

January 2026

Dear UKALTA members and colleagues

Happy New Year! I hope you have had a good start of 2026.

This is my first President's Message to you. I'd like to start by thanking Lynda for her leadership in the past six years, laying a strong foundation for UKALTA's establishment and growth. She has led UKALTA through the ups and downs, steering a clear direction when things were foggy. We will always be grateful as she has shown us what dedication, joy and pride of serving one's own professional association means. And, thank you for putting the reflection of your experience in writing: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/02655322251380873>. I'd also like to thank John Pill for being a faithful and wise UKALTA EC colleague for many years. We will miss you but I am sure you will continue to support UKALTA in different ways.

For those readers who don't know me, let me introduce myself a little. I'm an Associate Professor at CRELLA, University of Bedfordshire (<https://www.beds.ac.uk/crella/about/staff/sathena-chan/>). My current role is Director of the Institute of Humanities, Education and Arts Research. I do watercolour as a hobby. I am particularly drawn by its luminosity and delicacy. The medium requires a balance of visionary planning, painterly brushwork and flexibility to embrace unpredictability, which often leads to the most beautiful "happy accidents" in a painting. I thought this sheds some good insights into leadership.



I began my first professional committee role in 2016 in response to a colleague's invitation. Since then, I have worked closely with BAAL as the BAAL TEASIG Convenor (2019-21) and more recently served on the Executive Board as the Coordinator for all BAAL SIGs (2021-2025). Through these roles, I have had the privilege to work with many supportive and trustworthy colleagues who inspire me by the passion for their expertise and commitment to their community.

I am truly humbled and honoured to carry the torch as UKALTA's President from Lynda. Thank you for all your kind words since the announcement. Lynda has kindly offered to support the current EC as we settle in our roles. She will also help with some ongoing UKALTA projects, particularly in relation to our application for charitable status and setting up a new UKALTA-mandated AcSS Fellowship subcommittee that will allow us to benefit from the collective experience of our growing number of AcSS Fellows within UKALTA. In the coming weeks, in addition to our first EC meeting, I am meeting with different sub-teams, including PGR network, treasury, membership, communications and events, to take stock of what has been achieved and make plans. I am also making contact with our external partners including AcSS and British Academy to continue the collaborations. I will give an update of the latest development and main events in due course.

In the meantime, if you would like to discuss any aspects of UKALTA's work, feel free to get in touch at info@ukalta.org or contact me at Sathena.chan@beds.ac.uk. If you are on LinkedIn, follow us [here](#).

The [EC](#) and I look forward to writing the beginning chapter of UKALTA's second decade with you together.

Kind regards,

Sathena