Public Policy Engagement for Languages Researchers

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Part of an OPEN Leaders project funded by Oxford Policy Engagement Network, in partnership with the Faculty of Medieval and Modern Languages [MML], University of Oxford, and the Queen's College Translation Exchange.

This project aimed to increase capacity and infrastructure for public policy engagement within the Oxford MML Faculty. In order to understand the current situation and opportunities for strategic improvements, this report maps the status quo for languages policy engagement within MML and within government. It forms the basis of the project's recommendations to the Faculty on a strategic approach to public policy engagement.

Contents

Introduction

Interest in closer collaboration between policymakers and languages researchers is growing on both sides. Within academia, this trend is evidenced in Professor Wendy Ayres-Bennett's 'Languages and Policy' report (January 2024)[i] and by 'How does Arts and Humanities research influence public policymaking?', a report by Professor Arlene Holmes-Henderson and Luke Sewell (October 2024).[ii] On the policy side, the formation of an Academic Engagement sub-group of the Cross-Government Languages Group [xGLG], and the approval of the xGLG's vision and strategic goals by the Civil Service Board in February 2022, signal a shift in how languages expertise is valued by the policy community.

The need for more effective collaboration has become more acute as the challenges facing study and research in Modern Languages have grown. While there is consensus in the languages research community that it represents 'an essential disciplinary area that contributes to developing interdisciplinary and cross-sectoral solutions to global issues of urgent topical concern', this public value is under-represented nationally.[iii] Among Modern Languages faculties in the UK, there is a growing sense of crisis due to shared concerns about declining numbers opting for languages courses post-16 and post-18, the resulting departmental downsizing and closures, and the changing student population and its evolving demands.[iv]

This OPEN Leaders project acknowledges these major challenges and looks at how energies within the Oxford Modern Languages Faculty and the wider languages research sector could be more effectively engaged for research-policy collaborations. It explores how Oxford's MML Faculty can leverage this momentum to expand its policy influence beyond education, impacting areas including culture, media, technology, health, and social care.

To lay the groundwork for this development, this report assesses the MML Faculty's potential for policy engagement from an internal and external perspective. Given the project's focus on the work of the Cross-Government Languages Group, the conception of 'policy' and 'policymaker' throughout this report is defined according to that group, which has representation from government departments, arms-length bodies, and universities. The report further maps the policy landscape of languages expertise consumers, identifies policymakers' needs when collaborating with languages researchers, and outlines existing challenges to effective and sustainable collaborations.

1. Policy engagement within the MML Faculty, University of Oxford

The University of Oxford is [committed to leveraging its research to engage with and impact on public policy](#). Through policy engagement, Oxford researchers collaborate with policymakers to share evidence, expertise, and experiences, enhancing public policy with research-driven insight. Oxford's Faculty of Medieval and Modern Languages (MML) complements the broader mission of the University by emphasising collaborations in the public engagement sector. Its focus on 'social cohesion, international development, and a better quality of life' highlights a distinctive contribution, though at present it places less explicit emphasis on direct policy engagement.[v] Further, MML's strategic plan states: 'The Faculty should also play a role in underlining the value and importance of Medieval and Modern Languages to the University, to funding bodies and to the broader public in order to increase our visibility within and beyond the institution. The Faculty is well placed to maximise the benefits of international engagement and co-operation and can do more to help Oxford and the UK recognise these benefits, and overcome the hurdles to the study of MML.'[vi]

As the Arts and Humanities Research Council observes, while Humanities researchers may have fewer direct pathways into government policy, they provide valuable insights through their philosophical, cultural, and historical expertise.[vii] This suggests an opportunity for the MML Faculty to engage further with Oxford's policy engagement initiatives and so to amplify its societal impact.

1.1 MML Faculty Policy Engagement: Status Quo

To gather information about Policy Engagement experience, opportunities, and interest in the MML Faculty we distributed a [short questionnaire](#) through the faculty mailing lists and direct contacts within sub-faculties. We used an online format to ensure broad accessibility and ease of participation. A total of 31 responses were collected (see Appendix for more details).

- **Engagement with Policymakers:** Currently, the majority of respondents (71%) have yet to engage with policymakers or policy organisations, though there is notable interest, with 58% expressing a willingness to engage.
- **Perception of Policy Engagement within the MML Faculty:** Many faculty members feel that opportunities for policy engagement within the MML Faculty are limited, with 59% noting a lack of formal or informal involvement pathways. Among these, 89% have had no experience of policy engagement. Responses also indicate that recognition of policy-related skills and achievements often occurs only on an ad hoc basis. Only one respondent reported that impactful policy engagement is explicitly valued in recruitment and promotion processes as part of a recognised career pathway.

- **Growing Interest:** Of the 31 respondents, 18 expressed interest in engaging with policymakers and/or policy organisations. They expected that this engagement could enhance job satisfaction and motivation, provide career development skills, and increase funding opportunities, aligning with the impact criteria set by the Research Excellence Framework.[viii] Supporting policy engagement could enable researchers across all career stages to share their insights on policy-relevant topics, demonstrating the global relevance of languages research.
- **Broader context: The 'Crisis of Modern Languages'.** Among Modern Languages faculties in the UK, there is a growing sense of crisis due to shared concern about declining numbers studying languages courses at A-levels and Higher Education, resulting departmental downsizing and closures, and the changing student population and its evolving demands.[ix] Some respondents to our survey emphasised that this crisis, however, coincides with a growing interest from policymakers and organisations in fostering collaboration with languages experts, presenting potential pathways out of the 'Modern Languages Crisis'.

1.2 MML Faculty Policy Engagement: Current Challenges

A. General MML Faculty

According to survey respondents, MML faces multifaceted challenges related to funding, engagement strategies, relationship management, and recognition of policy expertise. These necessitate a strategic and collaborative approach to sustain and enhance MML's policy impact within the university and beyond.

The following bullet points summarise insights gathered from the survey and interviews.

- **Time pressure and long-term nature of policy work:** With substantial teaching and research responsibilities, alongside other commitments, policy engagement is often perceived as difficult to prioritise. Furthermore, effective policy engagement is often perceived as a long-term endeavour that requires sustained effort, commitment, and relationship-building with stakeholders.
- **Funding and financial constraints:** Financial limitations within the Faculty present challenges in making policy engagement a higher priority. According to several interviewees, the overall financial challenges facing UK universities pose a significant risk to the MML Faculty, which is already navigating a financial deficit that could impact both personnel and programme sustainability.
- **Lack of recognition:** Policy engagement and outreach are still in the process of being fully integrated into the faculty's mission. While visibility has improved, a disconnect remains between policy initiatives and the broader institutional goals. A significant majority of faculty members (95%) believe that recognition of

policy-related skills occurs primarily on a case-by-case basis. Policy engagement appears to be valued for senior members, but the same recognition is rarely given to ECRs. Furthermore, there is an opportunity for the faculty to better appreciate the value of policy expertise as a vital research skill that can enhance both grant applications and the overall institutional reputation.

- **Lack of strategic direction:** Within the Faculty, policy engagement often takes place on an informal and voluntary basis rather than as part of a structured initiative. To enhance future engagement outcomes, there is a clear need for continuity in initiatives, as well as a systematic approach to assessing successful practices.

- **Communication & visibility:** There are opportunities to enhance communication channels between sub-faculties and other Humanities faculties. Currently, successful examples of policy engagement are not sufficiently highlighted, which limits the visibility of effective practices across the faculty.

- **Nationality:** The Faculty has the potential to engage with policy-making beyond the UK but our particular study focused on the UK policy landscape. Some researchers, due to their nationality, may not be immediately familiar with or inclined towards policy engagement within the UK context. More generally, people outside the policy sphere may not fully understand the processes behind policymaking in the UK.

- **Fears around public engagement:** Concerns regarding the potential misinterpretation of their expertise and its implications for academic impartiality may cause some researchers to hesitate in engaging with broader audiences, including the media.

- **Relevance:** Researchers in modern languages may sometimes consider their work to be less pertinent to public policy compared to STEM areas of research.

- **Narrow definition of policy engagement:** There is a concern that universities often restrict the definition of policy engagement to direct interactions with state policymakers, overlooking broader cultural, educational, and minority advocacy policies.

B. Sub-Faculties

- **Limited policy engagement in smaller sub-faculties**
  The small size of certain sub-faculties limits their involvement in language policy initiatives. While Faculty members offer guidance to stakeholders such as schools and community organisations, the precarious status of 'minority' Modern Languages (such as Slavonic languages, Modern Greek, or Portuguese) within the UK education system presents significant challenges compared to more established languages like French in terms of student uptake and funding opportunities.

- **Evaluating impact engagement**
  There is a marked lack within the Faculty of systematic training for impact and policy engagement, especially in smaller subjects. Consequently, many researchers find themselves ill-equipped to evaluate or document the impact of their public events and policy initiatives, which impedes their ability to demonstrate the broader societal contribution of their research.
- **Interdepartmental collaboration**
  There is a marked desire for enhanced collaboration across departments and institutions. By leveraging established connections with Oxford University's Department of Education or the Faculty of Classics, more effective engagement with policymakers could be achieved.

2. External Mapping: The Role of Languages Research in Public Policy

This section summarises our learning from interviews with external stakeholders, including four civil service members of the Cross-Government Languages Group. Additionally, we interviewed two Humanities researchers not based at Oxford University, whose policy-related projects are widely regarded as models of best practice. The objectives were (1) to determine which aspects of languages expertise are in demand; (2) to identify key government consumers of language expertise; and (3) to gather insights on effective collaboration between researchers and policymakers.

2.1 Aspects of Language Expertise in Demand

Policymakers look for several key attributes when working with languages researchers:

- **Policy Familiarity:** An understanding of how policy development processes function and familiarity with the broader political landscape.

- **Impact Awareness**: Clear articulation of the risks of excluding languages expertise and the value of this expertise in shaping effective policies.

- **Balanced Research**: The ability to complement quantitative date with rich qualitative insights.

- **Cultural Communication Expertise**: Skills to effectively engage communities to support policy goals.

- **Research Excellence and Communication Skills**: High-quality research presented clearly and concisely.

- **Timely advice**: Capacity to provide actionable insights quickly.

- **Evidence-based Recommendations**: Solutions grounded in both theory and practice, i.e. robust research and practical applications.

- **Networking**: The ability to connect policymakers with other experts and research networks.

- **Long-term perspective**: Policymakers appreciate insights that not only address current issues but also provide historical insights that can inform future decisions.

Policymakers are increasingly seeking language expertise in several key areas, including:

- ❖ **Technology and AI**: Exploring intersections of language with AI and its application in education, for interactions in welfare, justice, migration, healthcare and policing settings and for delivery of other services where foreign language processing is necessary.

- ❖ **Climate Change:** Language-related solutions for tackling climate issues.
- ❖ **Global languages:** Emphasis on the major global languages for soft power and diplomacy, national security and defence **(**Mandarin, Russian, Arabic, and Korean).
- ❖ **Home and Heritage Languages**: Understanding their societal roles and contributions.
- ❖ **Intercultural communication strategies**
- ❖ **Effective communication with the public during emergencies**
- ❖ **Innovative methods for engaging with languages and cultures**
- ❖ **Using quantitative data in languages research**

In conclusion: Policymakers are looking for practical, actionable solutions that can have a tangible, positive impact on society. Currently, this means approaching research through the lens of the [government's missions](#). Recent work by Ayres-Bennett and Charles Forsdick, in collaboration with the xGLG, has identified four key points for how languages research relates to the missions:[x]

- There is an opportunity cost in not valuing languages: in international business and trade; social cohesion and integration; equitable access to justice and healthcare, etc.
- Normalization of multilingualism is key to respecting people's language and identity
- Home, heritage and community language (home language) speakers are a vital untapped resource
- Linguists are crucial for advising how/when AI tools are used to avoid potentially serious errors, inefficiencies or reputational risk in government/business.

2.2 Key consumers of languages expertise in the UK government

i. Department for Education ([DfE](#))

The Department for Education (DfE) recognises the value of leveraging linguistic diversity in schools and fostering effective languages programmes, supported by strong leadership and clear messaging. Collaboration between policymakers and researchers, facilitated by intermediaries, is essential for translating research into actionable outcomes. Addressing teacher recruitment challenges through evidence-based strategies remains a priority despite funding limitations. Personal relationships with researchers have demonstrated the impact of practical, policy-relevant research. Highlighting success stories, such as a Hackney school linking bilingualism to resilience, and promoting the career and economic benefits of language skills, are effective strategies. Additionally, addressing misconceptions about the role of languages in an AI-driven world reinforces their unique value in education and the job

market. Cf. [DfE: areas of research interest](#) [NB: this was published under the 2022-24 Sunak Conservative government. The DfE is currently working on a new Areas of Research Interest document to reflect the priorities of the new government.]

ii. Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC)

The DHSC increasingly recognises language as crucial to health equity and public service delivery. COVID-19 highlighted significant health inequalities, particularly for non-native English speakers. This coincided with inter-departmental work through the cross-Government Languages Group that promoted efforts to address language-related barriers. NHS England has ennced translation and interpretation services to mitigate risks linked to poor communication, and UKHSA teams frequently encounter language challenges when managing outbreaks among vulnerable populations, such as asylum seekers. Language is a recognised determinant of care access, aligning with the health equity agenda and emphasising its role in bridging gaps in access and safety. Building partnerships with academic experts remains a key priority for integrating language considerations into health policy and decision-making.

Key Research Themes and Priorities for DHSC x Languages: Understanding Health Inequalities through Language

- ❖ **Linguistic and Cultural Sensitivity in Health Policy**
  The DHSC is keen to explore how linguistic assets within communities can be leveraged to address culturally and context-specific health challenges. While proficiency in language is important, the cultural insights gained through language skills play a critical role in rebuilding trust within healthcare settings. The DHSC is particularly interested in promoting linguistically sensitive communication that respects the social and cultural contexts of care, ensuring that patients, carers, and communities receive information that is both appropriate and effective.
- ❖ **Tackling Health Inequalities through Engagement with Marginalised Communities**
  Language research offers valuable insights for the DHSC in engaging with marginalised groups, especially those whose first language is not English. Evidence suggests that health messaging tailored to the most vulnerable populations has the potential to positively impact wider society, supporting the DHSC's efforts to address health disparities across the population.
- ❖ **The Written and Oral Dimensions in Health Policy**
  Language research could assist the DHSC in ensuring health policies adequately address both written and spoken language needs, particularly for communities with strong oral traditions. Ensuring that accurate translation and interpretation services are integrated into emergency preparedness and response strategies is a key priority for facilitating equitable access to care during crises.

❖ **Co-Design and Co-Production Approaches**
Languages research can help the DHSC recognise the value of the UK's linguistic diversity, particularly heritage and community languages, viewing them as vital assets rather than deficits. Involving these communities in the co-design of healthcare solutions can foster more inclusive and effective policies. Collaboration with language researchers provides an opportunity to integrate culturally informed perspectives, ensuring that health policies are better aligned with the needs of diverse populations.

iii. Government Office for Science (GO Science)

The Government Office for Science could greatly benefit from engaging with languages expertise to enhance policy development and implementation. While language is often narrowly viewed as limited to translation, there is a pressing need to raise awareness about the broader value of languages expertise in policymaking, particularly in communication strategies. Qualitative research, especially on marginalised communities that may be under-represented in conventional surveys or lack trust in government, is critical for developing inclusive policies. Innovative methodologies for accessing these groups can provide valuable insights, and researchers have a role in presenting their findings as both credible and relevant. During emergencies, such as the COVID-19 response, language expertise has proven pivotal in crafting effective communication strategies, as evidenced by projects like the UKRI/AHRC-funded initiative on cultural translation and interpreting of COVID-19 risks among London's migrant communities conducted by SOAS London. Language researchers can also serve as knowledge brokers, connecting policymakers with relevant research and fostering evidence-based, culturally informed responses to national challenges.

2.3 Case Study, Department for Health and Social Care
Based on an interview with Dr Fatima Wurie, October 2024

Dr Fatima Wurie is Head of International Engagement for Arms-Length Bodies at the Department for Health and Social Care [DHSC]. Wurie's account of how DHSC has integrated languages research into its systems presents a striking example of excellent departmental and cross-sector practice. This case study gives that background, and proposes some key reasons why this exemplary practice has been so successful.

This study uses the phrase 'the languages agenda' throughout. By this we mean awareness of the relevance for public policy of language, languages, and the expertise provided by researchers in university languages departments.

Step 1: Key committed individuals
Two senior policy officials and one researcher are key to the success of this collaboration. The policy officials' long-term experience and expertise in the field of health inequalities gave immediate depth and relevance to an increased focus on languages.
Dr Fatima Wurie, Head of International Engagement for Arms-Length Bodies; formerly Migrant Health Evidence and Delivery Lead [both DHSC]
Fevin Fenton, Regional Director for London in Office for Health Improvement and Disparities [DHSC]; President of UK Faculty of Public Health
Professor Wendy Ayres-Bennett, Emerita Professor of Linguistics (Cambridge); Founder, Languages, Society and Policy; PI, Promoting Language Policy

Step 2: Evidence of need
Wurie's long-term experience in health inequalities provided evidence of the **key role of languages in access to healthcare**. Expertise developed through her work on migrant health advice and on the reach and impact of Covid guidance informed a **new approach to inclusive communications** within DHSC. This included consideration of the role that language and language barriers play in inclusive communication. For example, the benefits of having a multilingual healthcare team to support patients whose first language is not English. Wurie's DHSC colleague Professor Kevin Fenton also has deep expertise in health disparities, leading Public Health England's review into disparities in the risks and outcomes of COVID-19. This review identified language as a factor in these disparities.[i]

Step 3: Cross-Government collaboration
Wurie was invited to join the Cross-Government Languages Group, where she provides perspectives in particular on public health and inequalities. Membership of this group provided a structure and networks for working through the specific role of languages for DHSC priorities, including introductions to key languages researchers.

Step 4: Creating a Department Board
DHSC has a national **Senior Responsible Owner [SRO] for Languages**, Fenton. Wurie and Fenton worked together to establish a DHSC Languages Board, which met for the first time in January 2024. The aim is to organise and facilitate engagement in the languages agenda right across DHSC.

The board has a very broad governance structure with **senior representation**. The board aims to **learn more about the languages agenda** in order to **understand where it fits into DHSC priorities**. It is working to identify tangible ways in which languages can support DHSC's work as it evolves.

One of the board's first priorities was to **build intelligent relationships with academic partners**, in order to understand how best to utilise languages research and ensure that it informs decision-making.

Step 5: Knowledge Exchange workshop
In July 2024, DHSC collaborated with Wendy Ayres-Bennett to run a half-day virtual knowledge exchange workshop on languages and national health priorities. This provided an opportunity for fruitful and focused exchange between researchers, policy officials and funders. Specifically, for:
- researchers to share research that has programmatic relevance for DHSC
- Arts & Humanities Research Council, British Academy, DHSC, National Institute of Health Research, NHS England and UK Health Security Agency to share their relevant priorities
- policy community to build understanding of breadth of languages research
- shared discussion of how to move this agenda forward.

Outcomes included: connecting researchers from different disciplines, funders and policymakers; gathering perspectives on the role of languages in DHSC contexts, e.g. in the GP-patient nexus; strengthening relationships with research funders; raising awareness of the value of qualitative research.

Step 6: Embedding researchers in the department
The DHSC Languages Board is now working with research funders to create opportunities for more intensive exchange between languages researchers and the department, e.g. fellowships embedded in government for short periods, or longer co-location between academic and government institutions. The intention is for researchers to better understand where their research fits in and how it can guide policy development and delivery, and for the partners to co-create language-focused research questions aligned to departmental ARIs.

Case Study: Conclusions

Key ingredients for integrating the languages agenda into departmental structures:

- Clear and specific sense of how the languages agenda is relevant for the department's priorities
- Membership of the Cross-Government Languages Group led by GCHQ
- Department has a Senior Sponsor for languages [also referred to as a Senior Responsible Owner proactive interest and leadership for languages at a senior level
- A departmental Languages Board with senior representation, or commitment to and oversight of languages through existing boards
- Structured access to languages researchers (perhaps via one trusted researcher)
- Events that enable practical knowledge exchange

- Academic-policy placements: Opportunities for researchers to embed in the department short-term, or for longer-term co-location across academic and policy institutions
- Co-creation of language-focused research questions aligned to departmental ARIs

A phased approach to integrating the languages agenda within a policy institution may look like this:

1. Key individuals identify evidence of need – how language links to departmental priorities
2. Key individuals take ownership of the languages agenda, ideally including a SRO for Languages
3. One key individual joins Academic Engagement Sub-Group, Cross-Government Languages Group, which facilitates access to one or more key researchers
4. Institution forms a Languages Board
5. Institution collaborates with key researcher(s) on knowledge exchange workshop
6. Collaborate with funders to develop academic-policy partnerships, which lead to co-creation of language-focused research questions aligned to ARIs.

3. Conclusions: Effective Collaboration between Researchers and Policymakers

We close this report with some reflections on what makes policy engagement effective and fruitful. These arise from all the interviews and discussions conducted as part of the project, and we hope will serve to focus strategies and resources as these collaborations develop further.

Key Considerations for Effective Policy Engagement

· **Focus on Policy, not Politics:** Distinguish between being an 'issue advocate' and an 'honest broker' by providing objective, research-based advice to guide policy decisions.

· **Genuine Collaboration:** Foster mutual interest, investment, and open-mindedness from both researchers and policymakers for successful partnerships.

· **Social Media and Advocacy:** Use social media carefully, focusing on sharing objective facts and research based-advice while avoiding public statements that may undermine trust.

· **Building Trust:** Establish clear expectations, maintain confidentiality, and build strong, reliable relationships with policymakers.

· **Long-term Change:** Aim for systematic, infrastructure-level changes that embed expertise into practice, recognising that such efforts require time and perseverance.

· **Engage Established Structures:** Work through existing networks, funding opportunities, or projects to initiate collaborations with policymakers and civil servants.

· **Consistency Despite Turnover:** Maintain continuity in relationships with policymakers even amid staff changes to ensure sustained engagement.

· **Regular Interactions:** Create spaces for consistent and ongoing collaboration to strengthen partnerships.

· **Open-Minded Approach:** Explore creative ways to align language expertise with the government's current priorities and areas of interest.

Current obstacles to Collaboration

❖ **Communication Challenges**: Researchers need training and resources to engage effectively with policymakers.

❖ **Government Resource Constraints**: Limited resources within departments mean languages are not always prioritised.

- ❖ **Individual Researcher Engagement**: Departments often lack capacity to work with individuals, so presenting as a group with clear, actionable points is more effective.
- ❖ **Misconceptions about Language Expertise:** Many civil servants view language as limited to translation, failing to recognise the broader value of linguistic and cultural expertise.

NB: These considerations are further addressed in a separate document that provides practical recommendations to the MML Faculty on building infrastructure and capacity for policy engagement.

4. Appendix

A. Methodology

    i. **Internal Mapping: Policy engagement within MML**

The internal mapping aimed to understand perceptions of challenges and opportunities for policy engagement among MML research across different career stages. We conducted both an online survey (with 31 responses) and individual interviews with members of the different sub-faculties and with researchers from other faculties. Key methods and findings include:

Online survey

- Responses by Sub-Faculty: French and Francophone Studies (15), German (4), Spanish (4), Italian (3), Portuguese (3), Slavonic languages (2), professional staff (1).
- Responses by Career Levels: 8 postgraduate students, 3 early-career researchers, 11 mid-career researchers, 8 senior researchers, and 1 professional staff member.
- Responses by Engagement with Policy Makers/Policy Projects: 9 respondents had prior experience, 18 respondents expressed interest, while 13 respondents were not interested.
- Responses by Perceived Opportunities: 18 respondents believed opportunities for policy engagement in MML were limited.

31 responses is relatively low. Our recommendations arising from this report will include measures to increase recognition of policy engagement, including running this online survey annually in order to map engagement; and introducing policy engagement at postgraduate inductions.

Interviews

- Interview format: semi-structured, conducted both online and in person.
- Interviews conducted with researchers from various MML sub-faculties (German, Greek, French and Francophone, Slavonic, Italian, Spanish). The senior researchers interviewed had experience with policy engagement and reflected on the challenges and opportunities within their individual sub-faculties.
- Interviews conducted with researchers from other faculties (one interview with two researchers from Faculty of Sociology, one interview with one researcher from the Department for Education and a group interview with four researchers from the Classics Faculty) who have experience with policy engagement to learn from their practice and talk about eventual future collaborations.

ii. **External Mapping**

The External Mapping strand of the project sought to gather insights from government consumers of language expertise to identify best practices and areas for greater collaboration. It also aimed to map out which areas of government are not currently seeking expertise in modern languages, or which are in the early stages, and how we can support them.

- Interview Format: Semi-structured and conducted online. Questions tailored to individual experience, focusing on past projects and their potential to inform future practices.
- Participants: Two humanities researchers from outside Oxford with recognised policy-focused projects. Four members of the Cross-Government Languages Group, including two civil servants from the Department of Education, and one researcher from the Government Office for Science.
- Confidentiality: To ensure anonymity, no names or direct quotes were included in the final report, respecting the preferences of some interviewees.

B. Resources and Training for Policy Engagement

Recommended resources from the webinar series on policy engagement, supported by OPEN and led by Dr Charlotte Ryland and Dr Gina Edwards, May–July 2024

About the OPEN Leaders Programme:

- [Oxford Policy Engagement Network (OPEN)](#)
- [OPEN Leaders Programme](#)

Where to start?

- [Engaging with Policymakers as a Researcher in the Arts and Humanities](#) (Short UPEN blog by Arlene Holmes-Henderson)
- [Introduction to Policy Engagement and 'how to' Guide for Researchers](#) by the University of Cambridge
- [AHRC guide to policy engagement for humanities researchers](#)
- Inspiration from researchers already engaging with policy with OPEN:
  - [Researcher Stories: Shaping policy on oracy and Classical languages (youtube.com)](#) (Arlene Holmes-Henderson, Senior Research Fellow in Classics Education)
  - [Researcher Stories: Understanding migration in the UK (youtube.com)](#) (Madeleine Sumption, Director of the Oxford Migration Observatory)

How to engage with the policy community

- [How to engage with policy makers: A guide for academics in the arts and humanities](#) (more detailed guide than the above, by the Institute for Government). Further guides by the IFG can be found [here](#).
- [Research to policy impact: strategies for translating findings into policy messages, University of Oxford](#)
- [Humanities and Policy Engagement. An introduction for researchers](#), TORCH
- *Storylistening: Narrative Evidence and Public Reasoning,* Sarah Dillon and Claire Craig. The book offers 'a theory and practice for gathering narrative evidence that will complement and strengthen, not distort, other forms of evidence, including that from science.' More info [here](#).
- [Communicating evidence to policy makers – what works best?](#) By Caroline Wood (Chartered Institute for Public Relations). Includes case studies of good practice.
- [Communications & engagement – CREDS](#)
- [Languages and Policy: Building Collaborations between Academics and Policymakers](#), Wendy Ayres-Bennett

Resources for engaging with the UK Government

- UKRI ['Engaging with Government'](#) course
- ['One-stop shop'](#) to search for research topics that the government is interested in
- Search for research interests under different government departments ([Areas of Research Interest](#) or 'ARI's)
- [Parliament's Knowledge Exchange Unit](#) @UKParl_Research; keu@parliament.uk
- Parliament Office of Science and Technology - POST publishes impartial, balanced and peer-reviewed briefings that make evidence research accessible to Parliament, offers training through the POST Fellowship and other schemes, and holds seminars and events for parliamentarians and the public, inter alia (http://www.post.parliament.uk; @POST_UK).
- All Party Parliamentary Group on Modern Languages https://www.ciol.org.uk/appgml - a cross-party alliance of MPs with interest in promoting languages
- Search for select committees on areas relating to your work: [Find a committee - Committees - UK Parliament](#)
- The Department for Education is running a [Language Hubs](#) outreach programme with schools

Further reading on languages and education policy

- [Transnationalizing Modern Languages: Reframing language education for a global future](#) (PolicyBristol, University of Bristol)
- [The Salzburg Statement for a Multilingual World](#) (2018)
- [The economic value to the UK of speaking other languages (RAND)](#)
- ['The demise of modern languages has been greatly exaggerated'](#) by Wendy Ayres-Bennett, Charles Burdett, Emma Cayley
- ['Teaching modern languages without culture will harm global relations'](#), Charles Burdett
- ['Is AI the final nail in the coffin for modern languages?'](#), Patrick Jack
- [Policy Briefings - Modern Languages Leadership Fellow](#)
- *[Languages, Society and Policy](#)* - A journal connecting research in linguistics and languages, cultures and societies with policy and the public.
- *[History and Policy | Connecting historians, policymakers and the media](#)* – online journal
- [The Humanities in the UK Today: What's Going On?](#) (Higher Education Policy Institute)

Opportunities for funding, policy fellowships, etc.

- AHRC (ESRC has similar schemes)
- UKRI Policy Fellowships (info about the 2023 scheme [here](#))
- UKRI Policy Internships
- British Academy: *Innovation Fellowships Schemes: Route B Policy-Led*

Careers in policy

- Find jobs and tips on the [Civil Service Careers](#) page
- The [Foreign and Commonwealth Office](#) website has internal vacancies
- [Routes into policy careers for linguists – The Translation Exchange blog, The Queen's College, Oxford](#)
- Consider exploring policy roles at cultural institutes, [think tanks](#) and [charities](#)

List of relevant organisations (not an exhaustive list!)

- UPEN (University Policy Engagement Network)
- AHRC
- UKRI
- British Academy
- ILCS (Institute for Languages, Cultures and Societies)
- HEPI (Higher Education Policy Institute)
- Institute for Government

- Cultural institutes (e.g. Goethe Institute for German)

[i] Languages and Policy: Building Collaborations between Academics and Policymakers (University of Cambridge, Institute of Languages, Cultures and Societies, 2024)

[ii] 'How does Arts and Humanities research influence public policymaking?' (University of Durham, UPEN, 2024).

[iii] 'Modern Languages: Developing Concerted Collective Action', report by Institute of Languages, Cultures & Societies and University Council for Languages [https://ilcs.sas.ac.uk/research-policy-and-training/policy/modern-languages-developing-concerted-collective-action, accessed 18 December 2024.

[iv] See 'Challenges facing Modern Languages', https://ilcs.sas.ac.uk/research-policy-and-training/policy/modern-languages-developing-concerted-collective-action, accessed 18 December 2024.

[v] See MML's Research and Engagement Impact statement, accessed 18 December 2024.

[vi] MML Strategic Plan, updated and approved November 2023, accessed 18 December 2024.

[vii] See the AHRC Blog 'How can arts and humanities research influence public policy?', accessed 18 December 2024.

[viii] TORCH report 'Humanities and Policy Engagement. An introduction for researchers,' p. 5f, accessed 18 December 2024.

[ix] Wendy Ayres-Bennett, Charles Burdett, and Emma Cayley, 'The demise of modern languages has been greatly exaggerated', The Times Higher Education (December 8, 2023) <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/blog/demise-modern-languages-has-been-greatly-exaggerated> [Accessed 29 October 2024]. Patrick Jack, 'Is AI the final nail in the coffin for modern languages?', The Times Higher Education (April 25, 2024) <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/depth/ai-final-nail-coffin-modern-languages> [Accessed 29 October 2024].

[x] Ayres-Bennett and Charles Forsdick, 'Languages and the government's missions', December 2024.