

School of Science and the Environment

Proposal to review Archaeology staffing requirements

Prepared by Prof. Peter Seville, Head of School, July 2021

Business Case

1. Executive Summary

This paper outlines the proposal to review the current staffing resource associated with the teaching of Archaeology and provides a recommendation for a revised staffing structure for 2021/22 academic year, and a recommendation for staffing subsequently.

2. Background

2.1. Context

University of Worcester currently offers BA Archaeology & Heritage Studies as a single honours course. The course and staff are part of the Department of Geography, Archaeology & the Environment, within the School of Science and the Environment. Concern over low recruitment over several years led to the commissioning of a Course Viability Report, to establish an evidence base when considering the future of Archaeology at University of Worcester.

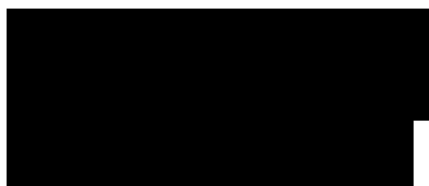
2.2. Current Staffing

Academic staff in the School of Science and the Environment are organised into two departments, viz. Biological Sciences and Geography, Archaeology & the Environment. This proposal concerns academic staff in the latter department, specifically staff associated with the delivery of Archaeology teaching and research.

There are currently six members of Archaeology staff (4.1 FTE),

From July 2021, there will be five permanent members of staff (3.5 FTE):

Person 1
Person 2
Person 3
Person 4
Person 5



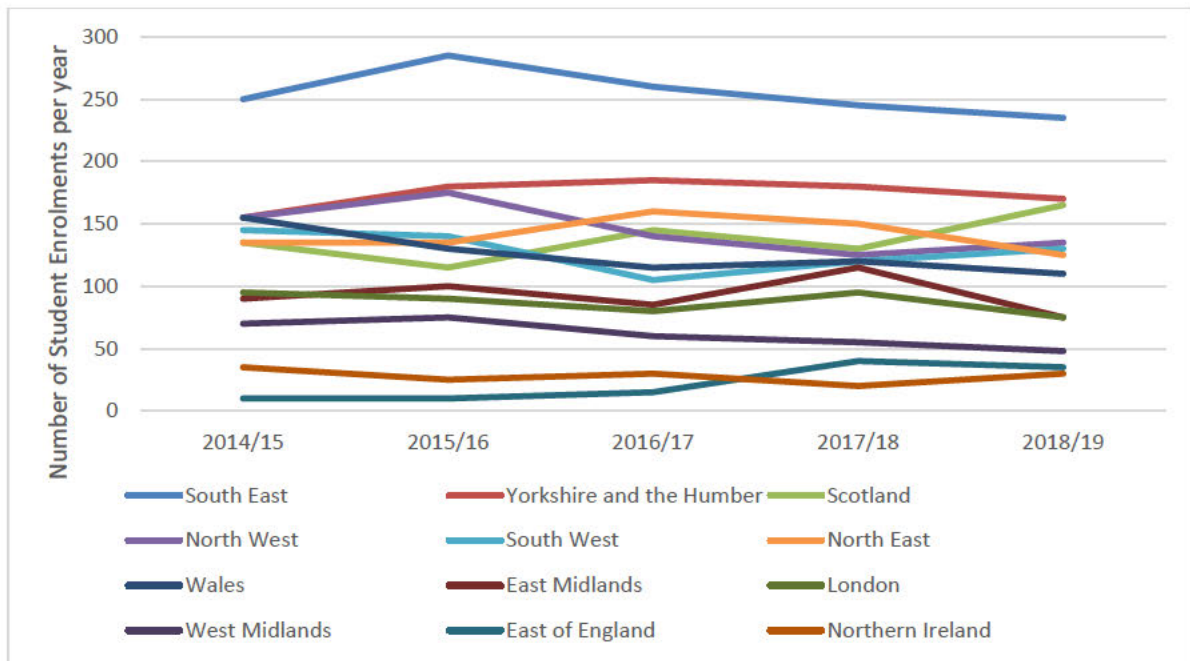
2.3. Student Recruitment

The above staff deliver teaching on one course (BA Archaeology & Heritage Studies). This course has suffered from poor recruitment over a number of years. A Course Viability Report was commissioned from The Knowledge Partnership in July 2020, to inform course development opportunities. This report states:

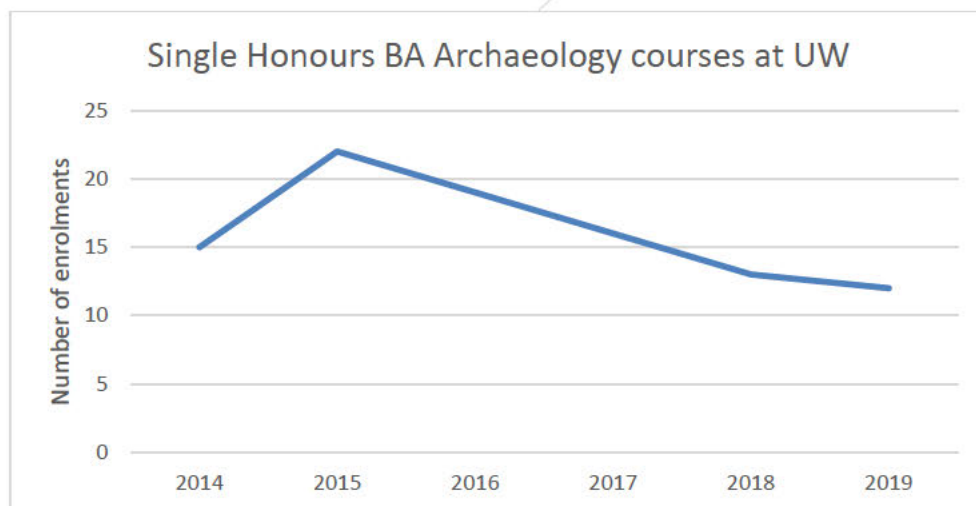
The market for undergraduate Archaeology appears to be declining; although numbers have fluctuated year-on-year, the overall trend is negative. Other market indicators are also less positive for an institution such as Worcester. Almost two thirds of students enrolled at Russell Group institutions, and half of the remaining third at other established HEIs. Institutions in the West Midlands region also had a much smaller than expected market share.

In summary, Archaeology is a declining market, where many institutions struggle to recruit viable numbers, and it is likely that many rely on joint honours enrolments to “top up” cohorts.

Analysis of the data in the report shows a very clear geographical distribution of enrolments, with the South East leading the field by some margin. In 2018/19, there were 235 enrolments to full-time undergraduate courses in the South East, compared to only 48 enrolments in the whole of the West Midlands region, including 18¹ at Worcester. Worcester recruitment represents 1.5% of the national recruitment figure.



Recruitment to Single Honours BA Archaeology courses at Worcester has declined significantly:



Ahead of the 2020/21 student intake and because student numbers were so low, the University suspended student recruitment to the course. In 2020/21, this course only has one L4/5 student, 12 L5 students and 14 L6 students. In academic year 2021/22, it is expected that the course will have one L5/6 student and 12 L6 students. The one L5/6 student is expected to complete the course in 2022/23, taking the dissertation module.

¹13 on single honours, five on joint honours

2.4. Staff Workload

The School operates the “8+1 modules” workload model. Due to the limited student number in 2020/21, Archaeology staff’s workload was lower than expected. The workload allocation for Archaeology staff in 2021/22 will be even lower.

The Head of Department has allocated workload across the five members of staff; this totals 13.6 modules, which is the expected allocation for around 1.5 FTE members of staff on standard academic contracts, or around 1.0 FTE members of staff on teaching focused contracts. However, this includes remission from teaching for activities such as Course Leader (1 module) and Assessment Officer (0.5 module); these allocations are extremely generous, given there will only be 13 students on the course in 2021/22. Other allocations are given for personal academic tutoring (1.3 modules to support 13 tutees) and MRes/PhD student supervision (a total of 1.25 modules to support one full-time PhD student, two part-time PhD students and 1 full-time MRes student). A further allocation is for dissertation students (1.2 modules to support 12 students).

Across the team, a total workload of 6.2 modules is allocated for formal timetabled teaching activities, with a total of 230² hours of formal timetabled teaching based on requested 2021/22 timetables for the relevant modules. This is roughly 40% of the maximum teaching load for one member of staff on a standard academic contract (maximum being 550 hours).

Low student numbers mean associated “teaching-related” workload, such as marking and student support, is also low. Therefore, in addition to “8+1 modules” under-allocation, there is also low “teaching-related” and “non-teaching” workload (not formally recorded in the “8+1 modules” workload model).

2.5. Other Considerations

2.5.1. Proposals for alternative Archaeology undergraduate offerings

The course team submitted to APPG a proposal for a single honours BA Archaeology course and a single honours Archaeology with History course. The proposal for a BA Archaeology course was not approved, due to concerns over viability of the proposed course. In addition, the proposal for a BA Archaeology with History course was not approved, due to concerns over the fit of the proposed History modules.

In depth discussions took place with staff in History to explore opportunities for some form of combined undergraduate degree, such as BA Archaeology with History (75% Archaeology), BA Archaeology and History (50% Archaeology) and BA History with Archaeology (25% Archaeology). However, it seems clear that there is little synergy between the current History offering and the Archaeology offering, and the evidence suggests that an undergraduate offering in Archaeology is no longer a viable option at Worcester.

2.5.2. Proposal for postgraduate Archaeology offerings

APPG considered a scoping report for a L7 Apprenticeship in Archaeology on 24th June 2021. The proposal, and in particular the costings, were underdeveloped and the team were asked to return to APPG in September 2021 with a more detailed proposal that combines the L7 Apprenticeship and a proposed MA in Archaeology. However, whilst APPG will need to consider any proposal fully, it appears unlikely that such an offering would recruit sufficient students (at least 30 per year) for this to be a viable option.

3. Proposed Change

Despite best efforts of the course team and other colleagues in the University, it seems that it is probably no longer viable to offer Archaeology at University of Worcester. The proposal is therefore to teach out the

² Including 30 hours’ non-Archaeology teaching on the Biology Foundation Year

remaining BA Archaeology & Heritage Studies students and remove Archaeology as a subject at the University.

The Archaeology minimum staffing requirements for 2021/22 academic year amount to 1.5 FTE, and the only staffing requirements in 2022/23 will be to support one student's dissertation.

The proposal is therefore to reduce the current Archaeology staffing from 3.5 FTE to 1.5 FTE in 2021/22, and then further reduce the staffing to 0 FTE thereafter. The one dissertation remaining in 2022/23 can be supervised by [REDACTED]

Two options are proposed to facilitate this change.

3.1. Option 1

This option proposes a reduction in contracted hours commensurate with anticipated teaching workload for Archaeology in 2021/22:

Member of staff	Current contract	Proposed reduction
Person 1	[REDACTED]	0.4 FTE
Person 2		0.4 FTE
Person 3		0.2 FTE
Person 4		0.2 FTE
Person 5		0.3 FTE
Total	3.5 FTE	1.5 FTE

At the end of the 2021/22 academic year, all posts would then unfortunately become redundant, unless alternative course provision that could utilise their skill set is identified in the meantime.

The potential positives from this option are that all staff members retain some level of employment for the next 12 months, whilst the University retains all areas of subject knowledge and specialism to ensure our remaining students experience a positive final year. However, it is also recognised that not all individuals may be in a financial position to be able to accept such a reduction in earnings for the next 12 months.

3.2. Option 2

This option proposes a more flexible approach to achieving the desired outcome of reducing staffing from 3.5 FTE to 1.5 FTE. Rather than reducing each post as indicated in Option 1, this option would involve reallocation of teaching duties amongst the team. This may facilitate some posts to be made redundant whilst other posts retain current contractual hours, provided the total staffing resource is no greater than the 1.5 FTE required.

At the end of the 2021/22 academic year, all remaining posts would then unfortunately become redundant, unless alternative course provision that could utilise their skill set is identified in the meantime.

Whilst this option appears to have the positive of offering staff more choice and flexibility, the skill set and knowledge base of any individuals who do remain in post for the next 12 months would need to be carefully considered to ensure that all course content can still be delivered to the necessary standard. On that basis, proposed selection criteria for staff who are retained may need to be applied and therefore consulted upon and it may not be as straightforward as just being able to reduce to the required level of FTE for 2021/22 through volunteers.

4. Staff Implications

The proposal ultimately puts all Archaeology posts at risk of redundancy now, but with reduced requirements of 1.5 FTE for one year, the precise arrangements for which are to be determined as outlined above. If Option 2 is the end result of consultation, then some staff may be redundant at or by the end of the current academic year.

[REDACTED]

It may be possible for some work to be available on the Foundation Year in Biological Sciences, although the extent of this is small.

[REDACTED]

6. Assessment of the potential impact on equality of the proposals

The University has legal duties to have due regard to the need to promote gender, race and disability equality in the carrying out of its functions. In practice, this means a collective expectation to be proactive in ensuring that activities and practices are non-discriminatory, inclusive of different needs and that reasonable steps will be taken to address the under-representation of equality groups. As a result, an Equality Impact Assessment of the proposal, and any selection criteria that may need to be applied if option 2 is the preference, will be provided at or near the start of the consultation period.

7. Consultation

If the Vice-Chancellor approves the proposal in principle, then consultation will open for a period of 30 days. During the consultation, there will be a minimum of one group consultation meeting and each individual will also have the opportunity to attend, as a minimum, one individual consultation meeting. Naturally, further group and individual meetings may be held as appropriate.

HR will provide advice and support to the consultation process. Recognised trade unions will also be briefed on the proposal and will have the right to accompany their members to any formal consultation meetings scheduled should their members wish for them to do so.

The intention will be to consult with all affected staff (and stakeholders if applicable) about the implications of the proposal. The consultation process will seek to consider all matters that arise that are relevant. As a minimum, it will seek to consider questions, counterproposals and ideas about the proposal, as well as engaging with individuals on the potential impact of these changes.

We are seeking to consult with all affected staff on both option 1 and option 2, and neither option is particularly preferred at this point. The consultation will take into account the views and individual personal preferences of the team, before coming to a view about which of the two identified options (or any alternative options identified during the consultation) to take.

If the decision is to take Option 2 (i.e. reduce headcount to achieve 1.5 FTE), we may seek volunteers for redundancy. However, we would wish to preserve the right to decline any such requests based on business requirements and against any selection criteria identified.

The consultation will therefore include discussion about how to avoid, reduce and mitigate redundancies where it is thought they may be necessary.

8. Redeployment (as appropriate to the business case)

Staff who are proposed to be at risk of redundancy will be encouraged to apply for any vacancies within the wider department and the wider University for which they believe they have the required skill set and experience.

9. Decision

At the end of the consultation period, the feedback collated during the consultation process will inform the final decision which will confirm, amend or withdraw the proposals accordingly.

10.Redundancy

If redundancies are still proposed following the end of the consultation period, staff at risk of redundancy will be given formal notice of the termination of their employment by reason of redundancy with the right of appeal. Staff under notice of redundancy may still be considered for other redeployment opportunities.

11.Staff support

It is recognised that any organisational change is potentially disruptive and distressing for many members of staff. Change can affect people in many different ways, and we will work with HR to ensure that staff are aware of any employee support services available (such as: counselling service; training courses etc.).

12.Implementation

Following the completion of consultation, it is anticipated that the new structure will be fully implemented by the start of the 2021/22 academic year.

Name of Change Lead/Manager:	Prof. Peter Seville
School/Department:	School of Science and the Environment
Date:	15 th July 2021

Appendix 1: financial implications

	FTE	Standard Academic Contract / Teaching focussed contract	Cost Centre	Potential redundancy costs	Maximum potential Payment In Lieu Of Notice (PILON) costs
Person 1					
Person 2					
Person 3					
Person 4					
Person 5					

Notes:

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