



The PhD in Classics at Victoria University of Wellington

Contact us

For more details, please contact our Postgraduate Coordinator:

Simon Perris

Phone 04-463 5478

Email simon.perris@vuw.ac.nz

To start the process of application for PhD study at Victoria University, go here:

www.victoria.ac.nz/study/programmes-courses/postgraduates/phds-doctorates

The three application deadlines are:

1 March, 1 July, and 1 November each year.

The Faculty of Graduate Research website has good information, including policies: www.victoria.ac.nz/fgr

Other Classics Staff can be found at victoria.ac.nz/sacr

Postal Address: Victoria University of Wellington, Classics Programme,
P O Box 600, Wellington 6140

Our doctoral programme in Classics at Victoria University offers as many opportunities and rewards as it does intellectual challenges.

As a PhD student in our programme, you will develop your own ideas on a topic chosen with your advisor, work closely with an expert in your field of choice, and become part of a vibrant research community at the heart of New Zealand's capital.

As an advanced student in Classics, you will gain deep knowledge of your chosen subject-matter, broader familiarity with the history and culture of the ancient world, and a diverse set of high-level research and presentation skills.

The PhD degree is a requirement for academic jobs in Classics and, equally important, a launch pad to careers in other sectors, including the arts, civil service, and politics. In the Classics Programme at Victoria University, we draw inspiration from the two-faced Roman god



Janus. With one face, we keep a clear focus on the classical past, while looking forward to the present and future with the other. A number of our research strengths—in areas such as classical influences on modern film and on modern New Zealand, the history of sexuality, and ancient and modern democracy—demonstrate this double focus.

As the same time as it deepens your understanding of yourself, a PhD in Classics will connect you to the world—greater Wellington and New Zealand, and beyond.



What our Classics PhD programme involves

- Writing a thesis (with a maximum of 100,000 words) on a topic you have decided upon in consultation with your supervisor.
- Participation in the programme's regular Research Seminar, the Wellington Classical Association, and occasional conferences and other events.
- The opportunity (optional) to teach, either as a tutor for large lecture courses or (when applicable) as the sole lecturer for courses in the ancient languages.
- Occasional involvement as an assistant in research projects undertaken by your supervisor or other members of the programme's staff.
- If desired, involvement in other Classics programme endeavours, e.g., the Classics Museum or the annual Victoria Ancient Theatre Society play.

What a PhD in Classics can offer you

- Mastery of the evidence and arguments relating to one aspect of the ancient world, be it—and these are only examples—the Roman Republic, ancient art and material culture, Greek tragedy or comedy, individual authors such as Plutarch or Tacitus, or cross-cultural comparisons with other later cultures, e.g., Māori or Pasifika.
- Broad knowledge of other dimensions of the classical past, encompassing more than 3,000 years of human history—from the sprawling economies of the Bronze Age to the later Roman Empire.
- A distinctively interdisciplinary approach to research—whatever your thesis topic, you will be able to combine a number of the following modes of analysis: philology, literary criticism, art history, reception theory, archaeology, political theory, source criticism, theories of sexuality and gender, anthropology, epigraphy, film theory, and others.
- A firm grounding in the foundational cultures that underpin much of the modern world: its political and legal systems; its myths and fantasies (on stage and screen and in books); its philosophical and social thought, both in New Zealand and abroad.
- A toolkit of analytical and communication skills that will serve you well in all spheres of professional life.

What skills you will develop during your PhD

- Managing and completing a large-scale project over an extended (usually three-year) period of time—work you will carry out independently though never without the support of your supervisor whenever you want it.
- Research skills, involving not only work in a library, but also with digital databases (of, e.g., literary texts, inscriptions, or archaeological findings).
- Writing a lengthy piece of highly technical expository writing—a skill necessary both in academia and other high-level sectors (e.g., business, government, etc.).
- Producing an original contribution to your field, requiring you not only to

synthesise existing knowledge but also to think creatively in order to move beyond it.

- Working one-on-one, and on a regular basis, with an expert in your field—and learning when to challenge advice and when to accept it.

What you can do with a PhD in Classics

- Internationally, the PhD is a requirement for anyone wanting to pursue an academic career at the lecturer level or above.
- At the same time, due to its academic prestige, the PhD is increasingly being seen as a preparation for other high-level careers, including those in the civil service.
- Many employers in information-intensive sectors such as banking regard a PhD in an arts subject as a distinction, not a hindrance—and this means that the degree broadens your opportunities rather than narrows them.
- If you want to really stand out in today's competitive environment, an advanced degree in Classics can be combined with higher qualifications in other fields (combining a PhD with a law degree, for instance, is increasingly common in the United States).
- Ultimately, perhaps the greatest reward of studying Classics is the insight it gives about your history, your society, and yourself—a reward whose value is in some sense incalculable.

What the Classics Programme at Victoria University offers

- A broad chronological sweep (from the Bronze Age to the Byzantines) and a wide array of topics (from ceramics to cinema); as well as special focus on topics relevant to the modern world (e.g., law and politics) and to New Zealand (e.g., the reception of the classics in New Zealand letters, comparative study of Graeco-Roman and Māori mythologies).
- A lively research environment, including funding (contestable) for overseas conferences and research travel, a supportive community, and a well-stocked library (supplemented by a reliable interlibrary loan system).
- A vibrant research community that meets regularly for seminars, talks, and other events—and has also been known to throw the odd party!
- Links, especially through staff, to overseas researchers and institutions that are key players in the world of Classics.
- A location in New Zealand's capital, placing you in the nation's legal, cultural, and political centre and making you witness to its engagement with the wider world.

