

Research Environment (REF5)

UoA 28B: Modern Languages and Linguistics (Modern Languages and Linguistics)

The vitality of the Modern Languages and Linguistics unit at Ulster is evidenced by its notable research successes in the current cycle, including:

- External research awards totalling over £663k
- 14.3 PhD completions
- The awarding of a University Distinguished Research Fellowship (one of only two awarded annually)
- The editing of 7 research volumes
- The organisation of 22 international conferences
- The establishment of INFL (Irish Network in Formal Linguistics) funded by AHRC and IRCHSS
- The establishment of UCoM (Ulster Centre on Multilingualism)
- The development of a Modern Languages Strategy for Northern Ireland
- The hosting of the EuroCALL headquarters since 2010

The unit includes two research groups: the **Modern European Culture** (MEC) research group and the **Linguistics** group. MEC focuses primarily on writers and themes that challenge the orthodoxies and prejudices that face society, including racism, sectarianism and anti-Semitism. The Linguistics research group has expanded since 2008 to specialise in theoretical syntax, historical syntax, discourse, semantics, pragmatics, psycholinguistics, and applied linguistics.

Organisationally, MEC is part of the School of Modern Languages and the Arts and Humanities Research Institute (AHRI henceforth). The Linguistics research group is part of the Institute for Research in Social Sciences (IRISS henceforth). The majority of this group is located in the School of Communication but additional members are from the School of Modern Languages and the School of Sociology and Applied Social Studies.

Set against 2008 the unit overall has seen a rebalancing towards Linguistics, the introduction of Chinese (see below) and the retention of core strengths in French, Spanish and German culture. The University's commitment to linguistics is evidenced by both new recruitments and strategic investment in staff who had not reached the threshold for RAE. As a result, the linguistics group currently comprises 9 staff (from 3 in RAE 2008). This expansion has led to the development of new areas of focus in the reporting period. In general, the research unit has not just achieved the strategic objectives set out for the assessment period, but has expanded in new directions. Unusually for a unit of a relatively modest size, it now covers a broad range of overlapping areas and themes. This will ensure the sustainability of this research unit's strengths going forward.

The unit has had an excellent rate of PhD completion, with 14.3 PhDs awarded in the present cycle. It also has a very active cohort of PhD students with 21 currently registered, all funded by a variety of external and internal scholarships.

The unit has an excellent record in research grants with a research spend of £394k but a total of £663k awarded. Among the notable awards in this cycle are £408k from the AHRC in 2013 for a project on Irish-Jewish literature, £45k (2012-2014) from the AHRC (jointly with QUB) for the Translating Cultures project, £20k a year (2010>) as Headquarters of EUROCALL, €34,619.03 in 2009 (of which £10,735 to Ulster) from AHRC/IRCHSS for establishment of INFL, \$148 from NSF for Haiki's grammar project (2008), £15k (2007 and 2010) from the BA for two projects on L2 acquisition (£7450K fell in the time between assessment periods hence is not registered).