

CAREER VIEW

CLASSICS

Echoes from the ancient civilisations of Greece, Rome and other Mediterranean cultures remain deeply embedded in our modern consciousness. Every day, one way or another, we live in the thick of their cultural legacy, which underpins our government and legal systems. This legacy informs the way we think and organise our knowledge about the world and ourselves; it reaches into the artistic and technological achievements we take such delight in. The classical past lives and breathes and walks with us all the time. To understand this is to have an advantage in the modern world.

WHY STUDY CLASSICS?

The Greek and Roman civilisations grappled, at least in principle, with many of the issues that confront us today. Their solutions, for better or worse, provide reference points around which contemporary concerns, such as globalisation and free trade, can be discussed. The study of Classics is both relevant and resonant. Classical culture provides advertisers with a universally understood image that signals quality and exclusiveness. Celebrity, which seems such a modern phenomenon, is simply a carry-over from the hero cults that first found expression in the myths and legends of the ancient Greeks. And for those disenchanted with the commercial culture that pervades modern life, the classical world provides an alternative social vista.

WHAT SKILLS DO CLASSICS GRADUATES HAVE?

Classics graduates know how to think. In an ever-shifting job market the ability to think in abstract terms is not only one of the most desirable transferable skills, it is also one of the most reliable predictors of success on the job. A trained mind can be applied to any situation. The skills of a mind trained in the classical tradition include:

- Strategic and tactical thinking - the ability to anticipate likely outcomes from hypothetical situations.



- Systematic analysis – the ability to work methodically through information separating what is relevant from what is not.
- Critical judgment – the ability to prioritise information, which leads to effective decision-making.
- Political awareness - an understanding of how power differentials between groups and individuals are used to achieve desired outcomes.

Topical coverage of career related issues brought to you by Victoria University Career Development and Employment.

Areas covered include how degrees and courses relate to employment opportunities, to life/work planning, graduate destination information and current issues or material relevant to the employment scene. Your comments and suggestions always welcomed.

- The ability to construct a logical argument.
- The ability to identify cause and effect.
- The ability to spot the difference between rhetoric and substance.
- The ability to discriminate between events and the personalities of people who influence those events.
- Broadened perspectives from comparing other civilisations with our own.
- An appreciation of superlative literature and art which has had a dynamic influence on the western world.
- With Latin or Greek - an understanding of the etymological roots of English and other modern languages. This typically results in enhanced confidence with verbal and written communication and an enriched vocabulary. Understanding the grammatical structures that underpin these older languages can help people express complex ideas in modern English with greater clarity and finer shades of meaning.

Classics graduates also possess a range of other generic skills including:

Research and information gathering skills. Knowing how to find and use information is essential in a 'knowledge economy.'

Factual knowledge. In addition to positions where factual historical or linguistic knowledge is required,

being able to retain and use factual information allows people to communicate with authority and conviction.

Decision making skills. Classics subjects demand a disciplined and methodological approach and students are required to identify and resolve issues.

Confidence in exploring different points of view. Employers typically value people who can come up with new insights or a different approach to tasks and problems, particularly in team situations.

An adaptable and flexible approach to problem solving. The study of Classics encourages students to explore different interpretations and construct new solutions to theoretical questions.

Experience in presenting ideas and information to groups. Includes receiving feedback in an open and constructive manner.

A results oriented approach to tasks. Typically developed through the process of tertiary study.

Attention to detail. People who pick up on details can prevent small problems from growing into big disasters. Employers do not like big disasters.

WHERE DO CLASSICS GRADUATES WORK?

According to recent graduate destination surveys, Classics graduates were employed in a variety of jobs which included, but were not limited to:

- archivist • bank officer • book buyer
- community support worker •
- conference organiser • deputy press attaché • employment officer • event coordinator • exhibition supervisor
- international banking consultant
- land information searcher • library assistant • market researcher • passport certifying officer • policy analyst • records manager • research assistant
- secondary school teacher • student liaison officer • university tutor/lecturer.

Graduates work in radio, marketing, museums, archaeology, libraries, tourism, immigration and refugee services, embassies and consulates, publishing and a range of Government Ministries, including Foreign Affairs and Trade, Health, Education, and The Treasury.



Certain sectors of the job market demand skills and knowledge that Classics graduates are particularly able to demonstrate. Although many job vacancies only refer to “a tertiary qualification,” it is important to note that in some job areas additional courses of study, qualifications or practical experience may be required. Many Classics students consider a second major subject when planning their degree.

LEGAL AND GOVERNMENT

Legal. To the extent that modern legislative and judicial systems are based on Greek and Roman models, Classics graduates are equipped with a conceptual map of how these institutions work and the processes and procedures that drive them. The practice of Law has a traditional affiliation with Classical Studies and many basic legal concepts are still expressed in Latin phrases. The adversarial nature of the judicial system demands proficiency in argument and counter-argument, and legal documents must be precisely worded in order to avoid ambiguity. The intellectual training that Classics students undergo is compatible with these requirements.

Policy Advice and Analysis. The formulation of policy demands high levels of abstract reasoning and the ability to follow hypothetical sequences of cause and effect. Classics graduates have analysed action and consequence over time and in the context of highly complex social systems and organisational structures. Policy advice or analysis involves a combination of strategic and operational thinking skills. A typical job description statement might read “developing options to resolve policy and operational issues and prepare proposals and advice based on sound analysis and problem solving.”

Government agencies that emphasise the provision of policy advice include the Department of Internal Affairs, Ministry of Health, The Treasury, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the Ministry of Social Development, and the State Services Commission.

The Parliamentary Service, Ministerial Services, and The Office of the Clerk are agencies that provide advice and assistance to Parliament, Members of Parliament and Ministers. Excellent written and oral communication skills, problem solving and analytical abilities are required and typically possessed by Classics graduates. An appreciation of Tikanga Māori could be desirable.

Government organisations that are directly involved with historical matters include Archives New Zealand,



The Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, and the Ministry for Culture and Heritage. Classics students are advised to consider a double major with History. A Master's degree is preferred and possibly a qualification in Museum Studies.

Local Authorities are required to draw up strategic plans and set policy directions. Advisers work with their Council and its various committees and community organisations on procedures, processes, and the application of statutory regulations. High levels of verbal comprehension and reasoning are required.

Job titles include: researcher, Hansard reporter, librarian, speechwriter, policy analyst, policy adviser, parliamentary officer, administration officer, committee adviser, mediator.

EDUCATION

Teaching. Classical Studies is taught in many secondary schools (a popular subject in years 11 to 13) and most universities. Latin is taught as an independent subject at some secondary schools. Teacher training plus more than one teaching subject are generally required for secondary teachers. Specialised language schools and some secondary schools employ ESOL teachers. Knowledge of Latin and Greek can support the grammatical basis of ESOL training and teaching. Community education classes can provide more informal teaching opportunities.

Universities. A PhD plus published research is required for university lecturing.

Large tertiary institutions are complex organisations with a range of administrative positions that demand high levels of conceptual thinking.

Educational travel is a developing area. Guided tours around the ancient world are popular, and sometimes field trips to classical sites are incorporated into university studies.

Job titles include: university tutor/lecturer, secondary school teacher, tour guide, community education teacher, ESOL teacher, academic director, administration assistant.

RESEARCH

Many organisations carry out research of one sort or another, including universities, government departments, local authorities, libraries, museums, art galleries, market research companies, law firms, management consultants, and radio and television production companies. Classics graduates will have completed a range of independent research projects. Knowledge of different research methodologies and information systems, particularly the Internet, is necessary. In some cases knowledge of quantitative research methods and statistical techniques may be required. Where research is related to policy development roles, an understanding of research and evaluation concepts as they apply to a policy environment is necessary.

Job titles include: research assistant, research analyst, art/museum curator, archivist, librarian, television researcher, qualitative market researcher, archaeologist, historian.

MANAGEMENT AND BUSINESS ORGANISATIONS

Core management skills include: strategic planning, the effective use of resources (including staff), making the right decision at the right time, and sorting out what to do in a crisis. Classics graduates understand strategy and the value of making a tactical decision. They also understand the effect of individual personality and character on the play of events.

Business organisations such as banks, insurance companies, management consultancy firms, retail chains and franchise operations require good decision makers, problem solvers and people with strong planning and organisational skills. Management opportunities usually depend on appropriate experience and performance.

Universities run **graduate recruitment programmes** where participants include large national and multinational companies recruiting graduates for



management training. Check with Careers staff for more details.

Job titles include: projects manager, human resources adviser, graduate intern, employee relations manager, management consultant, operations manager, credit coordinator, administrator, bank officer, strategic analyst.

ARTS, CULTURE AND DESIGN

Modern theatrical, artistic, literary and architectural forms are saturated with references to classical, especially Greek, prototypes. Those who understand these classical themes typically have a grounding in what has 'worked' creatively over two and a half thousand years. Employment situations vary widely, many people working in these fields are self-employed or working in organisations that rely on funding to stay financially viable. Some businesses can be very profitable, particularly in well-established professional areas such as architecture.

Job titles include: arts administrator, playwright, set designer, film-maker, architect, art director, actor, stage manager, art conservator, writer, drama critic, choreographer, editor, garden designer.

MEDIA

All forms of media deal in some way with the communication of ideas, information and emotion. Classics graduates will understand the power of oratory and rhetoric, and the use of language as a fundamental tool of discussion, argument, negotiation and, ultimately, persuasion. Opportunities in this sector may depend on personal attributes of determination and persistence, together with relevant industry experience. High level written and oral communication skills are essential,

GRADUATE PROFILES

and in an environment where image is everything, people who can pronounce Latin phrases and suffixes correctly tend to acquire intellectual credibility.

Media organisations include advertising agencies, public relations firms, marketing companies, video, film and television production companies, as well as newspaper, magazine and book publishers.

Job titles include: journalist, accounts executive, editor, public relations consultant, marketing trainee, media organiser, copywriter.

THE JOB MARKET

Classics graduates have rarity value which can be an advantage in the job market. Many employers have never had to think about the relevance of Classical Studies to the modern world and confident Classics graduates are likely to stand out from the crowd. Classics graduates who can articulate the value of their degree and the skills they have to offer will have an 'edge' to work with when applying for jobs.

Entrepreneurship and innovation are increasingly becoming popular career options and suited to the many skills gained through the study of Classics in particular thinking critically and creatively, challenging ideas, interpretive and analytical thinking, problem solving, research and computing skills.



Caitlin Dunham

*Growth Organiser
NZEI Te Riu Roa*



When I started at Victoria University, I had a five-year study plan, which ended with me teaching History and Classics to high school students. Halfway through my second year I realised I didn't want to be a teacher but I'd already fallen in love with the Classics department so I decided to continue with my major. Outside of Classics I was involved in the Victoria University of Wellington Students' Association, as the Women's Rights Officer and went on to be the National Women's Rights Officer for the New Zealand Union of Students' Associations. I was able to tailor my study to that work, and my Honours research focused around sex, gender, and the portrayal of women in poetry.

There are so many different branches of Classics and it really allows you to focus on what you're passionate about. The ability to take something from one context and apply it to another is a valuable skill that serves me well in my current non-Classics job. Studying Classics taught me how to examine my own biases and gather cultural understanding - to understand Greek and Roman culture, you have to see how it fits into a wider context, and know the history behind it. The ability to do this allows me to see beyond my experiences as a middle class Pakeha woman, and relate to teachers from all different backgrounds. My Honours degree taught me how to self motivate - something very useful in any job.

What I enjoyed most about studying Classics was how collegial and supportive everyone is. There's always someone to explain the difference between the perfect and pluperfect tenses for a sixth time, someone to help you with your flash cards of art slides, and the chance to take a break from your study and hear about other areas you haven't studied yet. Having the Classics library and museum in the middle of the department makes for a welcoming environment, where you can always find a study partner or postgrad student to talk to. The Greek Field Trip at the end of 2010 was one of the best experiences I've ever had - you spend three years looking at slides of these places, then you finally get to see them up close. So start saving now. If you're considering studying Classics, I say, "Do it!" whether you plan to work in the field or not. At the very least it makes you awesome at a pub quiz.

Joel Gordon

*Youth Pastor, Itinerant Music Teacher
Master of Arts Student, Victoria University of Wellington*



When I first began studying at Victoria University of Wellington I had never contemplated doing Classics. I was actually enrolled in the New Zealand School of Music Classical Performance programme with the goal of teaching music at secondary school level. However, mid-way through my Bachelor of Music (BMus) I discovered that I was required to have a second teaching subject and so by chance I picked a Classics paper on Roman History. From that moment on I was hooked. I quickly added a Bachelor of Arts (BA) majoring in Classical Studies to complement my BMus, however Classics quickly took over. One of my lecturers encouraged me to complete the Honours programme - a path I had never considered but eagerly took up. I then took a year off my studies, working as an itinerant music teacher and youth pastor, getting married in the process. However, my passion for Classics continued to burn and I have since returned to Victoria in order to complete my Master's degree.

The thing I enjoy most about Classics is the way that it interacts with the present. The study of antiquity need not be an exercise devoid of relevance to modern society. In examining the culture and societies of those who lived millennia ago I found myself exploring my own beliefs and practices. My area of specialty is concepts relating to death and the afterlife, a subject corresponding well with my highly religious background and one, which has offered much insight into my own cultural assumptions. Aside from the ability to read the ancient Greek language, a thoroughly enjoyable skill although not directly applicable to everyday life, I have enjoyed developing my ability to think critically.

The great thing about Classics is no scholar has actually experienced life in the ancient world and therefore, as long as you can prove it with the evidence, everything is up for grabs. I never once thought I would enjoy Classics as much as I currently do nor that I would go on to study it at postgraduate level. I really just wanted to learn about the Roman gladiators and the heroes of Greek myth. However, I found that Classics is so much more than this. The more you study it, the more it proves far more interesting and applicable than you could ever have imagined.

Lillie Le Dorre

*Archivist
Archives New Zealand*



I decided to study Classics when I needed a paper to fill a gap in my timetable. I chose Greek myth, and was hooked from the very first lecture. I found I was fascinated by mythology, and the visual arts, and focused my studies around these.

Classical Studies complemented my major in History very nicely. In History, we study the past in order to understand the present, and prepare for the future. Classics is the same in this way. While remote in time, the tales of the ancient Greek and Romans felt very close to modern society. So many of the values and ideas that shape our society, literature and art come from the classical world. Lifting the lid on the ancient civilisations just a tiny bit opens up a whole raft of fascinating comparisons to modern-day life.

I really enjoyed studying Classics at Victoria because I found the lecturers to be incredibly knowledgeable, approachable, and interested in the thoughts and opinions of the students. The tutors were passionate and provided great feedback on assignments. Having access to the Classics Museum was a real treat. Being able to study amongst the small collection of Greek and Roman artefacts, some of which are on loan from the British Museum or the National Museum of Athens took my studies off the page and into real life, and staff members were always happy to discuss the pieces on display.

My double major in History and Classics has equipped me with the skills that employers are looking for in new recruits. I am currently employed by Archives New Zealand in Wellington. Throughout my studies, I developed the ability to research, collate and analyse materials. I learnt how to critically evaluate and interpret resources in order to formulate my own impartial and coherent arguments. Deadlines taught me time management and how to handle stress and pressure; the structure of the courses - a mix of independent study and group tasks - allowed me to prove that I can work autonomously and manage my own workload, while allowing me to engage in teamwork.

Amy Duxfield

Desk Assistant
Victoria University of Wellington
Library
Law Student, Victoria University



I had my first taste of Classics, Greek and Latin in the 7th grade when my English teacher made us study Greek myths and learn Greek and Latin prefixes. I fell in love, and doing Classics at High School was an obvious decision. I almost did a Bachelor of Arts in Classics but ended up taking two gap years instead, and when I finally came to university it was to study Law and International Relations. I also made room for Latin as an interest paper.

The interest paper soon became a major, and then an Honours degree. I remember reading Catullus in second year; I had previously come across the famous *Da mi basia mille* poem in a novel, and what a thrill it was to read it in Latin. For a student of Classics, nothing compares to the first time you read Vergil, Cicero, or Caesar in the original Latin and understand it. Learning any second language gives you a much better understanding of English grammar; but along with this, Latin also gave me a new appreciation for literature, and especially poetry. Once you reach second and third year courses, the degree becomes more like an English Literature degree, focussing on reading and analysing Latin literature.

I work currently as a Desk Assistant at the Victoria library and handle all the customer service interactions, issuing books, helping students find resources etc. This is an interim position while I finish my law degree. Having studied at the University means that I'm really familiar with using the library from a student perspective.

When I finish my law degree I hope to get a job with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFAT) once I graduate. MFAT are surprisingly not picky about what languages you speak, but I'm hopeful that Latin will be a mark in my favour, as it demonstrates an ability to learn other complex languages such as German and Russian.

A Classics degree, especially with a major in Latin or Ancient Greek, may not seem like the most useful degree unless you plan to go into teaching or academia, but it's actually one of the most diverse areas of study. Taking a Classics degree allows you to have a taste of a number of different areas of study: art history, literature, social and political history, religious studies, all in the one degree.

Dr Jo Wynell-Mayow

Classics Teacher
The Red Maids' School
Bristol, United Kingdom



I loved Classics at school, as well as History and decided to take the plunge of taking a degree in two subjects I especially loved, so at least I would enjoy what I was studying and not get bored. I was quickly drawn to the literature of the ancient world, although I also studied courses on ancient history, art and architecture, and society. I particularly loved the tragedies of Euripides, which I carried on into Honours year as well as my Master's thesis. I found it amazing that literature written so long ago could have such relevance to us today and feel fresh, relatable and exciting. I still find them fascinating to teach to my own students and love the fact that especially here in the UK there are many chances to see ancient drama on stage.

Skills I learned during my studies include time management – getting essays done, and invaluable research skills which I pass on to my own students. The passion shown by my lecturers for their subjects was the best inspiration of all, and they have set the bar for me as educators. They showed me that enthusiasm for one's field can have an enormously positive effect on those you are teaching, so I put a great deal of energy into being enthusiastic in my own lessons. I now teach at an academically focused all-girls school in Bristol, UK, which my friends affectionately dubbed 'Hogwarts'.

While I was writing my PhD, friends living in the UK told me many independent and grammar schools still teach Latin and Greek (as well as Classical Civilisation), and that they would look favourably on my PhD. Luckily, they did and I was able to train 'on-the-job' through a programme called the Graduate Teacher Programme. I teach both Latin and Classical Civilisation and I'm lucky to be at a school where the study of the ancient world is seen as a key part of education. My graduate studies also give me the chance to advise students on their own research as well as university options in their final years at school. I advise students to be open to new ideas and all opportunities. Even if you did not study a language at school, you are able to pick up Latin and Greek from scratch at Victoria to enhance your study of Classics.

CLASSICS AT VICTORIA

In Classics we teach a full range of undergraduate and postgraduate courses in Classical Studies, Ancient Greek, and Latin. We have a teaching museum in which students can study and handle actual ancient artifacts, and there is a reading or production of an ancient play, featuring student performers, every year. No knowledge of Greek or Latin is required for any of the undergraduate Classical Studies courses, although majoring students are strongly encouraged to take at least one of the half-year introductory language courses. Four basic 100-level Classical Studies courses are offered: Myth and Mythologies; The Greeks; Greek Art: Myth and Culture; Roman History and Society.



A range of more specialised courses are then offered at the 200 and 300 levels: Etruscan and Roman Art, Greek and Roman Drama, Roman Social History, Greek Society, Bronze-Age Aegean Art and Archaeology, Greek and Roman Epic, Myth and Storytelling, and Troy. Special topic courses that vary from year to year are also offered.

Both Greek and Latin can be taken from the beginning with a major possible in three years of study, while students who have already studied Latin at school can also complete a major in three years, but with a different portfolio of courses. The two 100-level Latin courses may also be taken during the summer trimester.

Graduate study begins with a Bachelor of Arts Honours Degree which students can complete over one or two years, taking four courses, one of which is a specialised research essay. One or two courses may be substituted from other disciplines. One option in the Honours programme is the Greek Field Trip (5 weeks in November/December in even years) which may also be taken at 300-level. Master's and PhD degrees by thesis are available.

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