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QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY BELFAST

Language Provision in UK Further Education

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Presentation Outline

- **Timeline**

- **Research Methodology**

- **Results**

- **Recommendations**

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Timeline

February/March 2022	
Inception meetings	Systematic-style review of literature

April/May 2022		
Secondary data analysis	Survey of FE lecturers and students	Interviews with key stakeholders

June/ July/ August 2022	
Write up	Submission of draft 1

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Research Methodology

1. Systematic-style review of existing literature

2. Secondary data analysis of existing National Statistics on languages uptake

3. Survey of FE staff and a survey of FE students

4. In-depth interviews with key stakeholders

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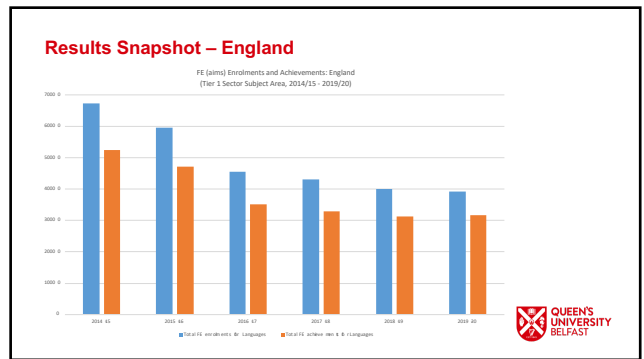
Results

Systematic-style literature review
- Replicable evidence that there is a dearth of literature on languages in FE over past 20 years
- Current research agenda in Modern Languages Education is focused on primary & secondary education and Higher Education
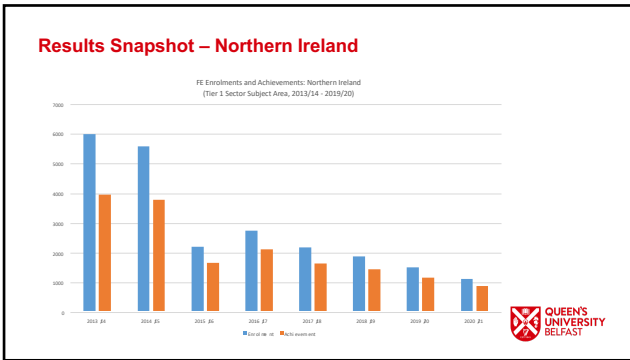
Secondary data analysis
- General picture of decline in England, Northern Ireland and Wales, but Scotland more erratic
- 51% of FE colleges in the UK offer some form of language teaching (based on desktop research of FE college websites), which can range from 'Holiday French' through to A level qualifications
- Lack of appropriate vocational qualifications, particularly in England, leads to absence of progression pathways in language learning

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Results Snapshot – England

FE (aims) Enrolments and Achievements: England
(Tier 1 Sector Subject Area, 2014/15 - 2019/20)

Total FE enrolments for Languages   Total FE achievements for Languages

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Results Snapshot – Northern Ireland

FE Enrolments and Achievements: Northern Ireland
(Tier 1 Sector Subject Area, 2013/14 - 2019/20)

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Results Snapshot – Scotland

FE Enrolments and Achievements: Scotland
(Languages and ESOL, 2013/14 - 2020/21)

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Results Snapshot – Wales

FE enrolments and achievements: Wales
(Tier 1 Sector Subject Area, 2012/13 - 2020/21)
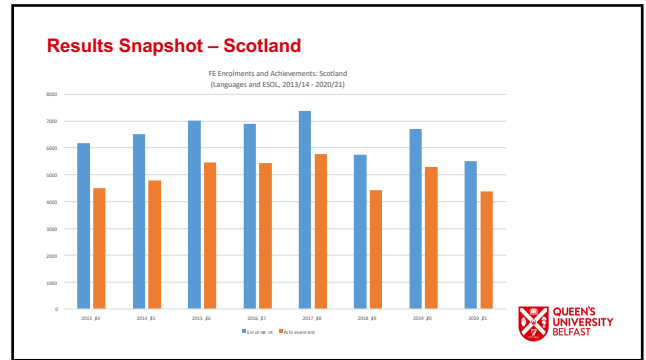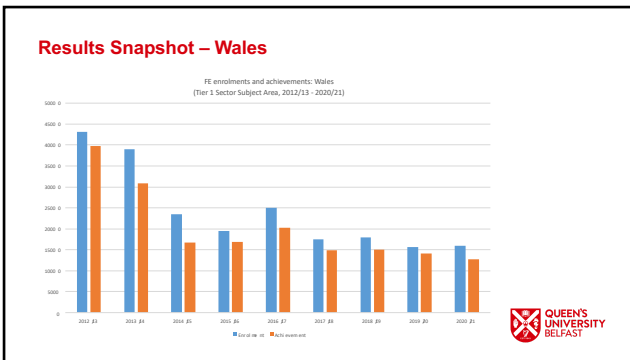
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Results

Staff survey (Middle Leaders)
- Response rate 18.8%
- Almost all teaching languages, so data need to be interpreted with caution
- Frustration evident
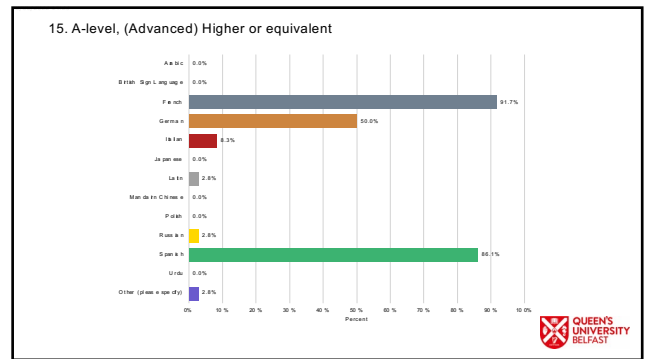- French and Spanish dominate at A level, but good variety of languages at Entry level

Student survey
- Only 205 individual responses, 202 of whom where studying a language
- Great range of ages across the lifespan and a mix of full-time and part-time students

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Entry-level /Languages for Leisure

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15. A-level, (Advanced) Higher or equivalent

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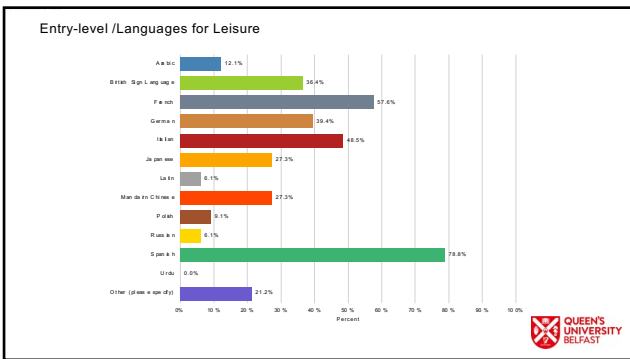
Results

Interviews with stakeholders

"I'm just a bit scared that one day languages in university departments will only be either for pupils in England or people coming from private schools." (FE/College leader)

Decline in provision	Responsiveness of FE	Diverse ways of learning	Not all languages are equal	Changing attitudes towards assessment and proficiencies	Online language learning

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Results

Interviews with stakeholders

The college needs to survive. Funded courses are more lucrative. So, we push the accredited courses more. Some find it challenging. Some find it fulfilling. Some find it a waste of time. (FE/College leader)

"There is an element of snobbery when it comes to languages" (FE/College leader)

" all courses are available online as well as face to face... the college was supportive, we installed software in our language labs to enable us to do this."

"There's that kind of a bias against mother tongue or community languages" (FE/College leader)

So I completed the GCSE and then found I was stuck again. There was no path to continue on. Unfortunately, there was no A level, the college refused to do it because there weren't enough people signed up" (FE/College learner)

"A better language education allows them to progress to the next level rather than to go to the next exam" (FE/College Lecturer)

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Recommendations

1. **Develop a unifying voice for languages in FE**
2. **Improve communication and sharing of languages teaching**
3. **Improve and expand qualifications in Further Education**
4. **Improve evidence-based policymaking in languages**
5. **Invest in languages for future UK prosperity**

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Danke schön

Go raibh maith agat

Gracias

Merci

Thank you

Xiè xie

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