

The University of Edinburgh

Internal Periodic Review 2018/19

**Teaching Programme Review (TPR) Classics
14th and 15th November 2018**

Final report

Section A- Introduction

Scope of the review

Range of provision considered by the review:

Ancient Mediterranean Civilisations (MA Hons) [owned by Archaeology]
Ancient History and Classical Archaeology (MA Hons)
Ancient History and Greek (MA Hons)
Ancient History (MA Hons)
Ancient History and Latin (MA Hons)
Ancient and Medieval History (MA Hons)
Classical Archaeology and Greek (MA Hons)
Classical and Middle East Studies (MA Hons)
Classics (MA Hons)
Classics and English Language (MA Hons)
Classics and Linguistics (MA Hons)
Classical Studies (MA Hons)
Greek Studies (MA Hons)
Latin Studies (MA Hons)
Classical Archaeology and Latin (MA Hons)

The TPR of Classics consisted of:

The University's remit for internal review (listed in Appendix 1)

The subject specific remit for the review, consisting of the following items:

Curriculum Design

Do pre-Honours courses offer suitable progression from year one to year two and do they offer appropriate preparation for entry into Honours (e.g. material covered and assessment) especially across language courses (Greek and Latin), Ancient History courses (Greek and Roman World) and for students on joint programmes? Similarly, is the breadth of options in Honours courses appropriate and are assessment methods constructive?

Employability and Marketing

Do programmes and courses offer suitable transferable skills for future employment and/or further study? How can this be enhanced to ensure that the department continue to deliver top quality provision compared with other Classics departments, in a way that aligns with the University of Edinburgh's strengths, particularly in the areas of Late Antiquity/Early Middle Ages and in Classical Archaeology?

The Reflective Report and additional material provided in advance of the review

The visit by the review team including consideration of further material (*listed in Appendix 2*)

The final report produced by the review team

Action by the Subject Area/School and others to whom recommendations were remitted following the review

Membership of the review team

Convener	Dr Simon Daff, School of Chemistry
External Panel Member	Professor Costas Panayotakis, University of Glasgow
External Panel Member	Professor Lynette Mitchell, University of Exeter
Internal Panel Member	Dr Andrea Birdsall, School of Social and Political Science
Student Panel Member	Ms Ozioma Kamalu, School of Physics and Astronomy
TPR Administrator	Mr Alastair Duthie, College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences

Situate Subject Area/School within its College

Classics is one of three subject areas within the School of History, Classics and Archaeology. The School is part of the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences.

Physical location and summary of facilities

The subject area is based in the William Robertson Wing of the Old Medical School, Teviot. This section of the building provides a dedicated space for staff and students in History, Classics and Archaeology. The facilities are split across six floors comprising mainly teaching spaces and staff offices. The building also includes a single School Teaching Office, an Undergraduate Common Room and a large Resources Room with a library and study-space facilities for students.

Date of previous review

November 2012

Reflective Report:

The Reflective Report was prepared by:

- Dr Calum Maciver (TPR Liaison and School Director of Quality)
- Professor Gavin Kelly (Head of Classics)
- Vicky Swann (Curriculum and Quality Assurance Officer)
- Frances Stannard (Curriculum and Quality Assurance Administrator)

Consultation of academic and professional services staff was carried out at departmental meetings and separate *ad hoc* meetings for the preparation of remit items. Students were present at the meetings for preparation of remit items (the Classics Society Student Academic liaison, and other volunteers). Further consultation took place in advance of the review (Semester 1) through the Classics Student Staff Liaison Committee meetings, and a list of items to be discussed in the particular student-focused sessions of the TPR was compiled.

Section B - Main Report

1 Strategic overview

1.1 Classics is one of three subject areas within the School of History, Classics and Archaeology. The Classics and Archaeology subject areas are smaller in size in comparison to History, which is the largest subject area in the School. Classics offers a total of fifteen programmes and a wide range of pre-Honours and Honours courses at undergraduate level. This provision can broadly be separated in the two areas of languages and non-languages that cover five main pathways: Greek, Latin, Ancient History, Classical Art and Archaeology, and Classical Literature in translation.

Academic staff in the subject area are recognised for their strong publication record and this departmental profile has been further enhanced by a number of new appointments in recent years. Cross-disciplinary and cross-School collaboration in research and teaching ensures the provision offered reflects the wide range of staff expertise available across all programme pathways. There is also strong evidence that staff from outside the subject area are often brought in to teach courses when appropriate. The School is **commended** for developing these connections and is encouraged to continue expanding interdisciplinary connections in the school at all levels of study.

1.2 The subject area has designed its provision to offer a distinct and highly marketable range of degree programmes that can compete within the sector, particularly with Oxford University and other Russell-Group institutions. By covering a broad range of specialisms, high-achieving students continue to be attracted to the Classics department at the University of Edinburgh. During the review, the subject area outlined its plans to further expand its provision into the area of Byzantine and Medieval studies, developing new courses and programmes that are unique to Edinburgh and align with staff expertise in this area.

The Review Team noted in admissions statistics that a disproportionately high number of Rest of UK (RUK) students were being recruited to programmes in Classics. The subject area confirmed that recruitment of Scottish/European Union (SEU) students has been made more challenging as comparatively few Scottish schools now offer Classical subjects, especially in the state sector. The Review Team suggested that the low numbers of Scottish students in Classics could be increased through outreach work and the School are encouraged to continue monitoring this trend (see 2.5.4).

1.3 Administrative support is provided to students and staff in the subject area through a single School Teaching Office. It was noted that this Teaching Office was re-structured partly as a result of the last Teaching Programme Review of Classics in November 2012. The new structure was introduced to streamline resource in the School allowing it to provide more efficient and consistent administrative support, particularly at course-level. This office is no longer student-facing, but Teaching Office staff are available by email and can schedule meetings with students if requested in advance. It was also noted that Teaching Office staff are removed from student-facing roles to ensure confidential information be hidden from view and to ensure that work can be completed efficiently. If required, students can also approach the Student Support Team (SST) and the main School Reception on the ground floor.

Staff suggested that it was challenging to create a sense of subject-area identity in the absence of dedicated subject-area lead administrative support. Although

the Review Team does not think the current structure is adversely affecting the student experience, it **recommends** that the plans to introduce a new lead administrator for each subject area in the School be progressed. It was agreed that the new roles would aid professional development among staff and may also help to strengthen subject-area identity among staff and students in the School.

2. Enhancing the student experience

2.1 Supporting students in their learning – all aspects of support relevant to students' learning, including:

2.1.1 Pastoral and academic support is delivered to students through the Personal Tutor system. The support of a dedicated academic staff member is complemented by that of the Student Support Team (SST); a school-based team of professional services staff. The SST provides essential and dedicated student support when the Personal Tutor (PT) is unavailable, or for students experiencing a sudden crisis, providing an instant source of support and signposting on to the central support services and the Advice Place when appropriate. The office also provides support for PTs who rely on the knowledge of Student Support Officers (SSO), particularly for routes to central University support services, advice on regulations and processes.

Feedback suggests that the Personal Tutor is more widely accepted by students as the primary means of support in the Classics subject area and this staff member often deals with the majority of queries relating to academic and pastoral support. However, it is clear that the partnership between the SST and PTs is working very effectively and academic staff rely on the support and expertise of Student Support Officers. While students in the School are actively encouraged to engage with the Student Support Office, the Review Team **recommends** that the Head of Subject Area work with the Head of School to raise the profile of the SST among Classics students, particularly those in their first year of study. The Review Team also **suggests** that the private meeting space already identified for use by the SST be furnished and made available to staff in this office as soon as possible.

Staff in the School, and in the subject area, acknowledge that the rising number of cases concerning student mental health presents new challenges. The Review Team **highly commends** the dedicated work of Personal Tutors and Student Support Officers in challenging circumstances. The Review Team **recommends** that the Dean of Students continues to explore ways of enhancing the Personal Tutor System locally, working with the Director of Student Wellbeing to ensure that staff in student-facing support roles are equipped to deal with crisis situations. During the review, the panel **suggested** that the University explore the possibility of employing a trained mental-health professional, who could be based in the School one day per week and who could rotate around the Schools in the College as required.

2.1.2 Training is provided to Personal Tutors on an annual basis through a School induction session. This training is aimed primarily at staff new to the role, but is also open to all staff who would like a refresher. Personal Tutors are also issued with a comprehensive sixty-one page Handbook detailing the expectations of the role and providing links to sources of support. A School induction session is delivered by the Senior Personal Tutor (ST) with an SSO in attendance. The PowerPoint slides used during the induction session are then made available to all PTs. Further training and support is available for academic and professional services staff through the Student Counselling Service and the Institute for Academic Development. It was noted by the Review Team that while staff found all training documents to be useful, the slides issued by the ST following the induction session were a key support resource. The slides were identified as an example of **good practice** and the Senior Tutor is **highly commended** for providing this dedicated support to Personal Tutors in the School.

2.1.3 Students are allocated to a Personal Tutor by the Senior Tutor and the Student Support Office. The School makes an attempt whenever possible to assign a student to a PT who will remain in that role throughout their period of study. If that member of staff leaves for a period of research leave, it is common practice for each student to be returned to their original PT once the period of research leave ends. The Head of Subject Area carefully monitors staff workload and ensures numbers be capped for staff with additional responsibilities. Temporary staff members do act as Personal Tutors for a small number of students to aid their professional development. While extremely rare, any issues regarding non-engagement of PTs or requests from students for a change of PT are handled by the Senior Tutor and the Head of Subject Area.

Staff acknowledge that in their role as Personal Tutors, performance in this area is not considered as part of annual review and does not lead to career promotion. The only current mechanism for recognising good performance is through the Edinburgh University Students' Association's annual Teaching Awards. However, it is widely accepted that research activities and grant applications will contribute more tangibly to promotion. The Review Team **recommends** that the Dean of Students and the Assistant Principal Academic Support further explore the link between promotion and teaching and administrative duties across the University, potentially as part of the University-wide review of the Personal Tutor System.

2.1.4 Study Abroad students are often assigned a new Personal Tutor when they depart from Edinburgh. Each student undertaking a year abroad is usually assigned the School's International Officer, who then remains as their PT for the remainder of their studies. The Review Team explored this arrangement during the review and **recommends** that the School change this practice to ensure that students undertaking a year abroad keep their original Personal Tutor in addition to the extra support provided through the International Officer. The Review Team believes that this would be more beneficial for students and will provide more consistency and stability for them during the transition to and following their year abroad.

2.1.5 Support for students on joint degree programmes poses a number of challenges for the subject areas involved. Currently, the Curriculum Officer is the primary contact for all students undertaking joint programmes that are owned or part-owned by the Classics subject area. Staff in Classics noted that while some joint degree programmes are working effectively, including Classics and English Literature (MA Hons), communication between Schools can be challenging, leading to some students feeling unsupported. It is **suggested** that the subject area and the School find ways of feeding in to the current review of joint honours programmes that is being led by the College Dean of Undergraduate Studies.

2.2. Listening to and responding to the Student Voice

2.2.1 The Classics department has managed to develop a strong sense of community between staff and students. Students reflect positively on the openness of academic and professional services staff and their willingness to help. There is a strong awareness among students of the passion that staff have for teaching their subject, and a respect for the expertise of those staff members in their respective fields. The department cultivates this sense of community by instilling a passion for the subject through learning and teaching and by listening and responding to student feedback. The Review Team **highly commends** all staff in the subject area for their accessibility to the students and for their dedicated approach to investing in enhancing the student experience by listening and responding to the student voice.

2.2.2 The Classics Society also plays a central role in creating a sense of community amongst students in the subject area. The society organises a range of social activities and academic events, including the Greece vs. Rome debate, which also involves staff. The Classics Society also attracts students from outside the subject area and seems to be very

popular with students from across the whole University. The Classics Society is **commended** for running activities that foster a strong sense of subject-area community and encourages organisers to keep developing these initiatives while promoting the society to the whole University.

2.2.3 Classics operate regular Student-Staff Liaison Committee (SSLC) meetings, which are student-led. These meetings are well regarded by staff and students in the subject area and minutes of the meetings provide strong evidence that when issues are raised, they are taken forward and actioned. Some feedback from students suggested that the attendance of senior staff members may prevent less confident students from being able to express their views. The Review Team supports the proposed plans for the subject area's lead teaching administrator to organise and facilitate these meetings. The Review Team also **suggests** that a reduction in the number of senior staff members attending may also help to generate more discussion in future SSLC meetings.

In addition to the regular SSLC meetings, the subject area offers various opportunities for student feedback on courses including through the class and programme representatives system. Some students in the first year of study suggested that they were unsure who to contact regarding issues with their course. The Review Team **suggests** that the School-level student representative find ways of increasing the visibility of class and programme representatives, particularly among first- and second-year students.

2.2.4 In the absence of a student-facing Teaching Office, the School has explored ways of developing a mechanism for handling student queries. Staff in the Teaching Office mentioned that they now include a frequently asked questions (FAQs) section in LEARN to improve the consistency and efficiency of feedback to common course and programme queries. This was identified by the Review Team as an area of **good practice** that should be shared across the University where appropriate.

2.3 Learning and Teaching

2.3.1 The subject area offers a broad range of courses and programmes that reflect the full spectrum of staff specialisms in the department. The subject area see this breadth as one of its key marketing assets with provision offered in the areas of Classical Archaeology, Ancient History, Literature, Greek Philosophy and Greek and Latin language; the department is also developing its provision in the areas of Late Antiquity and Byzantine studies. The mechanisms for monitoring the delivery of this broad suite of courses are strong (see 2.2) and feedback suggests that students enjoy exploring the different pathways on offer. This is particularly true for Honours-level courses.

At pre-Honours level, the courses offered are often broader in scope and cover a wider time-period than courses at Honours level. The content of the Greek and Roman World courses, which form the compulsory component of the Ancient History degree programme, are considered by some students to be quite demanding. By covering wide time-periods, some students found that the lecture content was difficult to follow. The Review Team agreed that, while these survey courses are relatively demanding, this concern could be addressed by increasing student involvement in course and programme design. It is **suggested** that the subject area look at ways of facilitating this involvement, which it is hoped will also help to communicate how the broader pre-Honours introductory survey courses prepare students for Honours-level teaching.

The overall curriculum design and its strategic direction, particularly programme design, is managed by members of the academic staff working within each pathway, in conjunction with the Head of Subject Area. The programmes are designed to offer specialisation in one or more of the five pathways. The Classical Studies (MA Honours) is a very popular degree programme and allows students to blend the study of classical languages, ancient history and literature or philosophy. The Review Team explored how progression on these degree

programmes is managed, when the emphasis is placed on breadth of course choice. The subject area confirmed that the Curriculum Officer reviews all applications to ensure that students are taking courses that meet the requirements of their programme. While the Review Team agreed that oversight in this area is strong, it **suggests** that the subject area carry out a light-touch review of all programmes and courses to ensure that the student experience is consistent across all provision (see 2.7.2).

2.3.2 The process for allocating courses at Honours-level was discussed at length during the review. In consultation with Teaching Office staff, the Curriculum Officer reviews any contextual information to ensure that each student has taken the courses they need in order to progress. Although students submit their course preferences in advance, the most popular courses can quickly become oversubscribed. In this situation, a lottery system is used in an attempt to ensure that the process for allocation is fair. While this affects approximately fifty students per year, some students suggested to the Review Team that they had been allocated their preferred choices because they enjoyed a good relationship with staff. The Review Team believe this to be a misperception caused by the lack of transparency that comes with the lottery system. In light of this feedback, the Review Team **recommends** that the Curriculum Officer reviews the process of course allocation at Honours level and moves away from the lottery system. The new system should be operated by a professional services staff member to ensure the process is made as transparent as possible to students and staff.

2.3.3 Study Abroad is a popular option for students in their third year. Members of the Review Team probed a noticeable drop-off in intake during the last two years. Subject area staff suggested that this could be a result of two smaller cohorts. Staff in the subject area reflected positively on the idea of studying abroad, but noted that it can be challenging for the students to maintain momentum in their studies. The Review Team **commends** the subject area for providing robust mechanisms to ensure the transition to fourth year is as smooth as possible, including regular communications from the Dissertation Co-ordinator and the 'Stepping up to Honours' induction.

Fourth-year students who have just returned from their year abroad suggested that more emphasis could be placed on the opportunities available through Study Abroad and how it could complement their degree programme (e.g. access to sources for completing research for the dissertation, fieldtrips, and archaeological digs). The Review Team **suggests** that the school's Careers Consultant discuss the linkage between Study Abroad opportunities and degree programmes with the Curriculum Officer and staff from the Go Abroad office, where appropriate.

2.3.4 The subject area outlined plans to develop more fieldwork opportunities for students on programmes in Classics. The Head of Subject Area confirmed that approximately ten students per year could apply for a £300 endowment per student to fund this opportunity. The Review Team **commends** the subject area for providing this opportunity to students. It also supports the plans to introduce a dedicated fieldwork course for students in Classics and encourages the School and the subject area to continue expanding fieldwork opportunities where possible.

2.3.5 The Head of Subject Area noted that the management of joint-degree programmes can be challenging for individual Schools. Many of the joint-degree programmes are often combinations of two single-Honours subjects with the fourth-year dissertation acting as the only cohesive course or component of assessment. The School sends out a weekly digest to all students on their programmes, including those on joint degrees, and the Curriculum Officer acts as the key contact in the subject area for these students. The Review Team identified this as an example of **good practice**. The Director of Undergraduate Studies is encouraged to link up with the College Dean of Undergraduate Studies to ensure that any local concerns about joint programmes in the School be considered as part of the wider review of joint degrees.

2.4 Assessment and Feedback

2.4.1 The Classics subject area offers language teaching as a major part of their provision. Language teaching in Greek and Latin is delivered to students at all levels and caters to a wide range of abilities. Latin 2A ex-beginners, for example, helps students to catch up prior to entering into Honours. While it is accepted that this course can be quite demanding, the students and staff find this enormously beneficial. Subject-area staff also arrange extra office-based classes and further extra-curricular support to assist those students who may need extra contact time and support for language acquisition. The Review Team **highly commends** staff teaching languages for their dedication and **commends** the subject area for monitoring student progression in language classes, bringing all students up to the same level and providing them with ongoing support through tutorial-based learning. The support for language learning from full-time academic staff and postgraduate tutors was identified by the Review Team as a particularly excellent example of **good practice**, with clear evidence that they are able to retain new learners of classical languages and provide exceptional support to mixed abilities and backgrounds. Students reflected on this very positively and it is clear that by providing extra contact time, the language-teaching structure was contributing to a positive student experience.

2.4.2 The introduction of a new school-wide marking scheme was explored during the review. The use of stepped marking was introduced two years ago in an attempt to encourage the use of the full marking-scale across the one hundred points. The subject area explained that the decision to move to this approach was taken at School-level and was not based on marking practices or concerns about practices in Classics. The Review Team did explore whether there was a potential link between stepped marking and grade inflation, particularly in Classics (MA Hons) where a higher proportion of firsts are usually awarded. The subject area suggested that the move to the new marking scheme is more likely to move students down a grade and therefore evens out. The Review Team **suggests** that the School and the subject area continue to monitor this to ensure that this does not lead to grade inflation in the future.

2.4.3 Feedback on coursework is made available to students alongside grade descriptors. It was noted that the movement to online submission and feedback had created new challenges in this area. The Review Team **suggests** that the subject area explore ways of better integrating grade descriptors and marking criteria within LEARN, in order to better link assessment performance and feedback during the submission and feedback process.

2.5 Accessibility, Inclusivity and Widening Participation

2.5.1 The Student Support Office works in partnership with the School's Co-ordinator of Adjustments to ensure learning adjustments are in place for all students who require this support. The Review Team noted that on some courses, including the large Greek and Roman World survey courses, lecturers do not always provide course materials (e.g. PowerPoint slides) in advance of the class. This was also acknowledged by some staff in the School. The Review Team **recommends** that the School Co-ordinator of Adjustments and the Head of Subject Area remind all staff that lecture slides should be provided to all students through LEARN at least 24 hours in advance of each class.

2.5.2 During the review, a small number of first-year students raised concerns about the absence of lecture recording on their courses. They noted that this created challenges for a class peer who had learning adjustments in place. While the focus of those conversations was on one student, it was suggested that lecture recording would aid the entire cohort, as it was sometimes difficult to absorb the volume of information given on the large pre-Honours Greek and Roman World courses (see 2.3.1). The Review Team **suggests** that the subject area support the introduction of lecture recording for large pre-Honours courses.

2.5.3 Widening Participation is a key area of interest for the University. The launch of the University's Widening Participation Strategy outlines four key strands and an implementation plan to help individual areas develop their initiatives for widening access, particularly for SIMD20 students (Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation), where a target of 10% intake has been set for the University by the Scottish Government. Recruiting from Scottish schools has been challenging for the subject area since very few state schools teach Latin or Classical Studies. Classics is involved in a 'literacy through Latin' initiative, connecting student volunteers with local primary schools, with the aim of improving literacy through the teaching of Latin grammar. The Review Team was very encouraged to hear about these initiatives and supports plans to expand any activities that raise the profile of Classics in local schools.

The subject area previously organised an Outreach Committee to help co-ordinate activities, including the 'literacy through Latin' initiative. Staff in the subject area noted that the committee no longer meets, as it required a staff member dedicated to leading its direction, and linking up with School-wide activities through the Deputy Director of Undergraduate Studies. The Review Team **recommends** that the subject area appoint a dedicated Widening Participation Director (or equivalent) from the current departmental staff who can lead the work of a Widening Participation and Outreach Committee. This individual should ensure that initiatives are developed in partnership with the School and the College, in line with the University's Widening Participation Strategy. The Review Team also **suggests** that the subject area liaise with the College's Undergraduate Admissions team to develop new ways of growing the number of places for students from widening participation backgrounds.

2.5.4 The composition of the current student cohort was explored during the review. The Review Team identified an imbalance between the high number of RUK students in comparison to SEU students (see 1.2), a disproportionately high number of female students, and a low number of black and minority ethnic (BME) students in the subject area. There is evidence to suggest that the composition of the student body on these programmes could be a result of both societal class and the greater rarity of Classics teaching outside the private schooling curriculum.

Reading lists across the courses and programmes in the subject area include a mixture of classical texts and secondary literature. It was accepted that the majority of the classical texts are written by male writers and do not typically come from minority voices. While the Review Team acknowledges that promoting equality and diversity in the curriculum through reading lists is often challenging, it was encouraged to hear about the Subject Area's attempts to identify new and interesting ways of sharing ideas by discussing how the teaching of the discipline has developed over time (e.g. how diversity is now visible in the composition of teams completing archaeological digs). It was understood that these ideas emerged through staff information-gathering and idea-sharing sessions.

The Review Team **recommends** that the Subject Area creates a role for a dedicated Classics staff member to act as an Equality and Diversity officer with a view to monitoring and enhancing the department's profile for diversity in admissions in partnership with the School's Equality and Diversity Officer and the Equality and Diversity Committee. This member of staff will also be charged with exploring new ways of embedding equality and diversity throughout the Classics curriculum. The School is encouraged to engage students in this work who expressed support for more gender diverse readings and courses.

2.6 Learning environment (physical and virtual)

2.6.1 The teaching of Classics is delivered by a group of approximately thirty-three academic staff, whose offices are spread across the Old Medical School building. As this building also houses the subject areas of History and Archaeology, staff noted that it can be challenging to create a physical subject-area identity. The Review Team found that, while this concern was raised by subject area staff, students did not seem to share this view and

instead found that there was a very strong sense of community in Classics. Academic and professional services staff in the School and particularly in the subject area are **highly commended** for achieving this through the mechanisms outlined earlier in the report (see 2.2).

2.6.2 The facilities available in the building to students include the undergraduate common room, the resources room with a dedicated Classics library, and the Classics cluster, which bring staff and students together in a specific area of the building. Postgraduate Tutors often use an area known within the subject area as the Classics cluster and the study pods around the building to hold meetings with students. The Review Team find these facilities to be well maintained and very beneficial to both staff and students.

While the majority of teaching is delivered within the School building, space is at a premium and, therefore, classes are sometimes timetabled to be held in other areas of the campus. The Review Team appreciates that the limited availability of teaching space within the School does pose challenges for creating a sense of subject-area community; however, it is clear that staff and students are finding innovative solutions for creating a sense of community in other ways and are **commended** for doing so.

2.7 Development of Employability and Graduate Attributes

2.7.1 The School of History, Classics and Archaeology has a dedicated Careers Consultant, who works with each subject area to develop its careers and employability profile. Activities involve presenting to students at Open Days, developing ways of further embedding employability initiatives in the curriculum in partnership with Boards of Studies, promoting the Edinburgh Award to students and assisting students and recent graduates with careers planning through meetings (in person and via Skype), mock interviews and year group-talks. The Careers Consultant and School Marketing Officer have also been involved in engaging alumni through a dedicated committee, linking recent graduates to the current student cohort to promote career options and employment opportunities. It is clear to the Review Team that the dedicated work of the Careers Consultant and School Marketing Officer is making a real and visible impact in the School. The Review Team **highly commends** them for the valuable support they offer students and recent graduates and encourages the subject area to continue working with the Careers Consultant to further develop these initiatives.

2.7.2 Transferable skills focus primarily on general research and writing skills, but are complemented by specific skills training in areas like palaeography through use of the University archives, role-play experience to simulate archival work and manuscript training exercises within the University library's Research Collections. Some courses also develop presentation and group-work skills, and Greek and Latin language courses develop core skills in translation. These transferable skills are embedded in course assessment, but vary depending on the nature and focus of the course. Students in the subject area did suggest that graduate skills could be more clearly built into programmes (e.g. the new palaeography course is considered as a key skill, but it is not clear how this connects with broader professional development and employability).

The subject area also sees and uses the teaching of Latin and Greek as a platform for further development of interest, and competency in, learning other languages. The Review Team identified a link between promoting the benefits of undertaking a Classics degree (e.g. clearly communicating transferable graduate skills) and the need to develop outreach work in schools across the country. It is **recommended** that the subject area finds ways of highlighting these transferable skills in the curriculum by embedding them in compulsory courses that form the core component of all Classics programmes, in a consistent way. These transferable graduate skills should link visibly to the pathways on offer (e.g. Ancient History students must have access to historical skills training), drawing on existing skills training courses both inside and outside the School where feasible. The Review Team

believes that this will both help to communicate the advantages of studying for a Classics degree to potential applicants and prepare current students for their future careers.

2.8 Supporting and developing staff

2.8.1 The subject area recruits Postgraduate Research students to act as tutors across its language and non-language provision. Those who want to tutor, first submit an expression of interest and apply each spring to teach specific courses that are due to run in the coming academic year. New applicants are then interviewed to ensure that they are suitably qualified to teach those courses and that tutors understand what is expected of them in this role. Tutors are then inducted at the start of the academic session (September) and trained using a series of four sessions covering marking, payment, handling challenging situations and other practical aspects of tutoring. The course organiser also conducts an observation of teaching at least once a year, followed by oral and written feedback. All tutors are also offered the opportunity to have an annual review of their teaching from the Head of Subject Area. During term time, additional support for marking is available through the course organiser; this is particularly helpful for those tutoring on language courses. The Review Team finds the overall structure for supporting the professional development of tutors in the subject area to be effective. However, it is **recommended** that the Head of Subject Area find a clearer way of communicating the annual teaching review to tutors as many were not aware of this opportunity.

The opportunities for reflection on teaching performance and development are available to students through mid-course feedback and course enhancement questionnaires (CEQs). This is provided to students through the course organiser and, in practice, forms part of the annual teaching review. Mid-course feedback was found to be more useful for tutors as CEQs tended to focus more on lectures. Tutors are also encouraged to develop and design their own tutorials, but are not given the opportunity to lecture. Staff in the subject area suggested that there are University-level Human Resource restrictions that prevent tutors from gaining lecturing experience.

Opportunities for further professional development outside the classroom are also available through the Institute for Academic Development. While opportunities do exist through the Edinburgh Teaching Award, the Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice (PGCAP) and the Principal's Career Development Scholarship, the Review Team **recommends** that the subject area find ways of promoting these opportunities to all Postgraduate Tutors at the earliest possible stage in their careers and systematically build a schedule of further professional development opportunities into a reflective mandatory annual teaching review. This schedule should also include training in unconscious bias, mental health and equality and diversity for all staff.

The Postgraduate Tutors reflected positively on the level of support provided during induction and throughout term time from course organisers, for oversight of marking and feedback, and from the Teaching Office, who provide dedicated course support and coordinate the implementation of adjustments for students in class. The Review Team **commends** the Teaching Office and course organisers for the support they provide to Postgraduate Tutors and teaching staff more generally. It is clear that the Postgraduate Tutors also support each other through informal peer-support mechanisms and organise seminars and social events to create a sense of academic community. However, there is evidence to suggest that this community is built around their role as Postgraduate Research students rather than staff members; the Review Team **suggests** that this could be improved by inviting tutors to attend regular staff meetings, in addition to the School-level tutor-staff meetings.

3. Assurance and Enhancement of provision

3.1 Setting and maintaining academic standards

3.1.1 The Review Team are assured that the Subject Area are recruiting high-quality students to the programmes in Classics. The review did highlight some challenges with diversity across the student cohort (see item 1.2 and 2.5.4) and suggested that the subject area continue to work with the College's Undergraduate Admissions Team to explore ways of growing numbers from a more diverse range of backgrounds.

3.1.2 Ongoing monitoring of the number of first-class degrees awarded in Classics is encouraged through the annual programme monitoring cycle.

3.2 Key themes and actions taken

3.2.1 External Examiners reports reflect positively on the standards of assessment in the subject area. The Review Team encourages the School Director of Quality to celebrate good practice identified in External Examiner reports and share this across the School.

Section C – Review conclusions

Confidence statement

The review team found that the subject area of Classics in the School of History, Classics and Archaeology has effective management of the quality of the student learning experience, academic standards, and enhancement and good practice.

Key Strengths and Areas of Positive Practice for sharing more widely across the institution

No	Commendation	Section in report
1	The School is commended for developing strong cross-disciplinary and cross-School teaching and research collaborations through co-teaching activity in the School.	1.1
2	The dedicated work of Personal Tutors and Student Support Officers in challenging circumstances is highly commended .	2.1.1
3	The Senior Tutor is highly commended for providing dedicated support and training to Personal Tutors in the School.	2.1.2
4	The Review Team highly commends all staff in the subject area for their accessibility to the students and for their dedicated approach to investing in enhancing the student experience by listening and responding to student feedback.	2.2.1 and 2.6.1
5	The Classics Society is commended for running activities that foster a strong sense of subject-area community and encourages organisers to keep developing these initiatives while promoting the society to the wider University.	2.2.2
6	The Review Team commends the subject area for providing robust mechanisms to ensure the transition from studying abroad to fourth year is as smooth as possible, including regular communications from the Dissertation Co-ordinator and the 'Stepping up to Honours' induction.	2.3.3
7	The Review Team commends the subject area for providing fieldwork opportunities to students and supports the plans to introduce a dedicated fieldwork course for students in Classics.	2.3.4
8	The Review Team highly commends staff teaching languages for their dedication and commends the subject area for monitoring student progression in language classes, bringing all students up to the same level and providing them with ongoing support through tutorial-based learning.	2.4.1
9	The Review Team appreciates that the limited availability of teaching space within the School does pose challenges for creating a sense of subject-area community; however, it is clear that staff and students are finding innovative solutions for creating a sense of community in other ways and are commended for doing so.	2.6.2
10	The Review Team highly commends the School Careers Consultant and Marketing Officer for the valuable and visible support they offer students and recent graduates. The Subject Area is encouraged to continue working with the Careers Consultant to further develop these initiatives.	2.7.1
11	The Review Team commends the Teaching Office and course organisers for the support they provide to Postgraduate Tutors and teaching staff more generally.	2.8.1

Recommendations for enhancement/Areas for further development

Priority	Recommendation	Section in report	Responsibility of
1	The Review Team recommends that the subject area appoint a dedicated Widening Participation Director (or equivalent) from the current departmental staff who can lead the work of a Widening Participation and Outreach Committee. This individual should ensure that initiatives are developed in partnership with the School and the College, in line with the University's Widening Participation Strategy.	2.5.3	Head of School, Head of Subject Area and Head of Widening Participation
2	The Review Team recommends that the subject area create a role for a dedicated Classics staff member to act as an Equality and Diversity Officer with a view to monitoring and enhancing the department's profile for diversity in admissions and for finding new ways of embedding equality and diversity throughout the curriculum.	2.5.4	Head of School and Head of Subject Area
3	The Review Team recommends that the Curriculum Officer review the process of course allocation at Honours level and moves away from the lottery system. The new system should be operated by professional services staff and made as transparent as possible to students and staff.	2.3.2	Curriculum Officer
4	The Review Team recommends that the subject area ensure that transferable skills be embedded in all Classics programmes, in a consistent way, by being delivered within compulsory core courses. These transferable graduate skills should link visibly to the pathways on offer and future avenues for employment.	2.7.2	Classics Teaching Committee and Careers Consultant
5	The Review Team recommends that the School Co-ordinator of Adjustments and the Head of Subject Area remind all staff that lecture slides should be provided to all students through LEARN at least 24 hours in advance of each class.	2.5.1	School Co-ordinator of Adjustments and Head of Subject Area
6	The Review Team recommends that the plans to introduce a new subject-area lead administrator be progressed as a way of strengthening subject-area identity and aiding staff professional development. This role should include direct student interaction within SSLC meetings and involvement with teaching planning.	1.3	Head of School and Director of Professional Services
7	The Review Team recommends that the profile of the Student Support Team be raised amongst first- and second-year students in the Classics Subject Area and that its role is clearly defined.	2.1.1	Head of Subject Area and Director of Professional Services
8	The Review Team recommends that the private meeting space identified by the School be furnished and made available to the Student Support Team as soon as possible.	2.1.1	Director Professional Services
9	The Review Team recommends that the School work in partnership with the Dean of Students to identify ways of enhancing the operation of the Personal Tutor System, including reviewing the	2.1.1	School Senior Tutor, College Dean of Students and University's

	support for staff dealing with rising cases of mental health among students.		Director of Student Wellbeing
10	The Review Team recommends that the Dean of Students and the Assistant Principal Academic Support further explore the link between promotion and teaching and administrative duties across the University, potentially as part of the University-wide review of the Personal Tutor System.	2.1.1	College Dean of Students and Assistant Principal Academic Support
11	The Review Team recommends that the School change the practice of re-assigning Study Abroad students to the International Officer to act as Personal Tutor. This will ensure that students undertaking a year abroad keep their original Personal Tutor in addition to the extra support provided through the International Officer.	2.1.4	School Senior Tutor and Head of School
12	The Review Team recommends that the subject area find ways of promoting the PGCAP and Edinburgh Teaching Award opportunities to all Postgraduate Tutors at the earliest possible stage in their careers and systematically builds a schedule of further professional development opportunities into a reflective mandatory annual teaching review.	2.8.1	Head of Subject Area with input from the Institute for Academic Development
13	The Review Team recommends that the Head of Subject Area find a clearer way of communicating the option of an annual teaching review to Postgraduate Tutors.	2.8.1	Head of Subject Area

Suggestions for noting

If an issue is minor but the review team nevertheless wants to flag it as a potentially useful action, it will be couched as a suggestion rather than a formal recommendation. Suggestions are not tracked in onward reporting.

No	Suggestion	Section in report
1	The Review Team suggests that the University explore the possibility of employing a trained mental-health professional who could be based in the School one day per week and could rotate around the Schools in the College as required.	2.1.1
2	The Review Team suggests that the PowerPoint slides used by the Senior Tutor during induction be shared as an example of good practice.	2.1.2
3	The Review Team suggests that the subject area find ways of feeding their concerns about Joint Programmes into the wider review conducted by the College Dean of Undergraduate Studies.	2.1.5
4	The Review Team suggests that a reduction in the number of senior staff members attending may also help to generate more discussion in future SSLC meetings.	2.2.3
5	The Review Team suggests that the School-level student representative find ways of increasing the visibility of class and programme representatives, particularly among first- and second-year students.	2.2.3
6	The Review Team suggests that the subject area look at ways of increasing student involvement in course and programme design to help communicate the benefits of the broader pre-Honours introductory survey courses.	2.3.1
7	The Review Team suggests that the school's Careers Consultant discuss the linkage between Study Abroad opportunities and degree programmes	2.3.4

	with the Curriculum Officer and staff from the Go Abroad office, where appropriate.	
8	The Review Team suggests that the School and subject area continue to monitor the use of stepped marking to ensure it does not lead to grade inflation in the future.	2.4.2
9	The Review Team suggests that the subject area explore ways of better integrating grade descriptors and marking criteria within LEARN in order to better link assessment performance and feedback during the submission and feedback process.	2.4.3
10	The Review Team suggests that the subject area consider the introduction of lecture recording for large pre-Honours courses.	2.5.2
11	There is evidence to suggest that the community built by Postgraduate Tutors is built around their role as Postgraduate Research students rather than staff members, and the Review Team suggests that this could be improved by inviting tutors to attend regular staff meetings in addition to the School-level tutor-staff meetings.	2.8.1

Appendices

Appendix 1 – University remit

The University remit provides consistent coverage of key elements across all of the University's internal reviews (undergraduate and postgraduate).

It covers all credit bearing provision within the scope of the review, including:

- Provision delivered in collaboration with others
- Transnational education
- Work-based provision and placements
- Online and distance learning
- Continuing Professional Development (CPD)
- Postgraduate Professional Development (PPD)
- Provision which provides only small volumes of credit
- Joint/Dual Degrees
- Massive Open Online Courses MOOCs (even if non-credit bearing)

1. Strategic overview

The strategic approach to:

- The management and resourcing of learning and teaching experience,
- The forward direction and the structures in place to support this.
- Developing business cases for new programmes and courses,
- Managing and reviewing its portfolio,
- Closing courses and programmes.

2. Enhancing the Student Experience

The approach to and effectiveness of:

- Supporting students in their learning
- Listening to and responding to the Student Voice
- Learning and Teaching
- Assessment and Feedback
- Accessibility, Inclusivity and Widening Participation
- Learning environment (physical and virtual)
- Development of Employability and Graduate Attributes
- Supporting and developing staff

3. Assurance and Enhancement of provision

The approach to and effectiveness of maintaining and enhancing academic standards and quality of provision in alignment with the University Quality Framework:

- Admissions and Recruitment
- Assessment, Progression and Achievement
- Programme and Course approval
- Annual Monitoring, Review and Reporting
- Operation of Boards of Studies, Exam Boards, Special Circumstances
- External Examining, themes and actions taken
- Alignment with SCQF (Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework) level, relevant benchmark statements, UK Quality Code
- Accreditation and Collaborative activity and relationship with Professional/Accrediting bodies (if applicable)

Appendix 2 Additional information considered by review team

Prior to the review visit:

Reflective Report

Glossary of Terms

List of programmes and courses covered in the review

Previous TPR report and response (November 2012)

Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Subject Benchmark Statement

School Personal Tutor statement

Academic Standards comments

Teaching Excellence Framework Statement

Student Voice arrangements

Student Representation arrangements

Quality Assurance arrangements

Learning and Teaching Strategy

School Quality Assurance Reports:

- 2017-2018
- 2016-2017
- 2015-2016: No report available as 2016/17 report covers reflections on academic session 2015/16.

External Examiners Summary reports:

- 2017-2018
- 2016-2017
- 2015-2016

School Organisation Chart

Organisational Chart of the Classics Subject Area

Current Subject Area staff information

Programme Handbooks (or equivalent)

Classics Pre-Honours Handbook

Classics Honours Handbook

HCA Personal Tutor Handbook

Degree Programme Specification/Tables information:

- Ancient Mediterranean Civilisations (MA Hons)

- Ancient History and Classical Archaeology (MA Hons)
- Ancient History and Greek (MA Hons)
- Ancient History (MA Hons)
- Ancient History and Latin (MA Hons)
- Ancient and Medieval History (MA Hons)
- Classical Archaeology and Greek (MA Hons)
- Classical and Middle East Studies (MA Hons)
- Classics (MA Hons)
- Classics and English Language (MA Hons)
- Classics and Linguistics (MA Hons)
- Classical Studies (MA Hons)
- Greek Studies (MA Hons)
- Latin Studies (MA Hons)
- Classical Archaeology and Latin (MA Hons)

Statistical information:

- Completion rate of entrants report
- Course results
- Entrants report
- Progression report
- Student applications
- Students Studying Abroad report (2016/17 & 2017/18)
- Widening Participation report
- Equality Diversity Monitoring and Research Committee (EDMARC) Student report (2017)
- Undergraduate Degree Classification Report (April 2018)
- Subject Area Background Data for First Destination Statistics (DHLE Survey)
- DLHE HESA Performance Indicator for 2016/17 leavers
- Summary of Transfers

National Student Survey (NSS) results and reflection:

- 2018
- 2017
- 2016

Student Staff Liaison Committee meeting minutes 2017/18:

- 9 March 2018
- 1 November 2017
- 13 March 2017
- 2 November 2016
- 16 March 2016
- 11 November 2015

University of Edinburgh Standard Remit 2018/19

Year abroad dissertation email

Powerpoint Presentation for Personal Tutor induction

During the review visit:

An outline for a course in Greek Palaeography detailing the transferable skills gained through assessment, provided by the Head of Subject Area during the review.

Appendix 3 Number of students

Student numbers for academic year 2018-19 are as follows (both degree programmes 'owned' by Classics and those 'owned' by other departments or schools):

Degree programme	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Total
Classics	20	20	15	9	64
Ancient History	14	21	10	12	57
Classical Studies	28	20	17	7	72
Ancient History & Classical Arch.	6	6	4	4	20
Latin Studies	0	0	2	2	4
Greek Studies	0		2	1	3
Ancient History & Latin	2	1	1		4
Ancient History and Greek	2		0		2
Classical Arch. & Latin	0		0		0
Classical Arch. & Greek	0		1	1	2
Classics and Linguistics	1	3	1		5
Ancient and Medieval History	16	11	3	8	38
Classical and Middle East St.	1	1	1	1	4
Ancient Med. Civilisations	3	1	0		4
Arch. And Ancient History	12	11	7		30
History and Classics	11	7	9	8	35
Divinity and Classics	0	2	2	1	5
English Lit. and Classics	12	7	8	4	31
French and Classics	3	4	2	1	10
German and Classics	1				1
Italian and Classics	2	2	2		6
Russian Studs. and Classics	1		2		3
Spanish and Classics	4	1	2	1	8
Scandinavian St. & Classics	0	1	0	2	3
Philosophy and Greek	2				2
Arabic and Ancient Greek					0
Wholly in Classics	72	68	52	36	228
On Classics- owned Joint Degrees	18	15	5	9	47
On Hist./Arch.- owned joint degrees	26	19	16	8	69
On outside joint degrees	25	17	18	9	69
	141	119	91	62	413

