

ALL-PARTY PARLIAMENTARY GROUP on MODERN LANGUAGES

Chair: Tonia Antoniazzi MP (Lab); Co-Chair: Baroness Coussins (CB);
Vice-Chairs: Darren Paffey MP (Lab); Lord Dykes (CB); Lord Sherbourne of Didsbury (Con).



3 April 2025

To:
Andrew RT Davies, Chair, Economy, Trade, and Rural Affairs Committee

CC:
Wendy Lerner, Vice Chancellor, Cardiff University
Damian Walford-Davies, Deputy Vice Chancellor, Cardiff University
Pat Younge, Chair of Council, Cardiff University
Vikki Howells, Minister for Further and Higher Education, Welsh Government
Baroness Smith of Malvern, Minister of State (Minister for Skills) and Government spokesperson for Equalities, Department for Education
Heledd Fychan, Chair, Wales International Cross-Party Group
Alex Barros-Curtis, MP for Cardiff West
Stephen Doughty, MP for Cardiff South and Penarth
Anna McMorris, MP for Cardiff North
Jo Stevens, MP for Cardiff East

Dear Mr Davies,

Request for economic impact assessment of proposed closures in languages and cultures at Cardiff University

The All-Party Parliamentary Group on Languages is alarmed that Cardiff University is proposing to close degrees in languages and cultures at Cardiff University.

We wish to bring your attention to this matter (7 February letter attached).

What impact assessment has been made of the economic effects in Cardiff and across Wales of closing such significant provision of languages study?

For example, Cardiff University is the largest provider of modern languages degrees in Wales, accounting for over 60 per cent of all undergraduate intake. This would make access to languages within Wales difficult for many – forcing linguists to leave Wales for their degree; reducing the number of trainee languages teachers available to Welsh schools; and risking the loss of Wales-based graduates who decide not to return as a result.

Cardiff University is a regular recipient of funds from the Turing Scheme and the Welsh Government's Taith Scheme, both of which fund international mobilities and (in the case of Taith) reciprocal international exchanges, which brings overseas students and others to Wales.

We note for example that Taith has funded five 'planned projects'¹ at Cardiff University from 2022-2024, funding 1,311 individuals to a total of £2,829,518. How many of these mobilities would be affected by these closures and what would be the financial impact?

The closures could furthermore complicate regional inequalities in economic opportunity.

We would be grateful if you could provide reassurance that full economic impact assessment has been made of the proposals, across a full range of criteria, including those above, and provide details of any such impact assessment.

Best wishes,

Tonia Antoniazzi MP, Chair

Baroness Jean Coussins, Co-Chair

All-Party Parliamentary Group on Modern Languages
APPG Secretariat: APPGML@ciol.org.uk

¹ <https://www.taith.wales/impact/planned-projects/>

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7 February 2025

To:

Wendy Lerner, Vice Chancellor, Cardiff University
Damian Walford-Davies, Deputy Vice Chancellor, Cardiff University
Pat Younge, Chair of Council, Cardiff University

CC:

Vikki Howells, Minister for Further and Higher Education, Welsh Government
Baroness Smith of Malvern, Minister of State (Minister for Skills) and Government spokesperson for Equalities,
Department for Education

Dear Wendy, Damian and Pat,

Call to secure the future provision of languages and cultures at Cardiff University

The All-Party Parliamentary Group on Languages urges Cardiff University to declare an immediate pause in the current proposals for the closure of degrees in languages and cultures at Cardiff University.

Proposals have caused great concern across the UK.

It is clear that the closure of honours degrees in languages, cultures and societies cannot be seen as a strictly internal matter, but will have strategic consequences affecting language provision and leadership in Wales and indeed the UK.

We urge decision makers to pause, take a wider view and commit to maintaining provision, working with staff and stakeholders to find ways forward.

The APPG is concerned that proposals will harm the reputation of Cardiff University and reflect badly on Wales and the UK more widely.

Colleagues at Cardiff University have led, and continue to lead on, nationally important work for languages, resulting in Cardiff University's enjoying a well-deserved reputation for leadership on language policy in Wales, influence on national policy, and pioneering student mentoring programmes which are influencing the whole country.

Cardiff University is the largest provider of modern languages degrees in Wales, accounting for over 60 per cent of all undergraduate intake. The impact of cuts would therefore be of national and strategic importance. It would make access to languages within Wales difficult for many – forcing linguists to leave Wales for their degree; and reduce the number of trainee languages teachers available to Welsh schools.

We note that the proposed cuts were raised in the Senedd as a matter of national urgency on February 5th, and urge all relevant parties to respond and find solutions.

It is short-sighted to lose linguistic and cultural expertise as the country's future requirements for diplomacy, security, diversified trade and exports will become more complex.

Post-Brexit, as the UK navigates new relationships and trade with the European Union and the rest of the world, including international university partnerships and preparing young people for the agile, skilled careers of the future, we will need universities to lead in providing the necessary skills and opportunities.

We urge Cardiff University to commit to be part of that future.

Tonia Antoniazzi MP
Chair

Baroness Jean Coussins
Co-Chair

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