

April 2026

Dear UKALTA members and colleagues,

Hope you are enjoying the Spring season.

The preparation for our annual **Language Testing Forum** hosted by Oxford University Press is underway. The conference will take place on **20-22 November 2026** and the theme is 'Methodological Choices in Language Assessment: Traditions and New Directions'. The Call for Proposals will soon be announced. Please circulate the call widely to your colleagues and students!

We shared the preliminary findings of the **UKALTA Membership Survey 2025**, organised by the Membership & Nominations Committee, at the AGM last November. The full report is now available on our website. 48 of the members completed the survey. Participants express strong support for expanded professional development, assessment literacy work, and postgraduate support, while recognising the constraints of volunteer capacity and financial sustainability. There is also a clear expectation for UKALTA to play a more visible advocacy role, particularly in relation to AI, fairness, and policy use of language tests, while maintaining its independence and credibility across academic, professional, and industry contexts. These findings suggest that prioritisation, scalability, and hybrid models of engagement need to be central to UKALTA's strategic planning for its second decade. Our thanks go to the previous and current Membership and Nominations Committee including Leda Lampropoulou, Shishi Zhang, Sathena Chan, Özgür Sahan and Anna Whinnett for leading the survey.

In February, the UKALTA **PGR Network** Coordinators, Petra Smelak and Ozlem Terzioglu, organised the first **Research Webinar Series** this year with Professor Tineke Brunfaut (Lancaster University). She presented a collaborative project with Professor Judit Kormos, titled 'Assessing multimodal language uses: Task design, performance, processing and rating'. The online event was well attended with the highest attendee number and the Q&A session was very engaging. The aim of the PGR Network is to bring PGRs in the field to join engaging research talks, skill-building webinars and networking events. The next event will be part of the networking series, in an interview format, and is scheduled for early summer 2026. Our PGR Network mailing list has now got 104 members. Please contact Petra and Ozlem if you want to be part of our PGR Network.

The **CEFR Alignment Handbook Steering Group** (with representatives from ALTE, British Council, EALTA and UKALTA) met most recently on 26th March and focused on dissemination of the new CEFR Journal Special Issue, promotion of the Handbook Supplement (now hosted on our website and the partners' ones), follow-up from a

well-attended webinar (154 participants). The CEFR Journal Special Issue, which represents the latest public update from the group, is available here:
https://cefrjapan.net/images/PDF/CEFRJournal/CEFRJournal-8_2026pdf.pdf

In addition to our collaboration with ALTE, British Council and EALTA, UKALTA is affiliated with national bodies promoting our subject areas and sectors, including the Academy of Social Sciences (AcSS) and the British Academy's Network of Learned Societies and Subject Associations. This partnership provides opportunities for UKALTA to benefit from shared experiences and strengthen the profile of UKALTA in the UK.

[AcSS](#) has 46 learner society members. They host termly CEOs meetings. One current focus is the various updates, following the 'unpause' of REF 2029. REF2029 assesses the quality of research in UK higher education institutions and determines future research funding allocations. UKALTA has been in direct conversations with REF panels to communicate how the updates might impact colleagues in language testing and assessment. In the last REF, our members (their institutions) submitted to C23 Education, D26 Modern Languages and Linguistics and D27 English Language and Literature. Working closely with [BAAL](#), we had a joint **BAAL/UKALTA REF information session** in March run by Professor Jane Stuart-Smith and Professor Susan Harrow (Sub-panel chair and sub-panel deputy chair for D26 Modern Languages and Linguistics), with Professor Susan Fitzmaurice (Sub-panel deputy chair for D27 English Language and Literature), chaired by the BAAL chair and myself. We anticipate some more engagements with the REF panels. If you would like to discuss aspects of REF2029, please contact me directly.

AcSS also organises three main working groups for its learner society members. I recently joined the **AcSS policy working group** and will attend my first meeting in May. When schedule allows, our Events and Liaison Officer and PGR Network Coordinators will take turns to attend the online meetings of the **AcSS conferences and events network group**. Petra attended the meeting in March and feedbacked some useful tips from the other learner society members to the UKALTA EC.

I attended the **BA SHAPE conference** in March on behalf of UKALTA. There were updates of major policy announcements concerning SHAPE subjects and discussion of issues affecting development of the sector and how we can collectively champion the value and impact of SHAPE subjects in higher education. A question for UKALTA members is how we can better promote the study of language testing and assessment in higher education?

Last but not least, we are thrilled to share that Luke Harding, Professor of Applied Linguistics, has been conferred **Fellow of the UK Academy of Social Sciences**. His research focuses on language testing and assessment, exploring the design and evaluation of tests of second language proficiency for educational and professional

purposes, and the role that such tests play in society. His contribution to our field has been enormous. You can read more about his work here:

<https://www.lancaster.ac.uk/humanities-arts-and-social-sciences/news/fellowships-for-two-outstanding-social-scientists>

Sincere congratulations to Luke, and our grateful thanks go to the UKALTA colleagues who worked on the AcSS Fellowship nomination process. A recognition of this nature would certainly inspire many to study language testing and assessment!

Kind regards

Sathena