

Meeting Minutes

Teaching Sustainability Languages Subgroup

13 May 2025

1. Welcome and apologies

Attendees: Fiona Devine (Chair), Emma Rose, Fiona Smyth, Camden Reeve, Emma Wilson, Catherine Tann, Julia Dobson, Thomas Schmidt, Frank Eissa-Barrera, Ben Cawley, Helen Dunning (Secretary)

Apologies: Lexy Cummins, Jayne Hindle, Jennifer Haworth, Fiona Keenan, Kathryn Howard

2. Minutes from the last meeting: for confirmation

The [minutes](#) were confirmed as an accurate record of the meeting.

3. Outstanding actions

- Action 44 , ‘to have an overview of research performance of languages as a future agenda item’ to be closed, but any impact on research activity will be monitored.
- Action 75 – FD confirmed we remain firm on the original decision, having reviewed Film Studies data in light of increase in applications.

4. HoS Update

- TS advised that the ‘Modern Languages and Cultures and Law’ and the ‘Modern Languages and Cultures and Economics’ course numbers for other institutions are very small. These suggested joint honours programmes would not achieve the desired growth for MLC.

5. Update from MLC

- JD advised that the work with programme directors, supported by FK, rebooted in March, with one meeting having taken place on 12 May and two further meetings also planned for May.
- Purpose and vision have been defined, and colleagues are looking to build a bridge between what MLC needs to be (which may be different from where it wants to be) and where it is currently, aligning School, Faculty and University visions.
- Discussions have taken place around:

- Identifying potential problems with an 'umbrella' model identified elsewhere where individual languages are not 'visible' needs to be considered.
 - What opportunities there are.
 - How we respond to emerging trends
 - Implementable ideas around promotion and marketing
 - Dual degrees and baskets.
 - Looking at partnerships and collaborations as opportunities. For example. Andrew Brodie seminars on AI, inviting more external speakers. FD to pick up in meeting with Kate Camden from DDAR. **Action: FD**
- Potential new programme combinations have been looked at, however the conclusion was reached that combinations with STEM departments could prove difficult given student numbers in FSE.
 - JD will look at UK profiles for modern languages and cultures and maths and modern languages and cultures and computer science. **Action: JD**
 - The targeted promotion of LEAP provision to STEM programmes was discussed - JD to ask Elizabeth McCullough for data. **Action: JD**
 - Marketing and insights workstream is continuing, and syndicated work on expectations and understanding is happening in collaboration with other universities. Work is taking place to look at the main factors that determine whether secondary school children choose to study a language, with an update expected in June.
 - The proposed introduction of an umbrella structure will create a top-level programme. The earliest feasible timeframe in terms of external structures would be 2027. The need to understand all external deadlines, e.g. UCAS was highlighted. From an internal perspective, there is a need to look at timeline, project management, implications for teaching and learning and admissions teams. A more comprehensive rebuild of the programme would require a later launch date.
 - The model aligns with key RG competitors who have also moved to this structure. It is important to recognise that MLC is not 'broken' but is shifting structure to align with the sector and consolidate its position.
 - ER and EW are meeting to consider implications of the model for PS staff and processes. **Action: ER, EW**
 - The possibility of offering change to existing students rather than "teach out" old model for all was proposed. It would mean running a version of each model for each year of the programme, rather than introducing one year at a time. Pros and cons to be considered including the impact on student experience.
 - TS to reach out to Martin Evans at Durham to find out who is most appropriate people to speak to there. JD to contact Leeds and Newcastle. **Action: TS, JD**
 - Agreed: more detail on the umbrella model to be presented at the next meeting of the Languages Sub-Group. **Action: JD**
 - FS confirmed that Humanities will be piloting removing the wording "subject to approval" from programmes when advertising programmes that had NPP1 approval but had not yet completed NPP2 approval.
 - Concern had been raised about other departments not offering MLC course units when slimming down the number of options available to their students.

- Supporting teacher development in primary and secondary schools had been discussed. Economics have recently started working with the Bank of England as an initiative to support Economics teaching. A similar approach could be considered. Additionally, FS advised that colleagues engage with Teacher Education as they have contacts with many schools and offer PGCE training for some languages. **Action: TS to liaise with JS.**

6. Admissions update

- The overall MLC landscape is looking similar to last year.
- For Home student applications, offers and accepts are very marginally down.
- For overseas, the potential issue that had been identified has resolved itself, and we are now only down 2% on applications.
- Of the programmes that have been withdrawn, 24 have no live accepts, and 5 have no offers or accepts. However, the deadlines for applicants to reply have not yet been reached.
- Agreed that if a programme for which 2025 is the last intake has a confirmed student after results are received, it will be open for recruitment through clearing and the C&C Strategy will be applied.
- It was flagged that Politics and Spanish and Politics and Italian are doing better in terms of numbers, and that modern languages with business management for German, Spanish and Chinese are all up, which reinforces the message around social sciences.
- The next deadline is for replies to offers is 6 June, and data will be available the next meeting.

7. Comms update

- A new addition to the Staffnet pages is SHAPE mapping reports. This has links to the mapping tool used by British Academy, using HESA data. It was flagged however that international students are not included in SHAPE mapping data. ER has put together more detailed information on HECoS codes and how they are utilised, which will be shared with the subgroup. **Action: ER**
- BC to investigate British council pages as suggested by FD. **Action: BC**

8. RAID log

- Any feedback or comments on the RAID log to go to LC

9. Summary of Actions and Decisions

<u>Action</u>	<u>Owner</u>	<u>Deadline</u>
FD to discuss partnerships and collaboration with Kate Camden from DDAR, eg Andrew Brodie seminars on AI	FD	Next meeting

JD will look at UK profiles for modern languages and cultures and maths and modern languages and cultures and computer science	JD	Next meeting
JD to ask Elizabeth Mccullough for data on LEAP provision to STEM programmes	JD	Next meeting
ER and EW to meet to consider implications of the model for PS staff and processes	ER, EW	Next meeting
TS to reach out to Martin Evans at Durham to find out who is most appropriate people to speak to there. JD to contact Leeds and Newcastle	TS, JD	Next meeting
More detail on the umbrella model to be presented at the next meeting of the Languages Subgroup	JD	Next meeting
TS to liaise with JS regarding supporting teacher development in primary and secondary schools and engaging with Education	TS	Next meeting
ER to share detailed information on HECoS codes and how they are utilised	ER	Next meeting
BC to investigate British council pages as suggested by FD	BC	Next meeting

10. **AOB**

- FD confirmed she has met with all HoDs in SALC and will now be meeting with HoDs from the other schools, and asked JD and TS to think about whether there are any other colleagues it would be useful to meet.
- The next meeting will take place on 3 July, 3:00- 4:30pm, in room A4 Samuel Alexander building.