from AULC. The objective is the creation of a languages map showing degree provision in the different regions. We have been working on the report and are in the process of finishing the 3<sup>rd</sup> draft. Interesting results have come to light especially regarding the relationship between departments and Language Centres. The final report should be ready for dissemination by the end of the year.

#### 5. News of interest

- Article in [TES](#) claiming that language losses are worse than originally advertised
- Article in [The Guardian](#) outlining the percentage of Europeans able to speak multiple languages released on the European Day of Languages.
- **UCML Newsletter:** we have started writing a newsletter, to be released quarterly available through our website. Please advertise widely to our constituencies.
- The [Higher Education Academy](#) has now merged with [Equality Challenge Unit](#) and [Leadership Foundation](#) for Higher Education to form a new body named [Advanced HE](#), owned by UUK and GuildHE. Advanced HE are starting a process of consultation with its members with the objective of reintroducing subject communities. I have registered our interest on behalf of UCML; please ask your institution to sign up, too:  
<https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/addressing-subject-challenges>



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