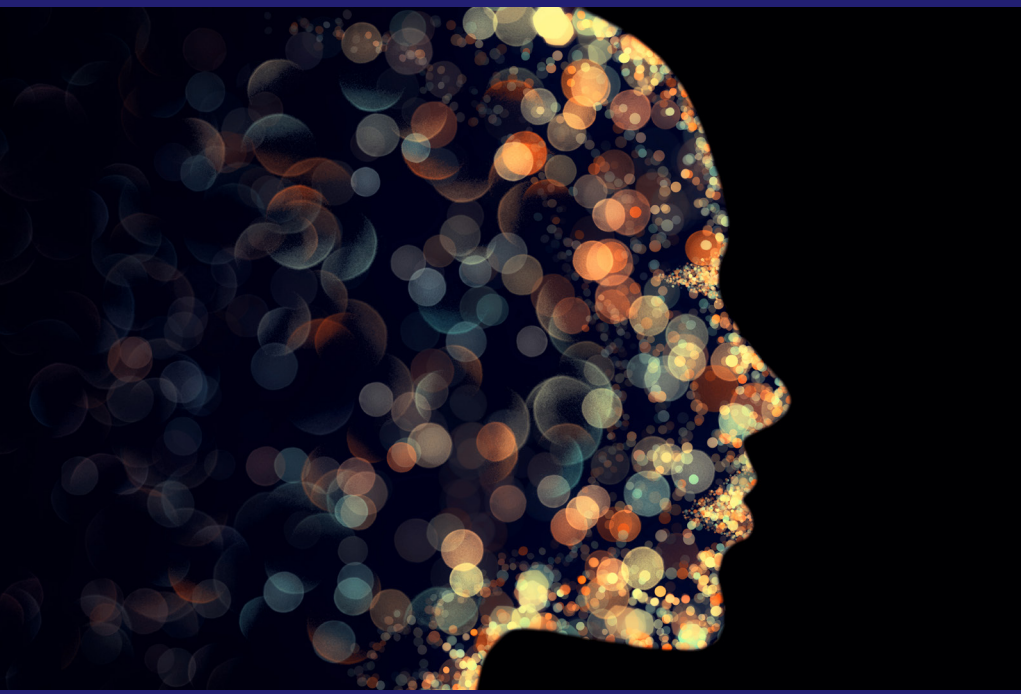
The Humanities in the UK Today: What's Going On?

By Marion Thain, with Susan Fitzmaurice, Jo Gill, Jeremy Gregory, Nigel Harkness, Gail Marshall, Murray Pittock and Andrew Thorpe



hepi
Higher Education Policy Institute

HEPI Report 159

About the Authors

Marion Thain (lead author) is Executive Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Humanities and Professor of Culture and Technology at King's College London.

Susan Fitzmaurice is Vice-President and Head of Faculty of Arts and Humanities and Professor of English Language at the University of Sheffield. She is President of the Philological Society.

Jo Gill is Vice-President and Head of the College of Arts and Professor of Twentieth-Century & American Literature at the University of Glasgow.

Jeremy Gregory is Pro-Vice-Chancellor for the Faculty of Arts and Professor of the History of Christianity at the University of Nottingham.

Nigel Harkness is Pro-Vice-Chancellor for the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences and Professor of French at Newcastle University.

Gail Marshall is Head of the School of Literature and Languages, Acting Head of Humanities and Professor of Victorian Literature and Culture at the University of Reading. She is Chair of University English.

Murray Pittock MAE FRSE is Co-Chair of the Scottish Arts and Humanities Alliance, a Scotland-wide organisation with 14 higher education institutions together with the Royal Society of Edinburgh and the national graduate school.

Andrew Thorpe is Executive Dean of Arts, Humanities and Cultures and Professor of Modern History at the University of Leeds.

This HEPI Report has been produced on behalf of the Russell Group Pro-Vice-Chancellors / Deans of Arts and Humanities Network and Murray Pittock and Catherine O'Leary as Co-Chairs of the Scottish Arts and Humanities Alliance.

Introduction

When HEPI published *The Humanities in Modern Britain: Challenges and Opportunities* (HEPI Report 141, September 2021), it presented a picture that many of us within higher education did not recognise.[1] This was primarily for two reasons:

- it seemed unaware of the extent to which the recommendations it made were already being carried out in institutions across the country, speaking to an idea of the Humanities that has in practice been superseded in UK universities; and
- it wrote of the 'crisis in the Humanities' without showing sufficient awareness of the trans-Atlantic context that phrase invokes when used in modern Britain, and the distinctions that need to be made to understand the UK context as distinct from the US.

So while recognising some of the good work the previous HEPI Report achieved, this current piece aims to provide a fuller understanding of what is going on in Humanities disciplines in UK universities today.

Talk of a Humanities 'crisis' entered into common discourse in the twenty-first century to refer to the huge drop in Humanities students in universities across the United States, including at some of the most prestigious institutions. This has happened since 2008 as student numbers in subjects like History and English have plummeted. The causes are multiple, but the abolition of requirements for students majoring in other disciplines to take Humanities modules is often cited as a key factor in addition to changes in students' choice of majors since the financial crisis.[2]

Yet when the term is now used in the UK, it tends to refer to a rather different phenomenon. In Russell Group universities, for example, student numbers in the Humanities have not seen the magnitude of the student-recruitment crisis witnessed in peer institutions in the US. Instead, what has happened in the UK is that the distribution of Humanities students across institutions and across individual disciplines has shifted in a number of ways, and this unevenness has indeed created a recruitment crisis in some areas and some institutions. Yet the Humanities overall have remained relatively popular among home students in the UK – and this is, in itself, interesting given the strong steer successive UK governments have given to students to go into Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) subjects.

This paper sets a context for policymaking that recognises the reality of the enduring importance of the Humanities in the UK as well as the significant challenges within the sector, and lays the foundation for policy that recognises the distinctive opportunities the Humanities give the UK for its contributions to the twenty-first century.

We begin, however, with a note on terminology. The 2021 HEPI Report starts by defining the Humanities subjects as those which have a 'limited focus on the acquisition of knowledge, skills and understanding for application in specific professional contexts' and ends with a recommendation that 'professionally valuable skills should be more fully embedded in undergraduate humanities degrees'. There are risks of occlusion in the circularity of this argument. In contrast, we define Humanities subjects as those usually found within Humanities faculties, with the exception of practice-based arts disciplines such as Music,

Fine Art, Drama and Dance. The Humanities includes for us everything from Philosophy, History and Theology, through English and Modern Languages, to Digital Humanities, Film Theory and Culture and Media Studies. We do not deal with practice-based arts disciplines here simply because there is a different but equally important story to be told about their place and trajectory within the UK – and HEPI plans to follow this report with a separate report on that topic.

Various data points have masked what is at this juncture still a relatively strong overall uptake of Humanities subjects by UK students:

1. the huge growth in recent years in international students has predominantly been outside the Humanities, meaning the Humanities take a smaller part of the overall student body in universities that have seen this expansion in overseas students;

2. secondly, the range of subjects on offer within the university sector, and indeed within the Humanities, has expanded, especially since 1992, and as a consequence traditional Humanities courses represent a smaller percentage of this expanded field;

3. there has been a rebalancing of student choice within the Humanities disciplines, with Modern Language degrees and English losing out to other areas – both have suffered from changes in school curricula (particularly at GCSE level) that have had a knock-on effect on university applications;[3] and

4. there has been a redistribution across different types of institution, as universities outside the Russell Group have

often seen significant drops in their recruitment as the Russell Group expanded Humanities departments in the early years of home tuition fee increases and the removal of student number controls in England – compounding this, the recent demographic dip in the UK, and the move to Centre-Assessed Grades during the pandemic, significantly affected institutions that had already lost out on market share.

The overall distribution of Humanities students has changed, then, in significant ways, resulting in a decline in student numbers, particularly in these core Humanities disciplines in some institutions, with consequent painful changes to staffing levels and the size and structure of departments. Nevertheless, such changes demonstrate multiple significant challenges across the sector rather than a huge drop in the numbers of students wanting to study the Humanities in the UK.

The reasons why the UK has not experienced as big a reduction in the number of students wanting to study the Humanities as the US are complex and there is not space here for a full analysis. But it is worth noting the differences in context:

- the two countries have different educational systems that lead up to students' higher education choices, with the UK reaching the point of specialisation far earlier;
- the cost of going to university can be very different, with home students in the top US universities sometimes paying over $60,000 a year, meaning media-generated perceptions of which disciplines deliver the best economic returns are likely to be uppermost in students minds; and
- differences in national culture and values.

The key questions for this report, however, are:

- What continues to make the Humanities so meaningful in the UK today?
- What is the state of the field in modern Britain?
- What further support is needed from policymakers?

The quality of UK Humanities research

The UK research base produces 9.9% of the total downloads of academic papers, published work from the UK generates 10.5% of global citations and 13.4% of the world's most highly cited articles are by UK researchers. On these metrics, the UK ranks third in the world, despite constituting only 0.9% of the global population, and 2.7% of the total global Research and Development spend in 2019. Arts and Humanities outperform this extremely strong average, ranking behind only Clinical, Environmental and Biological Sciences in field-weighted citation impact scores (FWCI) in 2016.[4]

In 2020, UK Arts and Humanities research activity was 49% higher than the global average.[5] This outperformed all other disciplinary research areas in the UK. The UK also has 20 universities in the global top 100 in the *Times Higher Education* 2022 rankings for Arts and Humanities, including four in the top 10, and 18 in the top 100 in the QS rankings. This is a globally leading sector rather than a sector in crisis whether we look at outputs (journal articles, books and other types of publication) or impacts (socially, economically, globally and locally). The Main Panel D Report (the panel dedicated to Arts and Humanities disciplines) in the 2021 UK Research Excellence Framework exercise showed sustained strength and particularly high performance in this area relative to others.

Employability and transferable skills

These headlines suggest research in these fields is strong, but what of the value of education in these disciplines? The number of UK students choosing Humanities subjects suggests they continue to recognise the value of degrees that fit them not narrowly for any one particular career but which (along with other Arts, Humanities and Social Science [AHSS] disciplines) develop the talents and skills needed for a wide range of careers, many of which we are not yet even able to imagine. The British Academy's report *Qualified for the Future* (2020) gives evidence of considerable flexibility in career options for AHSS graduates and of a strong correlation between the skills of AHSS graduates and the key skills employers value. This is what gives non-STEM graduates long-term resilience within the workforce.[6]

Humanities subjects give students the ability to work in sophisticated ways with language, text and written information that is invaluable for the majority of professions in an information-based economy. Where specialist technical knowledge is needed, employers often prefer to supply this themselves through in-house training programmes (in part because that technical knowledge is often fast-changing and what is needed by the employer is very specific), but a firm foundation in critical thinking, independent research skills and sophisticated linguistic and textual-information handling, coupled with advanced communication skills, provide an invaluable platform that takes years to develop and cannot be quickly back-filled or worked around.

As one employer at a large tech corporation reported:

The way I view it is, if you're going into more STEM-based

> *or more business-focused degrees, longer term, you still need a foundation in the Humanities; you need to have an understanding of language and communication and philosophy in order to do those other things.*[7]

Given that eight of the ten fastest growing sectors employ more AHSS graduates than other disciplines and six of these fastest growing sectors have over two-thirds of their graduate workforce from AHSS, these disciplines seem a good bet for the future.[8] A Humanities training may not pay back most quickly in the workforce, but it is likely to give good resilience and longevity for longer term prospects. With retirement ages going up and increasing flexibility needed over the course of a career, this is an extremely valuable asset.

Ultimately, arguing for specific skillsets arising from particular disciplinary areas may be a bit of a red herring. Only 14% of employers say specific degree subjects are a selection criterion; for most employers, it is the level of education that is important, not the particular discipline.[9] Yet there is a good deal of evidence to show that Humanities skills are valued in the marketplace, with recent research by Nesta and Pearson confirming a strong correlation between future occupational demand and the higher order cognitive skills developed in Arts and Humanities programmes, such as originality, fluency of ideas and active learning.[10] A 2022 British Academy report on employability notes that:

> *As many of the UK's most successful start-ups are founded by history graduates as by engineering graduates, and language graduates have founded more successful start-ups in the UK than maths graduates.*[11]

In addition to fostering imaginative, entrepreneurial mindsets,

AHSS graduates are well represented in the most socially influential careers such as politics, with 65 percent of MPs (following the 2019 election) holding degrees in AHSS disciplines.[12]

The British Academy report goes on to explore the value of AHSS skills to a wide range of employers through a series of case studies. Many Humanities faculties are now explicitly helping their students articulate the professional value of the skills they acquire through Humanities degrees. For example, initiatives such as Anglia Ruskin's 'Ruskin Modules', which are interdisciplinary modules, focused around the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, show that innovative work is already being done by higher education institutions in this area: 25% of the students in the Faculty of Science and Engineering took modules led by the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Science, showing students' awareness of the value they bring.

The reality of teaching and learning in the Humanities today already embeds many applied skills (including in digital and related technologies) that HEPI's 2021 report called for. First-year students in English at the University of Exeter, for example, learn to code and students in Humanities subjects at the University of Glasgow have the chance to immerse themselves in Augmented Reality, Virtual Reality and Extended Reality.

One of the striking developments over the last few years has been the growth of Liberal Arts and interdisciplinary programmes across the UK higher education sector. This has altered the way Arts and Humanities are taught and represented, often linking them to Natural Sciences and other STEM disciplines.[13] The growth of programmes across the sector in a short space of time has been impressive,

considering the impact of the recent demographic dip and the uncertainties brought by the pandemic. While just under half of Russell Group universities have one of these types of programmes, other universities, including post-1992 institutions, have also created similar ones. The creation of the new London Interdisciplinary School, and the establishment of cross-faculty units in universities such as Warwick (the School of Cross-faculty Studies) and Newcastle (School X) also point to the capacity for growth in this sector. A consistent element in all such programmes is a focus on 'interdisciplinary work' and 'applied work'.[14]

A study of the promotional material, websites and online prospectuses reveals a common approach to representing the value of these programmes: that they allow students to prepare for an increasingly complex and uncertain world. All programmes provide core elements that are designed to encourage interdisciplinary learning. These sessions are frequently problem-led, with students asked to work on pressing issues for society such as sustainability, economic growth and regional development, domestic and foreign policy, innovation and equality. A survey of these core modules reveals the character of Liberal Arts programmes as engaged, outward-looking and connected to external organisations and local areas as students are set local and global challenges.[15]

Significantly, these core elements do not tend to distinguish between the Arts and Sciences, arguing that both are valid and relevant for the work we will all have to do as global citizens in the future. The reality is, then, that narrow professional-oriented degree courses, while often seeming like a better financial bet in the short term, may not give as flexible a foundation of learning for the future as that given by the

broader skills base of Humanities and Liberal Arts courses. This is not to argue for one over the other: as so often, strength for the UK resides in variety. Success rests on having, and preserving, a workforce that brings varied skills, backgrounds, methods, disciplines and experiences to bear on whatever challenges the future brings.

Impact and public engagement

Indeed, looking at what universities in the UK are already doing in the Humanities is an important corrective to abstract speculation about the relevance or irrelevance of Humanities skills and knowledge. The Impact Case Studies from the Humanities in the 2021 Research Excellence Framework exercise give a good, and up-to-date, indication of exactly how Humanities methods, skills and knowledge have applied value. Two examples of how the Arts and Humanities are achieving impact through culture and the creative arts are:

1. Impact through the creative arts: Liverpool University's Josie Billington (English Department), for example, has been leading the creation of a digital resource, 'LivCare', offering examples of best practice in inclusive arts-in-mental-health provision to inform policy, widen provision and foster cross-sectoral co-operation.

2. Supporting the preservation of cultural heritage: Queen Mary's 'Safeguarding Indigenous Communities through Engagement in the Preservation and Dissemination of Cultural Heritage', led by Professor Paul Heritage (School of English and Drama), is an interesting example of this type of work. Similarly, at the University of Leicester, Heritage Studies scholar Corinne Fowler's influential work with the

National Trust, teachers and schoolchildren has sought to increase our knowledge and understanding of the Trust's holdings in the context of empire.[16]

What is less well recognised is how wide the range and impact of these disciplines is beyond intervention through cultural industries and creative practice. The pandemic was a watershed moment for the Humanities because the importance of the variety and quality of individual human experience rose to the surface in our collective re-evaluation of priorities. Coping with the pandemic was (for the lucky majority who were not severely ill) not so much a medical crisis as an existential one. The Humanities, working collaboratively, critically, imaginatively, and with both a global and a transhistorical perspective that recognises the diverse and inequitable experiences and effects of COVID, have risen to the challenge. They have supported cultures and communities to withstand the pressures of lockdown, helped society to make sense of and narrate the experience of the pandemic (and to memorialise the losses that many have experienced), explained the benefits of vaccination and, crucially, begun to shape the process of recovery.[17]

The Humanities have been tackling these challenges at the same time as Medicine has been taking on the challenge of finding vaccines; and both have been essential. There are many examples of this public engagement and impact work in relation to COVID, but we might pause on a couple of examples here:

1. An Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) project on communication and public health was led by Professor Svenja Adolphs from the University of Nottingham (School

of English) which addressed the challenges of constructing effective public health messaging across cultural boundaries. The team's analysis has been developed into a toolkit that will enable NHS bodies to understand better how successful health messaging is in real time.

2. At SOAS, Dr Nana Sato-Rossberg (School of Languages, Cultures and Linguistics) led a project to understand variations in cultural translation and interpretation of COVID-19 risks among London's migrant communities. Understanding the reasons for such variation has been a crucial foundation for identifying the different types of support needed by different communities, ensuring resources can be used more effectively and to achieve better effects.

Health and wellbeing

Outside the response to COVID, many other projects from the Humanities have been addressing key health and wellbeing challenges that are central to society's current concerns. Related to the experience of COVID, but with a broader reach, is the Essex Autonomy Project led by Professor Wayne Martin (School of Philosophy and Art History, University of Essex). The project aims to understand how best to respect the ideal of autonomy, or self-determination, in social care, psychiatric care and elderly care settings. Recognising the importance of autonomy as a value often invoked in public policy discussions, the lead researcher brought methods from philosophical phenomenology to understand how individuals' decision-making capacity can best be assessed and supported.

A second strand of the project engages philosophical concepts of autonomy to analyse how best the rights of residents can be protected in, for example, locked-down care homes during a pandemic. Research from the Essex Autonomy Project has been used in a Judicial College training module for judges of the Court of Protection, cited by the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights in their report on Human Rights in Care Settings, used by the Peruvian Law Reform Commission to stress-test law reform proposals and endorsed by an official review of mental health and mental capacity legislation in Scotland. The team's animated 'sketch-up' videos are used for training in NHS settings, its briefing papers are used by hospital ethics committees in the NHS and the project team regularly organises well-attended rapid-response webinars for frontline professionals working in the care sector.[18]

Mental health has also been a strong arena for Humanities engagement. Researchers at Queen Mary University of London have identified issues of 'emotional health' as a particular priority. Their project 'Living With Feeling: Emotional Health in History, Philosophy, and Experience' (led by Dr Tiffany Watt-Smith from the Department of English and Drama) has been running since 2015, funded by the Wellcome Trust.[19] Through frequent contributions to flagship BBC radio programmes, a major exhibition at the Royal College of Nursing (RCN), and a pioneering suite of lessons for primary schools called 'Developing Emotions', Living With Feeling researchers have equipped radio listeners, nurses, exhibition visitors, teachers and schoolchildren with the historical understanding, ideas and vocabulary needed to recognise and discuss emotions.

Likewise, and also funded by the Wellcome Trust, historian Fred Cooper and others at the University of Exeter have

been exploring the impact of, and ways of addressing, youth loneliness.[20] In both cases, the insights and methodologies of the Humanities have deepened and enhanced our vital understanding and improved interventions across a range of professional and public domains

Technology

As one might hope, the Humanities also have a lot of impact in questions around technology and are a major contributor to the shaping of our digital future. The Humanities bring a humanistic approach to the big issues of technology, recognising and addressing problems that run deep in our relationship with technology but which the technical disciplines do not have the resources or methods to name or resolve.

The University of Cambridge, for example, ran an 'AI Narratives' project that explored fictional narratives of Artificial Intelligence (the values they encode and the interests they promote) and analysed their impact on the public imagination and public acceptance (led by Dr Stephen Cave, Director of the Leverhulme Centre for the Future of Intelligence, and a philosopher by training). The project had considerable influence on policymakers and government, for example, through engagement with the AI Council.

With a very different aim, but similarly with a technology focus, the University of Edinburgh worked with industry partners in the creative sector to help them understand and analyse large-scale data resources in the service of delivering regional economic growth, resilience in the creative industries, and social, cultural and environmental benefits (led by Melissa

Terras, Professor of Digital Cultural Heritage). This project involved helping those in the creative industries to understand better the origins, and explicit and implicit biases of historical data, as well as the nuanced issues of interpretation and representation of large digitised datasets. To date, this 'Creative Informatics' project has supported over 200 entrepreneurs and start-ups.[21] Regardless of the technology, human experience, adaptability and curiosity are at the core of new products, services and experience, making suitably skilled humanists and creatives essential to the current and future workforce and entrepreneurship landscape.

Media and communication

Media and communication is another field where the Humanities are undertaking transformative work that has profound and far-reaching consequences. King's College London, for example, has led projects on viral mis/disinformation that is equipping journalists, civil society organisations and government policymakers with evidence and practical methods to investigate, understand and combat harmful and hateful online misinformation in relation to pressing global concerns. Dr Liliana Bounegru and Dr Jonathan Gray's influential *Field Guide* (2017/18) is an open-access set of digital methods that enables investigation and visualisation of flows of online misinformation and has been cited by the BBC World Service, *La Repubblica*, *Le Monde*, Transparency International and UNESCO as a key resource for responding to misinformation by organisations.[22]

Also in the media space, but on a very different topic, Bournemouth University and the University of Strathclyde have been collaborating to support journalists to ensure suicide cases are reported more responsibly, sensitively and

accurately. The Suicide Reporting Toolkit (co-created by Dr Ann Luce and Dr Sallyanne Duncan) embeds five sets of global media reporting guidelines to ensure it is useful for journalists around the world.[23] This has been used to train police officers in Malaysia and by Public Health England (now UK Health Security Agency, UKHSA), and its value has been recognised by the Independent Press Standards Organisation, the Ethical Journalism Network, and the Dart Centre for Journalism and Trauma. These are just a couple of examples of the way research in the Humanities is changing the media industry for the better and working collaboratively with professionals to address some key challenges of our time.

Challenges

The above paints a picture of the profound ways in which the Humanities are helping society to deal with issues that we cannot address through science and technology alone. While the Humanities in the UK are not in crisis in the same way they are in the US, there are still significant challenges that need to be addressed if we are to ensure this good is fostered and preserved for students, for employers, for society, for the environment, and for the economy.

One continuing, and rapidly intensifying, challenge for Humanities faculties in UK universities is the fact that the Humanities tend to recruit in large part from a home student demographic, and the financial recompense for this sector has remained (largely) static since 2017. While increases in recruitment from overseas have helped many other areas to address financial challenges, the Humanities have seen their income gradually but significantly eroded in real terms. This has left Humanities faculties vulnerable in the economic landscape

of today's university, particularly in institutions that have also lost out on market share and whose student recruitment is less buoyant in areas of demand from overseas students.

Yet a broad-based university cannot thrive as a knowledge community without disciplinary range and depth, and extensive the loss of Humanities disciplines in UK universities will erode their capacity to innovate and respond to new challenges, and reduce students' opportunities to acquire the range and depth of skills that will best equip them for a long and varied career in an uncertain future.

Secondly, as noted by a recent HEPI piece by Christopher Daley, rhetoric in the Government's research funding strategy appears to downplay the position of the Arts and Humanities in the UK's ambition to become a 'science superpower'.[24] As Daley notes, for the UK Research and Development agenda to be as effective as it possibly can be, it must include the Arts and Humanities disciplines as a transformative part of our response to the great challenges of our times.

A careful parsing of the Government's own recent interventions in this area (for example, the *Research and Development Roadmap*), would suggest it is precisely the Humanities that can deliver in the areas set out there: for example, with respect to working at 'the intersection of knowledge and societal need' and bringing forward 'creative, innovative and radical ideas' – a point that has been overlooked in much public commentary.[25] We impoverish each discipline's potential if we do not fully capitalise on what we can achieve if we work in a radically interdisciplinary way and if we overlook the richness, diversity, innovation and applied nature of today's Humanities scholarship. The UK is distinctive, globally, in having such

a strong and established field of Humanities research and expertise. So UK strategy and rhetoric need to change if we are not to lose one of the most signally valuable assets we have in comparison to other nations that are racing ahead in STEM but lagging behind in the areas that will be essential to give us the edge in addressing the challenges of the twenty-first century.

Conclusion

This report is authored by a group of leaders of Humanities disciplines who are primarily (although not solely) from Russell Group universities. While there is more to be said, and many other voices and perspectives to be heard within and beyond the sector, one thing is clear: the country's strength in the Humanities is a distinctive, and distinctively potent, one that can and should be at the heart of UK inventions and interventions.

If fostered and deployed correctly, this will create an unparalleled opportunity for the UK to contribute to human prosperity. Above all, the recommendation of this report is that the focus needs to be on connecting our disciplines (AHSS or SHAPE[26] and STEM) – and preserving disciplinary breadth. Maximum impact for society can only be achieved through bringing combined multi-disciplinary perspectives to bear on the key challenges we face because, put simply, those challenges are not discipline based.

Our research in the UK has a particular opportunity precisely because we have world-leading expertise in the Humanities which many other countries do not have. This is our unique advantage, and our opportunity is in finding the most effective ways to focus the combined power of our disciplines around key challenges through a multifaceted method.[27]

What is true for research is, crucially, equally true for teaching. In what will continue to be a fast-changing context, preserving a broad knowledge and skills base in university education is the only way to ensure that the country will be the creative, dynamic, innovative and flexible force required for the next phase of economic, social and human development.

Endnotes

1 Gabriel Roberts, *The Humanities in Modern Britain: Challenges and Opportunities*, 2021 https://www.hepi.ac.uk/2021/09/23/the-humanities-in-modern-britain-challenges-and-opportunities/

2 Colleen Flaherty, 'Major Exodus', *Inside Higher Ed*, 26 January 2015 https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2015/01/26/where-have-all-english-majors-gone; Benjamin Schmidt, 'The Humanities are in Crisis', *The Atlantic*, 23 August 2018 https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2018/08/the-humanities-face-a-crisisof-confidence/567565/

3 University Council of Modern Languages and British Academy, *Report on Granular Trends in Modern Languages in UCAS Admissions Data, 2012-18*, 2021 https://university-council-modern-languages.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/UCML-BA-UCAS-Granularity-Report.pdf; The National Association for the Teaching of English [NATE), 'The Decline in Student Choice of A Level English: A NATE Position Paper', *Teaching English*, 24, pp.4-8 https://www.nate.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/NATE-Post-16-position-paper.pdf

4 Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy [BEIS], *International Comparison of the UK Research Base: Accompanying Note*, 2022, p.8 https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/international-comparison-of-the-uk-research-base-2022

5 BEIS / Elsevier, *International Comparative Performance of the UK Research Base*, 2016, pp.49-50 https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/660855/uk-research-base-international-comparison-2016.pdf; BEIS, *International Comparison of the UK Research Base: Accompanying Note*, 2022, p.12 https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/international-comparison-of-the-uk-research-base-2022

6 British Academy, *Qualified for the Future*, 2020, p.8 https://www.thebritishacademy.ac.uk/publications/skills-qualified-future-quantifying-demand-arts-humanities-social-science/

7 James Robson, Emily Murphy, Nuzha Nuseibeh, Alice Tawell, Ben Hart, Jonah Stewart, Ewart Keep, Simon Marginson, *The Value of the Humanities: Understanding the Career Destinations of Oxford Humanities Graduates*, 2021, p.54

8 British Academy, *Qualified for the Future*, 2020, p.21 https://www.thebritishacademy.ac.uk/publications/skills-qualified-future-quantifying-demand-arts-humanities-social-science/

9 British Academy, *Qualified for the Future*, 2020, p.15 https://www.thebritishacademy.ac.uk/publications/skills-qualified-future-quantifying-demand-arts-humanities-social-science/

10 See H. Bakhshi, J. Downing, M. Osborne and P. Schneider, *The Future of Skills: Employment in 2030*, Pearson and Nesta, 2017, p.14 https://media.nesta.org.uk/documents/the_future_of_skills_employment_in_2030_0.pdf

11 British Academy, *SHAPE Skills at Work: Case Studies from Graduates of the Social Sciences, Humanities and Arts*, 2022, p.10 https://www.thebritishacademy.ac.uk/publications/shape-skills-at-work/

12 'MPs and their degrees: here's where and what our UK politicians studied', Studee.com, 13 December 2019 https://studee.com/media/mps-and-their-degrees-media/

13 Nationally, Liberal Arts enrolments grew by 50 per cent between 2016 and 2020 according to HESA data (675 enrolments in 2016/17, rising to 1,045 in 2020/21, the last year for which we have data) and UCL, KCL and Nottingham recruit over one hundred students a year.

14 Kathryn Telling, 'Selling the Liberal Arts Degree in England: Unique Students, Generic Skills and Mass Higher Education', *Sociology*, *52*(6), 2018, pp.1290–1306 https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0038038517750548

15 We are grateful to Dr Ross Wilson, Director of Liberal Arts at the University of Nottingham, for undertaking this survey and providing much of the information in this paragraph.

16 National Trust, *Interim Report on the Connections between Colonialism and Properties now in the Care of the National Trust, Including Links with Historic Slavery*, 2020 https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/features/addressing-the-histories-of-slavery-and-colonialism-at-the-national-trust

17 For an overview, see the work coordinated by the ARHC–funded, UK-wide project, 'The Pandemic and Beyond: Arts and Humanities contribution to Covid Research and Recovery' https://pandemicandbeyond.exeter.ac.uk

18 http://autonomy.essex.ac.uk

19 https://projects.history.qmul.ac.uk/emotions/livingwithfeeling/

20 https://wcceh.org/projects/beacon-loneliness-and-community/

21 https://creativeinformatics.org/; also see the Scottish Arts and Humanities Alliance Impact Case Study report for more detail of the impact outcome https://saha.scot/research-excellence-celebrated-through-saha-case-studies-booklet/

22 Liliana Bounegru, Jonathan Gray, Tommaso Venturini, and Michele Mauri, *A Field Guide to 'Fake News' and Other Information Disorders*, Public Data Lab, 2018 https://ssrn.com/abstract=3097666 or http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3097666

23 https://www.suicidereportingtoolkit.com

24 Christopher Daley and Matthew Smith, 'What is the Role of the Arts and Humanities in the UK Research Policy Landscape?', HEPI blog, 24 May 2022 https://www.hepi.ac.uk/2022/05/24/what-is-the-role-of-the-arts-and-humanities-in-the-uk-research-policy-landscape/

25 HM Government, *UK Research and Development Roadmap*, July 2020 https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-research-and-development-roadmap

26 SHAPE: Social Sciences, Humanities and the Arts for People and the Economy / Environment is a collective name for the Social Sciences, Humanities and the Arts https://www.thebritishacademy.ac.uk/this-is-shape/.

27 Marion Thain, 'Post-pandemic recovery requires radical interdisciplinarity', *Times Higher Education*, 18 July 2021 https://www.timeshighereducation.com/blog/post-pandemic-recovery-requires-radical-interdisciplinarity

UK universities have, historically, been strong in the Humanities as well as other disciplinary areas. So the country is well-placed to benefit from the global shift towards interdisciplinary ways of working.

This report looks at the current health of Humanities throughout the UK, in both teaching and research, and uncovers numerous examples of world-class practice.

It also raises concerns about recent funding shortfalls and calls for policies that would bolster the position of Humanities across the whole higher education sector, so that the UK can contribute even more to tackling the many problems facing the world.

HEPI was established in 2002 to influence the higher education debate with evidence.
We are UK-wide, independent and non-partisan.
March 2023 ISBN 978-1-915744-05-0
Higher Education Policy Institute
99 Banbury Road, Oxford OX2 6JX
www.hepi.ac.uk

Printed by BCQ, Buckingham
Typesetting: Steve Billington, www.jarmanassociates.co.uk