

School of Classics: Strategic Plan 2020/21-2025/26

Aspiration

The School of Classics is globally recognised for both its research and teaching. The School has an upward trajectory across its research profile alongside establishing cutting edge areas of specialism within its teaching and impact, developing areas such as Public Orientated Classics. In the 2020 QS rankings the School rose to 11th (alongside Harvard and the Sorbonne and 3rd in the UK), were ranked 1st by the Guardian University Guide, top 3 in the National Student Survey and joint 2nd in the 2014 REF. We are one of the smallest Schools at St Andrews, yet one of the highest rated and are the third largest Classics department in the UK. Our successes in REF and teaching are testament to our investment in research, which is underpinned by international research networks (such as our partnership with La Sapienza and connections developed through the Centre for Late Antique Studies).

At our heart is collegiality and flexibility; we empower our colleagues to develop their teaching and research in a supportive and open environment. Over the coming five years we will build on our achievements across research and teaching and aspire to be renowned as the most desirable place to work and study Classics. A destination where flexibility, forward-looking research, unique and innovative research-led teaching programmes and international connectivity are highly valued, alongside a commitment to increasing the diversity of our staff and student profile, providing an inclusive environment in which colleagues and students receive equal treatment and opportunity.

2020/2021 is a turning point in our development and we are experiencing a generational shift in our structure, made starker by the impact of covid on our younger staffing component which make up the majority of our colleagues. Investment in individuals and our research now will solidify our status as a destination of choice which we have worked so hard to attain.

Overarching Aims and Objectives

Our plan for the immediate term is to invest in further developing our research and teaching. Covid and staff turnover has had a considerable impact on the School which has at the same time seen a 68% increase in first year students. Teaching relief has allowed us to maintain our excellence in undergraduate teaching, but has also prompted us to identify areas for development, including in our approach to teaching languages and literature. Following five years of expansion, we now enter a period of consolidation where we will continue to enhance our teaching and research by:

- Fortifying our position as one of the top-ranked Schools of Classics in the UK and in the world.
- Promoting, supporting and encouraging excellent research, celebrating collective and individual innovation, underpinned by our commitment to being an inclusive and compassionate School.
- Through directed career mentoring and promotion processes, actively support academic careers at all levels and progression to ensure we retain and nurture our high-calibre colleagues.
- Building on experience and growing expertise in winning external funding to ensure we are submitting and winning large-scale grant applications (e.g. Leverhulme, AHRC, British Academy and Loeb).
- Building a more inclusive and diverse School, fully invested in socially responsible scholarship while leading the conversation about the role of Classics today (having made good steps in diversifying our recruitment at PGR/PGT levels we will now alongside Admissions focus on undergraduate recruitment).
- Reflecting on and enhancing our teaching provision to continue providing cutting-edge teaching while nurturing our undergraduate students in their education and entering the job market.
- Growing our PGR and PGT community, recruiting the best students through the increased provision of scholarships, with resource specifically ringfenced for widening participation.
- Utilising interdisciplinary links across our research and teaching profile and in particularly with Schools such as Computer Science, Philosophical, Anthropological & Film Studies, Psychology, Divinity, English and History.
- Securing the future of our recently established international institutional-level collaborations (principally La Sapienza and Tübingen, but also Nicosia, William and Mary, Bonn, and Groningen) by investing academic and professional service time and resources into their early years' successes.
- Further redefining and professionalising our operational activities, supporting the development of professional service colleagues and practices alongside our newly appointed School Manager.

- Continuing to explore the potential of summer schools and distance learning options to extend the range and reach of our student profile while generating income to re-invest into School activities.

Research and Impact Excellence

Our research strategy is reinforced by the freedom colleagues have to develop their research interests, which leads to innovative teaching, impact and outreach. In recent years we have focused on developing conferences and workshops, grant applications and fostering relationships with visiting scholars. We are the first English-speaking university to be invited to join the Europe Masters in Classical Cultures, we host an annual Distinguished Visiting Professor programme and participate in teaching and research exchanges with Columbia (US), Bonn, William and Mary, and Nicosia. We have been successful in securing opportunities offered by the Global Fellows and Global Scholarship schemes and significantly increased our external funding, including awards from Leverhulme, the British Academy, Loeb, and Leventis. We successfully attract externally funded Post-Docs and funded leave.

Research

Scholarship within Classics is underpinned by innovative single-authored or collaborative monographs, editions, commentaries and articles. As a School we prioritise several areas of distinction while focusing on multi- and interdisciplinarity research.

Prominent world leading research concentrations include **Late Antiquity; Literature and Philosophy; Greek and Roman Drama; Material and Landscape Studies; Classical Reception** (history, ideas, literature and material culture). These research strengths generate inclusivity, contemporary relevance and are multidisciplinary, forming the core of many of our research funding applications (AHRC, Loeb, British Academy & Leverhulme) and impact collaborations (Environment; Visualizing Warfare and Leadership; Ancient and Modern). Our strengths underpin our international networking and collaboration, contribute to the depth and range in our postgraduate supervision, attract high quality postdoctoral candidates, and drive our research-led undergraduate teaching. Key areas of future research focus are:

Classical Reception and Travellers in the Classical Landscape: With recent expert appointments in classical reception we aim to concentrate and extend our research profile in a field in which several colleagues already work. SGSAAH has committed seed funding for a PGR/early-career network for classical reception. A potential future Centre for Classical Reception, the first in Scotland, is envisaged, which would include projects focused on Travellers in the Classical Landscape.

Ancient Near-Eastern Studies: We will reinforce our links with the School of Divinity and staff from the Institute of Iranian Studies to create a meaningful cluster of expertise in the ancient Near East; we expect this to be a platform both for grant applications and requests for philanthropy.

Ancient Environment Studies: We will extend current work through developing a large-scale project bringing together for the first time archaeological, scientific, historical and literary approaches to ancient environmental history, exploring the role premodern environmental engagements can play in advancing our understanding of current environmental problems, linking to wider University sustainability initiatives.

Ancient Philosophy: Through excellent collaboration between Classics and Philosophy and the recent appointment of a new colleague in Ancient Philosophy within in the department of Philosophy we will enhance our collaboration and uniqueness in this area, allowing us to continue to offer modules that can be taken as part of a Philosophy degree and attract combined PGR students.

Institute for Global Antiquity (the first International Centre): Through applying for a Leverhulme Research Centre or to the ESRC we will set up an Institute of Global Antiquity to include colleagues from all areas in Classics, establishing collaborations with institutions in Europe and particularly in Asia, Africa and the Americas.

Impact

In addition to established public engagement work that is having significant impact beyond academia, we recognise that impact is a key differentiator for REF where in 2021 we have case studies in Shaping Modern Perceptions of Military Culture through Roman Experiences, Transforming Practice in Schools and the Performing Arts through Green and Roman Drama and Archaeological Resources Enhancing Education and Wellbeing. In preparation for the future we are building new and emerging areas of impact including Ancient Environment, Lessons for the Future: Portrayal of Ancient and Modern Leaders, Classical Reception and Education and Travellers and Landscape.

For the next 5 years our research and impact aims and objectives are:

- To give time and support to colleagues to reset and focus on research in a post-covid environment.
- To provide tailored research mentorship to colleagues at different stages of their careers.
- To consolidate our position in the top bracket of departments in REF terms and in domestic and international rankings.
- To increase grant income on research and impact projects, through dedicated grant application mentoring and incentivising large School-wide grant applications. We will use institutional experience of grant-application writing and our excellent record to target individual awards (e.g. Leverhulme, British Academy) and also as a platform for efforts to secure funding from the largest funding schemes, supporting the development of a major application for global antiquity to the Leverhulme.
- To advance our global international collaborations through support for collaborative workshops and conferences for postgraduates and staff, giving continued attention to funding applications (internal global fellowships and external Leverhulme professorships) and through online events.
- To focus on supporting our colleagues in producing the highest calibre of publications, focusing on quality not quantity as we move towards the next REF cycle.

Excellence in Learning, Teaching and Student Experience

The School of Classics regularly ranks first in the NSS, Guardian University Guide and Times Higher. We are known for our research-led teaching, small group tutorial approach, diverse honours modules and the supportive community we develop with our students.

Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught

In recent years we have developed our innovative and wide-ranging teaching provision to offer modules such as A People's History of Scottish Classics, Persia and the Greeks, Africa in Latin Literature, Anonymous Writing in Ancient Rome and Islands and Networks which are unique to St Andrews and directly linked to our impact and research strategies. We also integrated fieldwork modules with trips to Greece and Rome in alternative years. One of our key attractions as a Classics department is our offer of Greek and Latin acquisition from scratch within the Classics degree and at postgraduate level.

We attract the very best undergraduates, receiving 10 applications for each available place, and provide unique opportunities to experience the latest research and pertinence of Classics in the modern world. Our students will graduate with a holistic degree enabling them to be confident researchers and knowledgeable of the wide applicability of Classics in the contemporary world. Planned new modules for the next five years include: Environmental History, Geoarchaeology, an Honours module for both Philosophy and Classics students (Plato's Republic and its critics) and a new 3000-level gateway module offering professional skills and reflective learning opportunities in Classical Studies and Latin.

Our assessments involve creative performance and translation, public outreach and education and we are the first to offer at undergraduate level the opportunity to study Classics through the prism of social responsibility. We have recently developed and successfully run a new interdisciplinary module on Archaeology in collaboration with colleagues from the Arts and Science faculties.

We are attentive to our students' needs and have had a Student Wellbeing Officer in place since 2018. Our Student Wellbeing Team undertake work across the School community to embed wellbeing activities and support structures, undertaking weekly reviews of our student cohorts, ensuring support is directed where required. Each of our honours students have a dedicated staff member as their personal tutor. Our students regularly comment on our friendly and approachable environment and during lockdown we have maintained this sense of a close-knit community of learning and teaching. We offer travel and language scholarships, make good use of the undergraduate research assistant opportunities and our students are regular participants in our outreach activities.

Postgraduate Research

We offer a bespoke training programme for our PGR students, run by a dedicated PGR teaching mentor, and a highly supportive MLitt environment. We will focus on the recruitment and funding of PGRs, utilising a new annual budget for two postgraduate scholarships to support us in attracting the very best students. Alongside this we will implement two scholarships for our MLitt degree awarding two students partial or full fee waivers to further enhance our student cohort with one reserved for widening participation.

We have been expanding our PGR cohort intake in a measured way and will continue to do this through targeted funding, collaborative applications (e.g. Leverhulme Doctoral Fellowships, Wolfson, Carnegie & SGSAH) and with a focus on balancing workloads. In addition to the introduction of the La Sapienza joint PhD degree (now in its fourth year), we have won a St Leonards Global Scholarship (a project in collaboration with Bonn) and two world-leading studentships (one in collaboration with the School of History). For 2021-22 we will bid for a doctoral cluster/research group, funded by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG). We will continue to make careful use of the University Handset Scheme with special focus on attracting the very best international students and will nurture and develop our joint postgraduate degrees with La Sapienza and Bonn alongside our co-tutelles with Oslo, and Nijmegen.

Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Aims and Objectives

- To continue to provide rigorous training in Ancient History, Classical Studies and Ancient Languages, while engaging with new pedagogical methods, leading on the socially responsible relevance of Classics, and introducing reforms that allow room for new expertise in Classical Reception.
- To continue to place emphasis on high-quality, diverse recruitment (at UG and PG levels), and to focus on retention of students at first year, particularly in Latin, Classical Studies and Ancient History (traditionally third subjects for many 1000 level students).
- To develop modules and programmes that harness the academic and pedagogical expertise of a teaching-staff profile that has changed considerably in recent years and that respond to short- (and longer-) term changes in the secondary sector (for example, in language acquisition, discursive writing competence and source criticism experience).
- In response to our successful 2019 review of learning and teaching to continue to revise established modules and introduce new ones, with changes in both teaching and assessment methods across all four of our principal subjects. Including ensuring assessment at sub honours is of the right intensity.
- To pay close attention to our 3000-level provision in Classical Studies, Ancient History and Archaeology. As Semester 1 gateway modules, we will expand their teaching commitment (to 3 hours per week rather than 2) to reinforce the specific academic skills of the honours degree.
- Following the removal of the Bridges Collection, a collection donated with the expressed purpose of enhancing the learning and teaching of archaeology, we will work alongside Museums and Collections to ensure the quality of the Archaeology student degree experience is prioritised, and if required, develop a Swallowgate Bridges Collection through capital investment.
- To develop and improve the mechanisms for learning from each other's practice across the School through the implementation of support networks such as a peer observation scheme.

Global Reputation, Community and Wellbeing

We prioritise our global networks and are active in our applications for the university global fellowships and senior global fellowships, having success with Barchiesi and Blanshard. We have applied for Leverhulme professorial appointments and focus on opportunities for international collaboration. In addition to our successful and much envied weekly research seminars, our research funding is largely spent on holding internationally recognised conferences and providing funds for colleagues to travel for research purposes. This is fundamental to our international growth and importance and in the next five years we will fund the following conferences and public engagement events utilising online networks as appropriate:

New trends in the study of Eleaticism; Masculinities in the Ancient World (in collaboration with the Accordia Research Institute); Workshop on Ancient Philosophy of Mind; Thucydides and Religion; Tolkien's Fiction Theory; Late Antique Spatial Contexts; Climate Change in the Ancient Mediterranean; Gendered Praise within collaboration; Environmental Humanities; Global Antiquity; Visualizing War; Classics and Communism (in collaboration with University of Ljubljana and University of Warsaw); Environments and Lived Experiences in the Ancient Greek World (in cooperation with the University of Munster); Two international conferences on 'Ancient Ethical Concepts and Contemporary Challenges' (in collaboration with Sorbonne Nouvelle); Classical Association Conference; Age of Domitian (in collaboration with Illinois-Urbana Champaign, Newcastle, and Radboud University) tied to the exhibition 'Domitian: God on Earth'.

We will continue our ambitious outreach programmes delivering a series of workshops highlighting the relevance of Classics, including programmes on Classics and Human Rights, and Visualising War. We will also run exhibitions on Domitian, 18th- and 19th-Century Travellers and Fearless Women.

Additionally we will continue exchanges with Nicosia, Bonn, La Sapienza, Groningen, Columbia (US) and William and Mary. Alongside support for our collaborations with JM Drijvers (Groningen), Barbara Sattler (Germany), Jordi Pia Comella (Paris), Gianfranco Agosti (La Sapienza), Clifford Ando (Chicago), Daniel Jew (Singapore), Lisa Eberle (Tubingen), Olivia Elder (Cambridge), Georgy Kantor (Oxford), Thomas Schmitz (Bonn), Claire Stocks (Radboud/Newcastle), Antony Augoustakis (Illinois Urbana-Champaign), Centre for Urban Network Evolutions (Aarhus) and Postgraduate collaborations with Tubingen, Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro. And finally to maintain our highly rated visiting scholar scheme with Drijvers (Groningen), Alastair Blanshard (University of Queensland), Julia Hoffmann-Salz (Cologne), scholars from Columbia (US), Cyprus, William & Mary.

Staff Well-being

We will support our colleagues through monitoring workload and supporting family-friendly and carer policies to mitigate workload pressures. We will ensure colleagues can undertake research and funding applications during the working week and to support this:

- We will recognise that staff have made exceptional efforts, often to the detriment of personal health, and that continuing support, especially for colleagues whose working life has been affected by caring duties will be required long beyond the end of 'lockdown'.
- We will focus on research as part of the working week (supporting changes to our teaching) and the return of research lunches/informal events both online and in-person to build staff morale, collegiality, and spark research collaboration.
- We will develop structured support for colleagues new to teaching (including peer observation).
- We will have more transparency in the distribution of administrative roles across the School and an emphasis that colleagues undertaking service in public engagement, outreach and pastoral duties are properly recognised and valued for their work.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Equality, diversity and inclusion is integral to the ethos of the School, driving its recruitment, research, teaching, public engagement, and working environment. The School aims to achieve fair and equal representation for all, enabling all members of staff and students to contribute and reach their full potential. All staff operate under the University's equality, diversity and inclusion policy and the School's EDI officers (co-chairs who represent different academic career stages and genders) sit on Management Committee. We continue to adhere to longer-term strategies aimed at attracting a diverse student and staff body, fostering an inclusive working environment in which opportunities for personal and professional development are supported. Moving forwards we will:

- Continue to implement recommendations for change based on our successful Athena Swan Bronze award (2018), especially in increasing gender balance within our staff and PGR communities through focused recruitment and supporting female staff in professional advancement.
- Focus on the recent CUCD report (Council of University Classical Departments, Dec 2020) on Equality and Diversity, incorporating recommendations for best practice in the subject area, in particular in the areas of recruitment, curriculum reform and recognition for colleagues in terms of promotion structures.
- Making decision-making processes transparent and supporting staff in achieving the service and leadership experience necessary for personal and professional development.
- Use our recent Inclusive Curriculum Audit to drive curriculum reform, encouraging greater representation of the student voice in our decision-making frameworks.
- Will recognise that the pandemic has not affected all staff and students equally. While emergency funding to boost or re-boot research is welcome, in the short to medium term covid will have a negative impact on research, productivity and staff wellbeing, in a manner that exacerbates existing inequalities in the workplace. As a School we offer individual members of staff the extra support they need and will actively support and encourage University/national level responses to keep colleagues healthy and to assist in recalibrating research priorities over the next five years.