

# Investigating the relationship between Classics and public policy

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## Introduction

The relationship between Classics and UK public policy is well established, as attested by the consistently high number of classicists among the ranks of civil servants and elected politicians in Whitehall. However, no previous attempt has been made to examine why careers in policy attract classicists, how this intersection plays out in real terms, and what potential there is for increased mutually beneficial collaboration between agents of the two fields.

## Background

In 2024, Professor Arlene Holmes-Henderson and Laidlaw Scholar Luke Sewell embarked on a research project which aimed to explore how Arts and Humanities research influenced public policymaking. The resulting UPEN publication, which contained a plethora of case studies from a range of A&H researchers, unequivocally demonstrated the overwhelmingly positive impact that A&H research can have on informing policy.

## Aims

Encouraged by the findings, and positive reception, of this study, Prof. Arlene conceived the idea to create *Classics and Public Policy: perspectives from the UK*. A book-cum-research-output with the primary objective of elucidating the relationship between the two fields by answering the research-focus questions: how does Classics research influence public policy, and how do former classicists perceive their study of Classics in relation to their work as policy professionals?

## Methodology

In order to achieve our aims of answering the research questions, and indeed creating the book, it was necessary to gather contributions from Classics researchers, whose work had informed policy, and from former classicists, who had been or were currently policymakers to comprise the individual chapters of the book. I engaged with the twenty contributors to the book via various modes of communication including email, Microsoft Teams meetings, and phone calls. I was involved with the editing process of every chapter to varying degrees: correcting SPaG errors as and where necessary; re-formatting all the chapters per the publisher's guidelines; advising many contributors on the content, tone and direction of their chapters; fixing references and bibliographies; writing up abstracts and even writing rough drafts of a few whole chapters to give the respective contributors a starting point to work from. I stored the first, second, third and, of course, final drafts of each chapter in separate sub-folders within the 'CaPP Drafts' folder which I had shared with Arlene at the start of the project. To stay on top of the status of each chapter, I created a live 'Progress Tracker' Excel spreadsheet, which was also shared with Arlene and proved useful right to the end of the project.

## Findings

Copyright laws surrounding unpublished books prevent me from sharing details of the contributors' respective views on how their Classics research has influenced public policy or how their study of Classics has influenced their work as policy officials. But I can say that while completing this research project, even I, a Classics student, was impressed by the varied and significant ways that Classics is relevant and valuable to UK policy, but also more generally, right now, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

## Conclusion

Through the entire editing process Prof. Arlene's advice and guidance proved invaluable. Although, at times, the editing was laborious and, at others, I was inundated with emails from contributors, I found the experience extremely enjoyable. When the book, the official outcome of this project, is published by Routledge and our answers to the research questions are in the public domain it will become clear that there is much more depth to and potential for the relationship between Classics and public policy than ever previously recorded.

## References

Holmes-Henderson A. and Sewell L. (2024). *How does Arts and Humanities research influence public policy making?*. [online] [open.ac.uk](https://open.ac.uk)

