



Subject Benchmark Statement: Classics and Ancient History

The Basics

This document is a summary of the Subject Benchmark Statement for Classics and Ancient History (including Byzantine Studies and Modern Greek). It is specifically designed to provide a short and accessible overview of the main Statement for students, employers and academics. It is not intended to replace or alter the Subject Benchmark Statement, which should be referred to in the design and approval of courses and when any further detail is required.

Subject Benchmark Statements describe the nature of study and the benchmark academic standards expected of graduates in specific subject areas and in respect of particular qualifications. They provide a picture of what graduates in a particular subject might reasonably be expected to know, do and understand at the end of their course or programme.

Subject Benchmark Statements are presented in four sections. Section 1 outlines the contextual information - providing the operational landscape, and boundaries, of subject discipline. This includes consideration of the ways in which the discipline addresses wider social goals, specifically in relation to: equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI); the requirements of disabled students; education for sustainable development (ESD); and enterprise and entrepreneurship.

Section 2 covers distinctive features of the course, including curriculum design, partnership arrangements, flexibility of delivery, progression and ongoing monitoring processes. Section 3 explains any features relevant to teaching, learning and assessment activities for the subject. Section 4 describes the benchmark standards of achievement reached by all graduates with a bachelor's degree with honours in the subject, with some subjects also including achievement at master's level.



Why study a degree in Classics and Ancient History?

As a subject area, Classics and Ancient History (including Byzantine Studies and Modern Greek) teach the ability to deal with evidence (material, written, digital) critically and involve the study of a wide range of sources and source types while the proportion of art, archaeology, history, language and linguistics, literature, philology, philosophy, law, science and medicine, and reception studied varies. It is also important to recognise the interconnected nature of Greek and Roman societies with each other and with other cultures of the Mediterranean and beyond (for example, in North Africa, Ancient Near/Middle East, Egypt, India, Iran). Core to these subjects is the recognition and application of concepts of cultural influence, conflict, blending and borrowing.

Studying for a degree in Classics and Ancient History (including Byzantine Studies and Modern Greek) demonstrates a willingness and ability to learn and to comprehend a breadth of challenging subject materials. As a result, graduates of courses in this subject area are traditionally highly valued by employers for their broad skill sets, developed through working with an unusually wide range of topics, periods, places and source materials, which in turn require unusually high levels of intellectual flexibility. Linguistic aptitude, critical analysis, high levels of creativity and skills in researching, organising and presenting material are useful in the widest range of employments.

More specifically, although the subject matter of Classics and Ancient History (including Byzantine Studies and Modern Greek) is arranged around the ancient world, this subject area has always been focused on providing the broadest possible platform of transferable skills for both further academic study and rigorous intellectual training outside the academy. Many modern disciplines, including philosophy, theology, politics, foreign languages and literature in non-classical languages, are effectively approached from the study of their ancient counterparts. Generally, engagement with ancient culture provides exposure to many fundamental questions of life still relevant today and creates a basis for approaching questions of the contemporary world.



What are the main teaching and learning approaches in Classics and Ancient History?

A wide range of study methods is practised within the subject area, including traditional, remote and blended models. The use of websites, online databases and other forms of computer-assisted learning is widespread.

An honours graduate in the subject area will generally have had the opportunity to experience all or most of the following modes of teaching and learning: essay writing; exercises designed to develop linguistic, critical or problem-solving skills (for example, source analysis); digital environments; seminars or other forms of small-group discussion; one-to-one interaction between students and between students and teachers; formal lectures; joint student projects; work-based learning; reports on investigations; artefact analysis; presentations; revision for formal examinations; and dissertations or projects.

Arrangements for learning and teaching are based on the intellectual distance that each student needs to travel from their knowledge and abilities at entry to attainment of the attributes of an honours graduate.

Teaching should acknowledge and take into account the issues presented by encounters with sensitive or challenging topics (for example, slavery and violence against particular groups) and the potential reactions of students.



How are students assessed?

Given the breadth of the subject area and the differing degrees of specialisation possible within it, methods of assessment commonly associated with its courses will exhibit a similarly wide variety. The assessment of Classics and Ancient History courses includes a mix of methods that are accessible to disabled students and students from varying educational and cultural backgrounds within different learning situations.

Courses will include formative and summative assessment. Typical forms of summative assessment may include formal examinations, in-class tests, coursework, presentations, oral examinations and a variety of creative responses to different forms of media.



Benchmark Standards

The minimum threshold standards that students will have demonstrated when they are awarded an honours degree in Classics and Ancient History are outlined on **pages 22-24** of the Subject Benchmark Statement. The vast majority of students will perform significantly better than the minimum threshold standards. Each higher education provider has its own method of determining what appropriate evidence of this achievement will be and should refer to [Annex D: Outcome classification descriptions for FHEQ Level 6 and FQHEIS Level 10 degrees](#). This Annex sets out common descriptions of the four main degree outcome classifications for bachelor's degrees with honours: 1st, 2:1, 2:2 and 3rd.

The Statement was developed by a group of subject experts drawn from across the sector. Details of the Advisory Group can be found on **page 26** of the Statement.

Read the full Subject Benchmark Statement

The [full Subject Benchmark Statement](#) is available on the QAA website.



Subject Benchmark Statements are published in QAA's capacity as a membership organisation on behalf of the higher education sector.

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Southgate House, Southgate Street, Gloucester GL1 1UB
Registered charity numbers 1062746 and SC037786
Tel: 01452 557000 Web: www.qaa.ac.uk