

School of Modern Languages and Applied Linguistics Research Strategy 2017-2020 (abridged version)

Research Mission and Identity

At the core of the MLAL identity and distinctiveness is a commitment to interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary research across a range of languages. The School is a multilingual space, and research is carried out and published in a number of languages and in a variety of research traditions. With a strong comparative dimension, research in the School focuses in the main on the acquisition, analysis and interpretation of a range of languages and their associated cultures. The School specialises in research in linguistic, literary and cultural studies in French, German, Japanese, Spanish and Linguistics/English for Speakers of Other Languages.

Research Centres and Structures

In addition to its active support of the individual work traditionally characteristic of modern languages research, the School of MLAL is home to three research centres: the Centre for Applied Language Studies (CALs), the Centre for Irish-German Studies and the Ralahine Centre for Utopian Studies.

The School has a research board, chaired by the Director of Research, and which includes directors of the research centres, a representative of independent research, and a postgraduate student representative. Over the next five years, the School aims to increase the visibility of research carried out in the School and enhance our international reputation.

Selected Goals and Targets

Short-term:

- Continue with the School of MLAL Seminar Series held on a fortnightly basis during semester with the aim of sharing and profiling research by academic staff, postgraduates and visiting researchers.
- Continue with the MLAL annual research day (in December), used to review the School's research performance over the year, set targets and an agenda for the coming year, and share research activities and interests.

Medium-term:

- Review research targets and progress on a biannual basis in December (MLAL Research Day) and June.
- Identify strategic interdisciplinary research opportunities within MLAL and with other UL or international units with a view to developing attractive and sustainable master's programmes in line with MLAL's mission.

Research outputs

MLAL academics are research active in terms of UL criteria (active in supervision, publication or funding over the last five years). A key current objective is to increase the number of higher quartile SJR and ISI journal articles and publications with UL prestigious publishers, where appropriate, in keeping with disciplinary norms and while maintaining our necessary commitment to multilingual publishing.

Selected Goals and Targets

Short-term:

- All members of MLAL to activate Research Gate and Academia.edu accounts and upload articles and chapters.

- All members of MLAL to set up google scholar and ORCID accounts so that citations can be easily tracked.

Medium-term:

- Develop appropriate discipline-specific metrics for evaluating multilingual research output in literature and cultural studies.
- Contribute to the UL strategic plan by continuing to increase the number of publications in high-quartile SJR and ISI journals and UL prestigious publishers across the School, where appropriate in terms of disciplinary norms.
- Contribute to UL's internationalisation strategy by increasing the visibility, both internally and externally, of multilingual research undertaken by MLAL.

Long-term:

- Increase significantly over the next five years Quartile 1 ISI and Quartile 1 SJR = publications.
- Increase significantly publication of High Impact Books and chapters .
- Increase citation of our work, including median citations.

Research funding and projects

The School has been particularly successful in attracting small grants from schemes such as the Irish Research Council New Foundations scheme. In addition, the School secured a highly competitive Irish Research Council fellowship in 2015.

In terms of European funding, MLAL is currently a partner in an Erasmus+ project, has co-led a major funding award from the Finnish Academy (2012-2015) and has attracted funding from the Spanish Department of Economy and Competitiveness. Members of the School are involved in a variety of networks and projects across Europe. The School plans to increase its participation in the EUROM (European Observatory on Memories) network.

MLAL also has a strong track record in attracting funding in relation to language learning. Current projects include the Digilanguages initiative funded by the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education and a project funded by the European Centre for Modern Languages. Other funding partnerships and networks include the Leverhulme International Research Network on Imaginaries of the Future and the Movens Network of European German Scholars.

Selected Goals and Targets

Medium-term:

- Explore how to translate good international networks and project experience into more major funding applications and how to obtain targeted support for preparing and submitting such applications.
- Identify strategic interdisciplinary research opportunities within MLAL and with other UL or international units with a view to developing funded research networks/projects.
- Submit at least one Erasmus+ Strategic Partnership application and take measures to improve IRC success rate for applicants.

Research students

The School has increased its PhD enrolments by more than 20% over the last five years and is making a key contribution to the achievement of this AHSS Faculty goal. Currently, we have students from Ireland and other EU countries, as well as Brazil, Indonesia, Iraq, Libya, Saudi Arabia and the USA.

Research students are reviewed annually in a progression panel, which is generally held in December. The average length of registration has fallen considerably over the last number of years due, in part, to the introduction of the annual reviews mentioned above.

Selected Goals and Targets

Short-term:

- Market proactively opportunities for research students in literature and cultural studies, targeting both MLAL graduates and international students.
- Foster and encourage co-supervision of PhD students.

Medium to long term:

- Increase PhD recruitment by 20% over next five years.
- Increase international co-supervision.