

January 2025

Dear UKALTA members and colleagues

As 2025 gets under way, we are looking forward to another busy year for UKALTA. Your new Executive Committee has already met online this month and we have several initiatives to report on.

UKALTA continues as a key partner in the ongoing evolution of the *CEFR Alignment Handbook*. The Alignment Case Studies Conference, held in Barcelona in October 2024 and co-sponsored by ALTE/BC/EALTA/UKALTA, attracted more than 120 participants from 24 countries and four continents. The programme comprised six plenary sessions, 35 presentations and eight posters. Presentations included case studies from China, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ireland, Japan, Ukraine, Saudi Arabia and Italy. Slides for all the presentations are available at: [CEFR Handbook programme overview final.pdf](#). An expanded Steering Group is now working on follow-up projects, including several publications.

The collaboration we began last year with our sister organisation BAAL (British Association for Applied Linguistics) continues. Following receipt of grant funding from the AcSS/ESRC, the two associations co-organised two EDI-related Leadership Workshops – one at the BAAL annual conference at the University of Essex in September 2024, and another as the pre-conference event at LTF in November 2024. Both workshops were well attended and well received. Follow-up activities are now underway to write up a full report and to produce open-access resources to support EDI Leadership training and professional development in our respective fields of applied linguistics and language testing/assessment.

Thanks to successful LTF conferences in recent years combined with careful financial management, our association funds remain in a healthy state. This means we can continue to invest in the redevelopment of our UKALTA website (due to come online in the near future) and to fund our awards and scholarship programme for 2025, as well as plan for some new ventures. This year we aim to re-energise the UKALTA PGR Network for post-graduate and early career researchers so watch out for news of events and activities from our new Joint Coordinators, Petra and Ozlem, over the coming months.

Last autumn, UKALTA became a signatory to the new Coalition for Language Education (CLE): [Coalition for Language Education](#) – an initiative that seeks to initiate and support cross-sectoral strategies to reinvigorate contemporary language education in the UK. Caroline Tagg (BAAL Chair) and I will be attending a one-day CLE event in March 2025 to explore how our two associations might be actively involved in this endeavour.

The next Research Excellence Framework (REF) is now firmly on the horizon for many UKALTA colleagues. REF2029 will assess the quality of research in UK higher education institutions and determine future research funding allocations. On behalf of UKALTA, I completed the UKRI sector body survey this month inviting input on how our field of language testing and assessment (LTA) is normally represented in/through the REF. The short survey is not very sensitive to the fact that LTA sits across different disciplinary (sub)panels and Units of Assessment, e.g., Education; Mod Langs & Ling; Eng Lang & Lit. Our

colleagues in applied linguistics face a similar challenge. Like several other chairs/heads of fellow AcSS member societies, I will write to UKRI about this shortcoming, seeking to ensure that the relevant expertise is properly captured when they appoint REF2029 panel/subpanel members later this year. I have also written to senior UKALTA colleagues encouraging them to consider self-nomination for appointment to the various REF main and sub-panels to try and improve LTA representation.

Finally, following discussion at the UKALTA AGM last November about the proposed Home Office Secure English Language Test (SELT) tender, I will also write briefly to the UK Home Office this month just to raise awareness of the knowledge and expertise we embody as a professional association in case this is helpful.

A key aim for my final year as UKALTA President will be to raise and strengthen the profile of UKALTA across the UK scene, so I look forward to a busy and productive season with you all!

Kind regards

Lynda