

The [University Council of Modern Languages](#) and the [Classical Association](#) jointly welcome the Department for Education's [recent announcement](#) of support for new and existing initiatives to develop in England the teaching of languages, cultures and societies, both modern and ancient. We share a commitment to the belief that language learning fosters not just competence in specific languages, but the analytical, linguistic, intercultural, literacy and communication skills that are vital to the creation of a prosperous, productive, influential, innovative, knowledgeable, culturally richer, more socially cohesive and healthier society. We also share a firm belief that language learning should be accessible for all.

The DfE announcement outlined continued support for The Modern Foreign Language Pedagogy Pilot, a scheme launched and managed by the [National Centre for Excellence for Language Pedagogy](#) which supports the teaching of French, German and Spanish, in addition to the £16.4 million extension of the [Mandarin Excellence Programme](#), run by University College London Institute of Education and the British Council. Building on the success of the Mandarin Excellence Programme, the DfE also announced that the Government will make available £4 million for a new Latin Excellence Programme, which will work with up to 40 schools in disadvantaged areas to develop teacher training resources and resources for 11-16 year-olds.

These pilot initiatives are welcome initial steps towards the wider suite of medium- to long-term actions recommended in the 2020 [Towards a National Languages Strategy: Education and Skills](#) by a coalition of organisations (British Academy, Arts and Humanities Research Council, Association of School and College Leaders, British Council, Universities UK). TNLS proposed urgent, concerted and coordinated action at all levels to reverse the persistent decline in take up of languages in the UK. Seeking to build on existing initiatives and increase their impact, the strategy highlighted the success of the Mandarin Excellence Programme and the potential to introduce similar intensive schemes for other languages, with a focus on areas of multiple deprivation and low language-learning uptake.

The University Council of Modern Languages and the Classical Association welcome the Government's recognition of the benefits and strategic importance of language education and the investment in both modern and ancient languages, including lesser taught languages. Together with the languages community across the UK, we are actively engaged in further discussion, sharing research and lobbying to extend the benefits, reach, and scope of these programmes and to capitalise on such policy engagements as the [TORCH Knowledge Exchange Fellowship on ancient languages education](#) and the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) [Open World Research Initiative projects \(OWRI\)](#) which demonstrate the importance of multilingualism.

We are committed to continued cooperation, to promote and secure language learning for all.