

March 2025

Dear UKALTA members and colleagues

I hope you are well and find the following updates of interest.

As 2025 gets under way, UKALTA continues to liaise closely with various partner organisations within the UK and beyond - advocating for and promoting good language testing and assessment to advance language education.

Following a meeting in London in January of the expanded *CEFR Alignment Handbook* Steering Group (now comprising multiple representatives from ALTE, British Council, EALTA, and UKALTA), various projects are in hand including: a report on the Barcelona conference to appear in the next volume of the *CEFR-Journal* (Vol 7); a detailed publishing proposal for a special issue of the CEFR-J in 2026 profiling alignment case studies; plans for creating supplementary material to accompany the *CEFR Alignment Handbook*.

We received responses to the two letters I sent on behalf of UKALTA last month: i) to UKRI about the shortcomings of the REF 2029 sector survey, and ii) to the UK Home Office about the proposed Home Office Secure English Language Test (SELT). Unsurprisingly, the UK Home Office response was not very engaging or informative, but at least we raised awareness of UKALTA's existence and professional expertise in this field. The response from UKRI was more positive; they thanked us for our feedback and I've included some text from their response below:

"The REF is strongly encouraging interdisciplinarity and research diversity. In addition to recruiting interdisciplinary experts to main panels, all applicants to sub-panels can identify as interdisciplinary and be considered for more than one panel. We are not changing the unit of assessment structure but hope to accommodate the growing amount of interdisciplinary research by recruitment of interdisciplinary experts and appropriate processes for ensuring that all submissions are reviewed by appropriate assessors.

Approaches how to deal with interdisciplinary contributions to knowledge and understanding and interdisciplinary impacts will be decided by the panels as part of the criteria phase. Consideration of interdisciplinarity will also be part of the design of the 'submission of intentions survey'.

Please do encourage your members to apply for roles as interdisciplinary experts, sub-panel members in the relevant UoAs, or interdisciplinary assessors when we get to the assessment phase."

The spring conference season is getting under way. Over the next week, I will be representing UKALTA at the one-day Coalition for Language Education (CLE) event in London and at the ALTE Meeting in Cardiff. Sathena Chan will be attending the British Academy Shape Conference in London which is seeking to raise the profile and value of social sciences across UK society. Many members of our UKALTA community will no doubt be attending and benefitting from IATEFL in Edinburgh in April.

Work continues to redevelop the UKALTA website and we hope it will be ready to go live in April. UKALTA also now has a presence on LinkedIn – thanks to Leda Lampropoulou. Please do promote UKALTA's existence and activity via our various social media outlets.

Our new PGR/ECR Network Coordinators are eager to canvas the views of PGR/ECRs about activities they would like to see UKALTA organise in future. If you haven't already responded to their survey, you are warmly invited to do so via the following link:

<https://forms.office.com/e/j2NeCC78BX>

Finally, can I remind you once again of the dates for this year's Language Testing Forum in Southampton, hosted by Prof Ying Zheng and the Language Assessment and Testing Unit (LATU): 22-24 November 2025 (Fri-Sun). Planning for this event is well underway – and will include celebration of LTF's 45th and UKALTA's 10th anniversary! Looking further ahead, expressions of interest to host LTF in 2026 and beyond are welcome, so please contact me if this opportunity might be of interest to you and your institution.

Kind regards

Lynda

ALERT: We are aware that some UKALTA members have recently received an email message with the subject WORDPRESS asking them to update their profile information. This email is not linked to UKALTA; we believe it to be a spam/phishing exercise so please ignore and delete it.