

**External Review of the Department of Greek and Roman Studies  
November 23–25, 2021**

**Review Committee:**

**Dr. Mark Joyal (Chair), Professor, Department of Classics, University of Manitoba**

**Dr. Pauline Ripat, Associate Professor, Department of Classics, University of Winnipeg**

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**Executive Summary**

The Department of Greek and Roman Studies (GRS) has long played an integral part in the teaching and study of the Humanities at the University of Victoria. It is a unit of eight tenured and tenure-track faculty members, seven of whom are Research stream, and one who is Teaching stream. It offers well balanced and innovative undergraduate and graduate programmes that enable students to pursue an exceptionally wide variety of subject areas through different kinds of courses and modes of learning. GRS was responsive to its previous review by successfully seeking the replacement of its retiring Roman archaeologist and of a Latinist who had resigned. The archaeological appointment has enabled the Department to maintain its well-known strength in this area and at the same time to continue to complement its expertise in Greek archaeology. The appointment of a Latin specialist to the position of Assistant Teaching Professor represented a new direction for the Department, explicitly emphasizing what was already a departmental strength.

The programmes offered by the Department are appropriate for its size and wide range of expertise: a Minor, General degree, Major, and Honours degree, all available in Greek and Roman studies (courses which do not require knowledge of Greek or Latin), ancient Greek, Latin, and a combination of the two languages. Courses offered by GRS range in size from around 300 students (Greek and Roman Mythology) to small senior Greek and Latin courses. The Department pays close and constant attention to enrolment patterns, takes a rational approach to its offerings, and has frequently presented its students with new topics and themes in its courses, or existing but repackaged courses. Overall annual enrolment in the Department has been remarkably stable over the period of the Review (2014/15–2020/21) and is proportional to the size of GRS in relation to the Faculty itself.

The Department's MA programme is highly regarded and successful. It has produced many excellent graduates, a large proportion of whom has proceeded to high-quality PhD programmes in Canada and abroad. Members of the Department themselves do recognize, however, that a review of the programme in the light of changing circumstances is now needed. Outcomes for the PhD programme have not been as good as in the MA, and the PhD deserves a reassessment as part of a general review of graduate programmes in GRS.

Members of the Department have a demonstrable record of excellence in teaching and graduate mentorship, documented in detail in the Self-Study. The Department enjoys a high profile for its research, well-earned over a period of many years, and demonstrated both by traditional measures of publication in books and professional journals and of external grants, and by newer modes of knowledge mobilization, such as websites, databases, and consultations provided to public bodies. Service to the Department, the University, and the discipline occupies a central place in the professional lives of the faculty; many have undertaken, or continue to undertake, significant administrative positions in the University, foreign schools, and professional associations. Moreover, the Department is engaged in a large range of activities that can be classified broadly as "outreach," to the great benefit of GRS and the discipline itself.

Our review made clear to us that the Department of Greek and Roman Studies is an indispensable unit within the Faculty of Humanities. Its members are exceptionally energetic, innovative, self-critical, and imaginative in assessing problems and finding solutions, and dedicated to their discipline and their students. The high regard in which it is held in the University is substantiated by the institutional support which has enabled it to maintain its central role in a liberal arts education at the University of Victoria. In the spirit of continuous assessment which is part of the Department's thriving culture, we offer the following recommendations.

Recommendations:

1. The retirement of two faculty is expected in the next 5–7 years. We urge the VPAC and Dean of Humanities to replace these positions.

Both specialists in Greek literature are expected to retire, which will bereave GRS of instruction in one of the cornerstones of the discipline. Emphasis should be placed on the appointment of scholars whose main area of expertise is in Greek language and literature, broadly understood, but such appointments should be looked upon also as opportunities to enhance and strengthen the Department's international reputation for the study of material culture and social history.

EDI considerations must be prioritized to ensure gender imbalance in the unit is not exacerbated. The current situation — two women to six men — is already problematic. The two who will soon be retiring are the two women, as both were hired some thirty years ago. We urge that the VPAC and the Dean, who control the terms of hiring, commit to securing women as the replacements. Furthermore, we recommend that one of the two positions be a senior hire (Associate or Full Professor) to ensure that both junior and senior demographic ranks in the Department include women.

2. The Department should undertake a review of its graduate programme, including a consideration of the PhD programme and its future viability:
  - a) It was our sense that the PhD by Special Arrangement has worked well before, with individual students applying to work with a specific scholar, in a kind of one-on-one relationship that might be related to a specific research project. There seemed to be some ambivalence during our consultation process about the different elements of maintaining a doctoral programme. It might not be an advantage to try to recruit students to the doctoral programme. We support the Department's plan to re-vision the doctorate within their programming and become as clear as possible about the particular nature of their doctoral programme. We recommend that, except in the situation of an exceptional PhD candidate whose interests align very closely with a specific member of the Department, GRS focus its time and financial resources on its MA programme, which is well-established and very highly regarded within Canada. Thanks to the excellence of the training it offers, GRS has a consistent record of sending its MA graduates to high-profile PhD programmes in Canada, the US, and the UK.
  - b) There was a strong sense that everyone was committed to offering training for Master's students. There is clear evidence that there are strengths in the areas of philology, language acquisition, history, archaeology, and reception studies. We support the Department's plan to re-vision the Master's programme in terms of identifying key areas of strength — again, not trying to cover too many bases, to maintain a sustainable workload. We encourage the Department to consider reducing the language requirements for the MA (while leaving open the option for students to pursue the languages beyond exit requirements), to consider making use

of undergraduate offerings within the Department (i.e., to make use of the 3-unit allowance of undergraduate coursework towards an MA, and/or to enhance undergraduate offerings with 500-level numbers) and to consider greater use of graduate offerings in related departments. Furthermore, we recommend exploring the possibility of creating different streams within the existing MA. These streams should include the current model, which leads to a PhD programme and academic career path. The addition of other streams with differently envisioned goals, however, will lend flexibility to the Department's ability to serve the needs of current students, who may not aspire to academic careers but who nevertheless would continue to be involved in areas such as secondary-school teaching that embraces Greek and Latin culture.

- i) The unit may wish to consider a MA which might feature as an exit requirement a novel mode of disseminating a student's research. We note that Aspiration2030, the strategic statement recently released by the office of the VP Research and Innovation, recognizes alternative, non-traditional modes of knowledge mobilization as paths to be encouraged at the faculty level. An MA which legitimizes alternative forms of research dissemination would be both cutting edge and in better keeping with UVic's mission to incorporate EDI to the fullest extent possible. This stream would bridge a BA and an MA or professional degree in an area beyond the academic world of ancient studies.
- ii) The unit may wish to design a MA with a particular focus on the professional, practical skills of archaeological activity, which could lead more directly upon completion to (for example) work in a museum or government conservation agency. The exit requirements here too might be different from the traditional MA's thesis.

The committee notes that a non-thesis MA could have serious workload issues and financial implications for the Department which must be explored. We urge FGS to consider flexibility and the contemporary needs of students to be guiding principles when determining funding.

3. The Department should work with the Dean of the Faculty of Graduate Studies, the Dean of Humanities, and departments in Humanities to review the graduate funding model.

As a result of our consultation with multiple stake-holders, we have a slightly different understanding of the graduate student funding issue. We understand that there was a previous model (referred to as a "historical" model). The past model was not transparent as to the principles used in funding formulas across the university. The new model [NM] has only come into play in the last two years, and U.Vic has a new Dean of Graduate Studies, who seemed open to consultation. The new model has been designed to be transparent above all; it is also designed to level the playing field for existing and newly emergent graduate programming. We would urge the members of GRS to work closely with the Dean and Associate Dean Research in HUMS, and the Dean of Graduate Studies to analyze ALL aspects of graduate programming, prioritized areas of focus, faculty workload implications, etc. It is our understanding that the graduate programme is currently taught extra-to-load. This kind of arrangement could become a recruitment and retention issue for future hires. It also has the potential that a faculty member could refuse to participate in staffing the graduate programme (as has happened in other units on campus). We encourage the Department to reflect together on EDI policies and practices that create a fair and sustainable employment culture for all.

4. The Department should work to improve its lines of communication with undergraduate students. More direct liaison with the GRS Student Association, including practical assistance from the Administrative Assistant, would benefit both students and the Department.

We suggest that the unit find ways to create a stronger undergraduate culture in terms of advising, which emerged in interviews as a perceived area of weakness. Communication between the course union and the students it represents could be improved. Some units on campus invite undergraduate students to departmental meetings once or twice a term, to inform them of changes to departmental culture, or provide a listening space for student concerns. Concerted advertisement of the undergraduate advisor's contact information could prove useful. The Department might consider engaging undergraduate students more actively outside of the classroom through, for example, the organization of Departmental colloquia (in which Honours students could perhaps present their research alongside MA students), and/or by encouraging the Faculty of Humanities to organize such opportunities at annual faculty-wide student events.

5. Members of the Department, with leadership from the Chair, should expand its collaborations in teaching and research with other faculty members in Humanities, Social Sciences and other academic units, wherever it is possible and advantageous to do so. The establishment of one or more research "clusters" which highlight the strengths of GRS (and other departments at the same time) should be given strong consideration. We urge the unit to explore opportunities to build partnerships and connectivity within the Faculty of Humanities, through cross-listing courses, and to find ways to create shared courses with units in other Faculties.
6. Careful consideration should be made for the creation of a post-baccalaureate programme in ancient Greek and Latin, especially one which students from other universities or students intending to enter MA programmes at other universities could attend.

We recommend that the unit consider the potential of designing a post-baccalaureate programme in languages, either in term time, or as a summer institute. This could potentially strengthen its programming for Master's students at UVic and beyond. We encourage the Department and the VPAC to negotiate revenue-sharing from such a project. Micro-credentials are currently supported at both institutional and provincial levels, so the time is right to pursue such an initiative.

7. Provision – in terms of both space and resources – should be made for the creation of an archaeological lab which would have practical use for research, teaching, display and storage.

The proposal to create a Lab in Material Culture is attractive and has some obvious benefits in terms of experiential teaching for students. We heard that no appropriate space is available within the current Clearihue building. The Department should consult as widely as possible to see if there is any possibility of shared space, as well as working with the Dean of Humanities to explore possible partnerships.

8. Although not a unit-specific issue, the problem of large enrollment classes taught by sessionals and workload issues should be considered by the Department and Dean of Humanities.

Equity in teaching loads between regular faculty and sessional instructors emerged as an issue, given that sessionals are often responsible for large enrollment classes. This is a wider problem across the

university and it is not easy for individual units to resolve these discrepancies. We flag this issue for the Dean of Humanities and other Deans across campus.