

Meeting Minutes
Teaching Sustainability Languages Subgroup
4 March 2025

1. **Welcome and apologies**

Attendees: Fiona Devine (Chair), Thomas Schmidt, Camden Reeves, Frank Eissa-Barroso, Ben Cawley, Fiona Smyth, Kathryn Howard, Emma Wilson, Julia Dobson, Helen Dunning (Secretary) and Lexy Cummins.

Apologies: Catherine Tann, Jayne Hindle, Emma Rose, Jennifer Haworth, Christopher Ford and Fiona Keenan.

2. **Minutes from the last meeting: for confirmation**

The [minutes](#) were confirmed as an accurate record of the meeting with one revision from JD. HD to remove JD's comment from the last section.

3. **Outstanding actions**

- **Action 23:** TS confirmed that Thea Cameron Faulkner is currently undertaking a review of 2+2 provision and will further look into the 3+1+1 progression agreement.
- **Action 28/32:** LC met with JD and Orieb Masadeh-Tate to take a brief for this piece of work which has since been approved. LC meeting with Alexandra Martin Hernandez on 5 March 2025 to progress.
- **Action 57:** JD has been working with Elizabeth McCullough, who will share visualisation of studying 2 subjects.

4. **RAID log**

- The RAID log was shared for information, no comments or feedback were received.

5. **UCAS Equal consideration deadline**

- The principles agreed at the last Taskforce meeting were confirmed.
- A small number of programmes has not received any applications by the deadline, all of which have already been agreed to close and 2025 would have been the final year of entry.
- Four programmes (BA English Language and Chinese, BA Russian and Chinese, BA Arabic and Russian and BA Chinese and Japanese) have received a very small number of applications (1 or 2) but there are no live offers. These programmes have already agreed to be closed and 2025 would have been the last year of entry. It was proposed and agreed to close these programmes to new applications.
- The rationale for doing this was highlighted, noting that during Clearing it will be important to allocate resource towards programmes where it generates the biggest impact.

6. **Simplifying exit pathways**

- It was agreed that exit pathways will now be referred to as *languages and cultures pathways*.
- At the 30 January 2025 Taskforce meeting, the Taskforce confirmed that they are supporting of retaining these pathways but there is a need to reduce the overall number (there are currently 59 in HUMS, simplify them and understand why students switch to them).
- FS, JD, EW and CR to meet and discuss how they can be simplified and draft a framework that can be applied across the Faculty. Group to bring a short paper as to how the decision has been reached at the next meeting. **Action: FS, JD, EW, CR**
- As part of rationale for retaining exit pathways, it is important to highlight that students go on to get good degrees. Moving forward, it would be useful to look at how we track and record this data effectively.

7. **Update from MLC**

- JD confirmed that colleagues have been engaged in discussions and a third meeting with Programme Directors and FK is being arranged. The group have been looking at how to define what makes the UoM offer distinctive and updating the portfolio to reflect emerging trends. JD will be inviting wider group of colleagues to be involved in the discussion at the departmental board meeting and away day on 9 April.
- JD reported that umbrella structures have been discussed with colleagues using similar structures at the University of Warwick. They had reported some concerns about visibility of subjects under the umbrella structure, and concerns about losing applicants on the journey going through website etc. That said, there is no emerging consensus on moving away from the umbrella structure yet.
- There is also a need to consider that offering an umbrella structure (such as the Bristol model) poses a challenge to timetabling, as the flexibility offered means students may not choose their languages until they arrive.
- TS asked whether anyone is offering a more straightforward umbrella model that is transparent and serves as good practice. Elizabeth McCullough has been doing some work around marketing websites and highlighted that Durham's website is a good and clear example.
- FD has been discussing School websites with Heads of School and KH. Changes to the University website are being proposed by Duncan.
- FD to follow up with colleague regarding Middle Eastern Studies offer at the University of Leeds. **Action: FD**

8. Charles Forsdick visit: *update*

- Charles (Professor of French at Cambridge, British Academy lead for languages) met with JD, FD and TS to look at the work going on towards the UK national languages strategy.
- The British Academy are assessing emerging trends in education and recruitment, changes in provision nationally of language learning and humanities more generally. Remapping of cold spots in education provision is being considered in terms of barriers to opportunity.
- JD explained that there are no striking emerging trends at present, but a lot of this work is to be done to assert the status of languages and reaffirm their value. JD to share any further updates from British Academy.
- CR is reviewing school level trends in other subjects besides languages.

9. Admissions: *update*

- Home UG is in line with last year in terms of applications and offers. While acceptances are down, this is due to a much lower number of deferrals but is too early in the cycle to make conclusions.
- SALC is up 4% overall for International UG, however the quality of applications is not strong therefore fewer offers are made.
- MLC recruits more overseas students than any other subjects in SALC at UG, but International UG applications are down 12% in MLC. This trend is similar to last year. FEB to look into why this is higher than in other subjects. **Action: FEB**
- FEB noted a significant rise in applications of joint honours combinations of a language and Film Studies, with applications up 65% and offers up 300%. This uplift may be attributed to removal of written assignment during the application process. FD to review data with ER in light of this increase, however to bear in mind that while looking at the number of applications, we also have to consider whether these translate into offers, conversions and acceptances. JD supported reviewing this. **Action: FD, ER**

10. Areas of growth in 2024 registration data: *update*

- TS presented a [paper](#) on areas of growth and emerging trends.
- FEB flagged that we do not currently have a combination of languages with economics, or languages with law. This is something we may wish to consider as they are offered by competitors. FEB and TS to liaise with Elizabeth McCullough and review competitor offers, British Academy and admissions data to build an initial picture on who is making offers and the number of studying a language combination with law and economics. **Action: FEB and TS**

11. Communications: *update*

- BC gave an overview of updates that have been made to the TS StaffNet pages.
- BC to check whether students can access StaffNet pages. **Action: BC**

12. AOB

- The Subgroup meetings on 2 April and 20 May will be cancelled and a meeting rescheduled mid-late April.

Actions

Action Number	Action	Action Owner	Deadline
72	Meet and discuss how languages and cultures pathways they can be simplified and draft a framework that can be applied across the Faculty. Group to bring a short paper as to how the decision has been reached at the next meeting.	FS, JD, EW, CR	Next meeting
73	Follow up with colleague regarding Middle Eastern Studies offer at University of Leeds.	FD	Next meeting
74	MLC recruits more students than any other subject in SALC at UG, but International UG applications are down 12% in MLC. This trend is similar to last year. FEB to look into why this is higher than in other subjects.	FEB	Next meeting
75	FD to review Film Studies data with ER in light of increase in applications.	FD, ER	Next meeting
76	Liaise with Elizabeth McCullough and review competitor offers, British Academy and admissions data to build an initial picture on who is making offers and the number of studying a language combination with law and economics.	FEB, TS	Next meeting
77	BC to check whether students can access StaffNet pages.	BC	ASAP

[Action Log - Languages Subgroup.xlsx](#)