



MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CLASSICAL ASSOCIATION TEACHING BOARD HELD ON 10TH OCTOBER 2026 BY VIDEO LINK

Present: Henry Cullen, (Chair), Gráinne Cassidy (Director of Education & Policy), Sana Van Dal (Grants Officer), Dr Chris Burnand (Team Lead), Dr Jess Dixon (Team Lead), Rob Hancock-Jones (Team Lead), Angharad Williams (Eduqas), Alex Orgee (OCR), Helen McVeigh (CANI).

Apologies: Dr Alex Imrie (CAS), Prof Susan Deacy (JCT), James Renshaw (Team Lead), Steve Hunt (Cambridge PGCE), Dr Aisha Khan Evans (KCL PGCE), Robin Osborne (Omnibus).

1. Welcome & Apologies

The Chair welcomed all members. Apologies were noted.

2. Chair's Update

The Chair provided an update on developments since the previous meeting, including:

- John Holton's resignation as Co-Chair following his appointment as Head of School at Newcastle. Henry Cullen will continue as sole Chair.
- Discussions with Cambridge OCR & Classics for All following the withdrawal of AS Levels in Latin and Classical Greek, and initial exploration of a CA-led replacement qualification.
- The appointment of Jess Dixon as Teaching and Learning Team Lead.
- Progress on the National Strategy for Classical Greek, including the first stakeholder meeting and preparation of a strategy document for circulation.
- New funding secured by the Classical Association, including legacy funding for Greek-related projects and a separate donation to support qualifications and curriculum redevelopment.
- Qualification redevelopment timelines remain under discussion with Cambridge OCR.
- A strong response to the Classical Association Conference call for papers, including a substantial number of pedagogy-focused submissions.

The Chair reviewed actions from the [previous meeting](#) and noted that all actions had been completed.

3. CATB Qualifications Review

Updates from Subject Team Leads

Classical Civilisation: A meeting with Cambridge OCR colleagues is planned to resolve some remaining technical issues before agreed approaches are applied across the modules in development.

Classical Languages: This year sees the first teach of the revised Greek GCSE specification. New editions of John Taylor's course are in development to reflect specification changes, with publication anticipated in the New Year. Discussion continues regarding whether revised set-text materials should be issued as a new edition or through an addendum. Future GCSE reform work remains



under consideration, although immediate attention is focused on developing a replacement for the outgoing AS qualification.

Ancient History: (Gráinne Cassidy on behalf of James Renshaw): Ancient History team has already met this term to discuss qualification reform, including possible two- and three-component GCSE models. Qualifications review discussions will form part of the forthcoming Ancient History CPD Day. The British Museum continues to support the redevelopment work through both the Greece & Rome and Egyptology departments. Concerns regarding A-Level grading remain under discussion with Cambridge OCR, and correspondence has recently been sent to their senior leadership.

Cambridge OCR: Although classical qualifications were not identified as a priority area for reform within the Curriculum and Assessment Review, Cambridge OCR continues to explore redevelopment across the full Classics suite, in particular seeing whether redevelopment work can take place sooner rather than waiting until the end of the government-led reform. The policy landscape is ever evolving; however, we are hoping that clarity on potential plans and timelines will be achieved soon. In relation to concerns about grading, standard procedure would be for new specifications to carry on the grading standard from the previous qualification to ensure comparability over time.

4. Exams update

Eduqas: GCSE Latin entries were slightly lower than the previous year, although the Level 1 qualification remains stable at around 500 candidates annually. While some centres have ceased offering the qualification, new centres have also joined. There has been increased interest from overseas centres following the discontinuation of the Cambridge IGCSE, although EDUQAS is unable to offer qualifications outside the UK (with the exception of British Forces schools). A pre-recorded professional learning event reviewing the 2026 examination series will be available free of charge from the end of November, and the continued need to recruit additional examiners was noted. In relation to Classical Greek, Angharad drew the Board's attention to the Welsh [ESGOL platform](#) as a potential model for collaborative and hub-based approaches to teaching minority subjects.

ACTION: AW to provide contact details of CATB for non-specialist teachers taking on GCSE/Level 1 Latin, so tailored support can be provided.

Cambridge OCR: GCSE Latin entries continue to show a modest decline, while entries for GCSE Classical Greek have fallen by approximately 35% since the introduction of the current specification. Following the discontinuation of the IGCSE, Cambridge OCR continues to support international centres through existing arrangements. This summer has seen significantly fewer complaints regarding GCSE Classical Civilisation. Concerns raised post-results largely related to the grade boundaries of the Myth & Religion paper, reviews of marking, and inter-subject grading comparability. Alex explained that a review of marking is not a re-mark, but a review of whether academic judgement has been reasonably applied.

The Board discussed the continuing challenge of attaining A* grades in Classical Civilisation and Ancient History, concerns about the marking of translation questions, and the need for ongoing dialogue with Cambridge OCR regarding grading standards. Members also noted examples of schools reducing or discontinuing provision due to concerns about attainment outcomes. AO reiterated that centres retain the right to pursue formal appeals through Cambridge OCR's established procedures.

ACTION: GC to explore feasibility of CATB analysing DfE data to identify and contact centres that have discontinued Latin or Greek.

5. AS Level Latin & Greek

The Board discussed the implications of the planned withdrawal of AS Levels in Latin and Classical Greek and explored the potential development of a replacement qualification under the auspices of the Classical Association. Members noted that, although candidate numbers are relatively small, the qualification plays an important role in supporting progression for students who do not continue to full A Level study and remains particularly valuable for small sixth form cohorts, part-time learners, adult learners and independent students. The Board agreed that there was a strong case for pursuing a replacement qualification and discussed the need to consult current centres, universities and other stakeholders as proposals are developed.

The Board agreed that developing a replacement should be a strategic priority. Discussion indicated broad support for the following principles:

- the qualification should be available in both Latin and Greek;
- flexibility should be prioritised;
- literature should form part of the offer;
- language and literature components should be capable of standing independently;
- candidates should be able to enter individual papers rather than complete a full suite;
- a shared model across Latin and Greek would be preferable where possible.

The Board discussed a number of issues relating to the design and delivery of a potential replacement qualification, including the advantages and disadvantages of an examination window compared with fixed-date assessments, the sustainability of literature-based assessment, opportunities for co-teachability alongside A Level courses, and the possible use of existing set text materials. Members also considered the importance of securing university recognition and endorsement for any future qualification, together with the resource requirements, staffing implications and quality assurance processes that would be needed to ensure its long-term viability.

The Board agreed that consultation should be undertaken with current AS centres, Classics for All Greek academies and other providers delivering post-GCSE language provision, university stakeholders, and the wider teaching community. Members agreed that broad engagement would be



essential in ensuring that any replacement qualification meets the needs of learners, teachers and higher education institutions while remaining practical and sustainable to deliver.

ACTION: HC to draft a survey for the first stage of consultation. GC to organise a stakeholder meeting in late November to review consultation responses and agree next steps for a replacement qualification.

6. Director of Education and Policy update

A [report](#) was circulated in advance of the meeting. No matters arising.

7. Grants Officer update

Revisions have been made to the grants allocation process, including the introduction of quarterly caps for small grants and indicative funding caps for major grants such as summer schools. The changes are intended to ensure that funding is distributed more evenly throughout the year, remains available across all grant windows, and can better accommodate increasing demand.

8. Teaching & Learning Team Lead update

Activities undertaken since the previous meeting included attendance at the Classical Civilisation and Ancient History CPD Days, production of summaries highlighting key teaching and learning themes from those events, and the launch of the new 'Classroom Classics' series, beginning with a resource on literacy in the Classics classroom. The Board welcomed the positive early impact of the role and the support it provides to teachers who are unable to attend CPD events.

9. PGCE updates

KCL: [report supplied](#).

Cambridge: A written update was supplied:

The target each year is 18. Recruitment last year (2025-6) was good: 16 were recruited. All 16 completed the PGCE, and 15 got jobs. Recruitment for this year (2026-7) has also been good: 17 recruited.

The jobs market was weak in 2025-6 - see Steve's blog here: [Classics Jobs in UK schools – some stats for 2025-2026](#).

10. Publications updates

JCT: [report supplied](#).

Omnibus: A written update was supplied:



Omnibus 92 appeared on time in September after an exceptionally smooth production process due to the efficiency of the editor, Katherine Clarke. Katherine will also edit Omnibus 93. This issue involved a considerable amount of editorial work because it has been proving increasingly difficult to secure contributions of adequate quality without considerable editorial input (in general positively received by contributors, who recognise that the resultant piece is much improved).

The editorial team was also busy over the summer judging the Gladstone and Sam Hood prizes, with over 100 entries for each and some very high quality contributions. It has come to light, however, that private tutoring firms have been targeting these competitions with offers of extensive tutorial guidance, and although we do not know whether these firms, or indeed generative AI, have been extensively employed we are tightening up on the application process to demand explicit statements that neither have been deployed.

11. National updates

CANI: An update was provided on activities in Northern Ireland, including the commencement of the annual lecture programme and ongoing collaboration with refugee organisations using Greek tragedy as a means of engagement. Concern was expressed about the continued reduction of language qualification provision in Northern Ireland, and it was noted that responses had been submitted to the local examination board's consultation on modern language provision.

ACTION: GC to investigate whether a follow-up response can be made by the CATB the consultation in NI.

CAS: [Report supplied.](#)

Close of meeting: 12:00pm

Henry Cullen, CHAIR