Australian Academy of the Humanities Discussion Paper: Future Humanities Workforce

About DASSH

The Australasian Council of Deans of Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities (DASSH) is the authoritative agency on research, teaching and learning for the Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences (HASS) in Australian and New Zealand universities. DASSH supports those within these institutions who have responsibility for the governance and management of research and teaching and learning in their universities. DASSH also supports those who aspire to these positions through a Network of Associate Deans (International), a Network of Associate Deans (Learning and Teaching) and a Network of Associate Deans (Research).

In responding to this discussion paper, DASSH intends primarily to provide insights from the perspective of leaders in the academic humanities workforce. Our members' knowledge in this sense is drawn from direct experience in defining strategic directions and managing academic personnel in university contexts, and from their understanding of graduate career pathways and non-academic employers' perceptions of humanities graduates.

Strategic decisions made by Deans and other university leaders necessitate practical consideration of questions relating to financial sustainability and the appetites of those consuming academic products (i.e. teaching and research outputs). Therefore, in responses to some questions, our members experienced a conflict between what they believe is the ideal course of action and what they know to be achievable in the current humanities and higher education landscape. The responses below attempt to include both practical advice and speculations on what could be achieved should the current landscape undergo substantial change.

1. What are humanities researchers' (and humanities graduates' more broadly) most distinctive and important skills and capabilities?

There is a strong and plausible case to be made that humanities research creates better persons and better citizens, and this should not be taken for granted. The kind of inquiry involved in humanities research necessitates reflection upon who we are, how we relate to each other and what principles or ideals should govern our relationships with one another. It also requires us to reflect upon the human condition and questions of identity. In the humanities, researchers reflect upon the nature of our individual and collective aspirations and the kinds of societies in which we wish to live. Through a range of humanities disciplines, scholars foster creative expression (for example, in areas such as English and Drama), therefore, we provide students with the means to explore identity, to articulate concerns and hopes with respect to our futures, and come to a greater understanding of who we as individuals and societies might be. This is central to the formation of a citizenry able to engage collectively and positively with the complex problems we face today.

Although DASSH recognises the importance and value of describing humanities' graduates and their skills and capabilities, there was concern among members that by focussing on the 'Humanities Workforce', this exercise risks reducing the value of humanities to employability skills and socio-economic impact, and mostly the latter rather than the former. The humanities are about culture (which is largely absent from the report,

receiving only one mention as a synonym for language): its preservation, understanding, transmission, critique and transformation. They are about how we live individually and collectively. To immediately reduce these to a set of skills that can be 'sold' either to employers or governments (for more funding) is to box the humanities into an instrumental corner which belies their true nature and value.

In relation to more direct employability and economic impact as requested in this consultation, however, the most distinctive and important skills of humanities researchers are their fundamental research, analytical and critical thinking capabilities which are used to investigate, examine and interpret the world's peoples, cultures and communities. Associated with these are the communication skills critical in linking their research and analysis with non-expert stakeholders in communities, governments and industries.

Despite advocacy from global business leaders, humanities graduates' skills of collaboration, communication, leadership, negotiation and problem solving have been swept into a narrative of 'transferable skills' and are not immediately recognised as the *defining characteristics* of individuals trained in the humanities.

In a practical sense, the skill sets of those trained in the humanities include:

(i) the ability to identify, analyse and evaluate problems that are not straightforwardly empirical; and
(ii) the ability to develop creative expression and responses to the human situation.

The competencies acquired through the humanities include the ability to think ethically and critically, about ends not just means, and about 'values' beyond the economically quantifiable. Such abilities are of immediate importance to issues as diverse as artificial intelligence, the 'Internet of Things', climate change mitigation, global trade networks, and gene editing capabilities to name but a few examples. The 'relevance and value of the humanities to economy and society' is that it refuses the instrumental logic that pervades the former and challenges society to be clear and honest about the values that it does espouse. The humanities also promote deep questioning about the relevance and significance of all forms of discourse and decision making.

The ability to analyse and evaluate non-empirical problems

One of the greatest skills of humanities researchers and humanities graduates is their ability to analyse and evaluate 'wicked' problems, that is, those that elude solutions that can be achieved through laboratory or survey-based empirical work.

Creative expression

The other great skill set developed by the humanities is the ability to express oneself, to articulate responses to the world around us and to communicate those responses clearly, insightfully and meaningfully to our peers. These are abilities developed by training in the humanities.

Interdisciplinary collaboration

The growth of thematic research foci has encouraged a more interdisciplinary outlook between disciplines such as anthropology, sociology, history, cultural studies, and heritage studies. This interdisciplinary collaboration informs policy and discourse on the 'wicked' problems and critical questions facing society, including social inclusion and cohesion, the Anthropocene, and indigenous/settler relations.

Increasingly, interdisciplinary capabilities and cross-discipline communication skills are extending to effective collaboration with disciplines in the life and environmental sciences, health, engineering and law to inform comprehensive and critical debate on complex, far reaching issues including climate change, human migration, artificial intelligence and robotics.

2. What are the current skills and capability gaps?

a. In the academic workforce?

Broadly, Australia has no shortage of highly competent humanities-trained academics or graduates. Given the current status of funding for Higher Education, though, there is limited institutional funding to create ongoing employment for the people available. Capability gaps in the academic workforce are in some instances the result of insufficient resources for investment in new (and occasionally, replacement) positions rather than a dearth of suitably qualified people to fill the available positions.

Student demand and market forces have resulted in limited capacity for some universities to maintain staffing levels previously seen in disciplines such as languages, creative arts, philosophy and political science. This has resulted in aging workforces as tenured academics approach retirement age without sufficient numbers of early career academics in positions to succeed them. If not addressed, this pattern has the potential to lead to the loss, or severe degradation, of certain distinctive capabilities that are associated with disciplines in the humanities.

Capability gaps are also becoming evident in the methodological techniques that are required for humanities research to maintain its relevancy and ingenuity in the current age, for example mixed-methods data analysis, digital humanities, and interdisciplinary research and analysis. The humanities require the transformation of traditional skill sets into the digital realm and investment in developing quantitative analytical skills, also drawing on the expertise of colleagues from the social sciences.

Key capabilities for the future of the humanities will include the ability to contribute to interdisciplinary research and teaching teams, including leading collaborations to explore multiple points of view and methodologies. Identifying, supporting and developing meaningful collaborative relationships requires commitment and focus as well as secure employment.

b. In the wider workforce?

It is clear that the relevance and value of the humanities to the economy and society are not well understood. The lack of a distinct narrative linking workforce capabilities with a humanities education is also a potential barrier to articulating career pathways for graduates and identifying case studies of excellence; certainly, Deans and others in leadership roles have been sharing this as a collective concern for our sector in the past five to ten years. Ideally, the workforce would be strengthened by a clearer understanding of the link between humanities education and essential skills such as effective communication (including languages and intercultural literacy), human interaction, service design, collaboration, teamwork, negotiation and advocacy, leadership, team building, embracing diversity and understanding communities.

DASSH posits – based on global business leaders' commentaries – that there is a substantial gap in the wider workforce in terms of the capacity to read and interpret statistical information, along with the ability to

visualise and present data. Further, the ability to utilise emerging and digital technologies for research and communication is a critical skill gap in some areas.

Finally, DASSH recommends shifting the focus away from ideas of 'soft skills' or 'transferable skills' towards the promotion of the capabilities inherent to humanities training. In the context of design and technology workforces, these are sometimes referred to as 'human-centric'.[1] While 'transferrable skills', such as teamwork and communication, are encouraged through studies of the humanities, they are not skills that necessarily require in-depth engagement with the humanities (and certainly do not require postgraduate or doctoral study) and are not viewed as such by many in the community.

We instead wish to highlight the more highly-valued human-centric capabilities afforded by humanities training, particularly as we consider future workforce development needs that are aligned to technological change. We point to the unique capacity of the humanities to foster such capabilities, and the role of human-centric design in shaping the world's future political, financial and technological advancements. Through emphasising human-centric capabilities, we can better define the emerging spaces for highly trained humanities experts in the workforce.

3. Which skills and capabilities are most valued and where are they used?

a. In the academic workforce?

In the academic workforce, nuanced understanding and clear communication of issues is vitally important. This includes the ability to distil meaning and transfer information from an ever-growing pool of information 'noise' generated both within and outside of the academy.

Outstanding persuasive and plain-language communication skills are of particular importance to researchers in order to engage effectively with colleagues, current and prospective students, partners and research end-users. Related to this is the necessity for researchers to have the ability to secure research funding, which requires exceptional grant writing skills and the ability to articulate the value proposition of the proposed work.

DASSH notes that while the skills above are all, in theory, possessed by and fostered in all those employed as academics in the humanities, there is of course variation among individuals and disciplines. Furthermore, norms associated with some disciplines (and academia more generally) can arguably have a detrimental impact on a graduate's capacity to communicate with different audiences.

b. In the wider workforce?

The above skills are similarly important and valued in the wider workforce, in addition to the capability to exercise critical thinking and analytics skills to investigate and interrogate diverse subject matter. Leading employers from across industry sectors have commented on the value of teamwork skills fostered in humanities degrees and the comparative strength of humanities graduates in these skills. Although comprehensive evidence for these opinions has not been gathered, the emphasis on discussion and debate

[1] That is, the capabilities required to design products and systems which cater to the needs, desires and natures of humans in the first instance, rather than financial motivations or technological simplicity.

taught in humanities subjects is likely to contribute to improved aptitudes for communication, negotiation and teamwork.

The ability to apply human-centric and society-centric thinking, analysis, collaboration and communication skills to enhance areas of endeavour undertaken in fields outside the humanities is a uniquely refined competency of graduates trained in humanities research.

4. What are the future knowledge, skills, and capabilities that humanities researchers will require?

The next generation of humanities scholars require a skillset that enables them to participate in activities that bridge traditional boundaries set by disciplines, methods, geography and technology. Beyond merely accessing data digitally, to remain relevant humanities researchers must be able to engage with new and borrowed methods of analysis, manipulate large quantities of data innovatively in the search for new insights, and communicate with audiences across disciplines and cultures. Even apart from analysis, data collection methods are evolving, and humanities researchers must gain the skills required to digitise records and engage with data that originates in the digital realm, for example data collected through social media. Inherent to the challenge of adapting to new methodologies is the need to concurrently develop appropriate ethical safeguards to ensure participants and practitioners are protected, thereby retaining the humanities' authority and relevance to society.

DASSH members emphasise that the development of new capabilities cannot occur at the expense of the traditional skills mentioned above concerning evaluation, analysis and creative expression, as it is these skills that underly the value the humanities as distinct from other disciplines.

Skills in interdisciplinary collaboration, particularly with STEM disciplines, will continue to grow in importance in order to answer the complex questions of our time. Further, the capacity to develop meaningful and effective partnerships with diverse stakeholders and research end-users will continue to grow in importance for all researchers.

5. What can the humanities contribute to the data and digital literacy agenda over the next decade?

The humanities are uniquely positioned to ensure the development of ethically sound practices in the use of data and to educate data users on the importance of ethical standards. This is especially crucial in an age of Big Data, data breaches, and changing approaches to the uses of public data in social media contexts. Specific applications for humanities research in the ethical use of data and digital literacy in the coming years will include:

- Adoption of human-centric, ethically sound strategies to the use of Big Data, Personal Data (quantified self), and publicly owned data, to foster inclusive access, understanding, and application of digital information for citizens.
- Focused research on the ethical, socio-cultural and political implications of Industry 4.0 (Artificial Intelligence, Robotics, Cloud Computing, Virtual Reality etc) to investigate the impact of these technologies on the lived experience of individuals and societies.
- Critical inquiry about how data is collected and stored and by whom, privacy and data protection issues, and which issues are being ignored because data is not collected due to lack of political interest

or economic value (or data which is not openly available to keep the public's attention away from certain issues)
- Safeguarding of the attention to the value of qualitative data in the 'quantitative revolution' of big data which we are experiencing at the moment, and to offer guidance on how different datasets (quantitative and qualitative) can be meaningfully combined to answer important societal questions. (As Einstein said: 'not everything that matters can be measured; and not everything that is measured, matters'.)
- A holistic or more integrated approach to implementing data and digital literacy agenda, and directing technological advancement

We are well-placed to comment because the digitisation of humanities is also a central area of future development in research. Humanities disciplines have a tremendous amount to contribute to the data and digital literacy and fluency agenda. Teaching students how to transfer humanities skills of evaluation and creative expression into a digital environment is a key element of digital literacy.

Digital fluency requires, amongst other things, the ability to communicate effectively and clearly in online environments. These are skills that are developed through training in the humanities. More significantly, the humanities have a tremendous role to play in our agenda with respect to data. We now have the ability to generate large bodies of data on just about any topic, but how to best interpret the meaning and significance of such data is something that can only be achieved through adequate training in the humanities.

As technological, computational and statistical advances become more accessible, the advantages of having humanities data digitised and available online become increasingly apparent. Complex textual analyses, detailed interrogations of images and large-scale comparative studies are now conceivable in ways that were not possible before the advent of advanced information and communications technologies. There is therefore a growing need for investment in digitisation of humanities data and development of digital infrastructure.

This will improve access to humanities records by both the public and researchers and enable them to initiate and participate in innovative research activities. Pre- and post-doctoral researchers should also be encouraged to acquire skills in the digital humanities to prepare themselves for careers either within or beyond academia. Archival institutions across Australia (the 'GLAM' sector, including Galleries, Libraries, Archives and Museums) have highlighted the need for greater staff capacity and skills in order to clear medium to large backlogs of records awaiting digitisation.

6. What are the best practice models for supporting early career researchers (ECRs)?

A critical challenge for ECRs is the development of a research and publication track record competitive for a post-doctoral fellowship or lectureship. Significant consideration should be given to models to support ECRs during this stage of their career, including four-year PhD programs that support time to publish and teach. Postdoctoral fellows also need a strategic plan to help them with the next stage of employment or to sustain their research careers. ECRs in full-time employment need mentoring, financial incentives and a reduced teaching workload also in order to ensure that they publish, participate in conferences and that they can plan for their post-PhD research careers in an orderly and supported manner.

Institutional provision of career support targeted to ECRs:

- Balanced workload and support for early career academics to enhance their research, publications and improve their profile to apply for competitive research funding
- Avoiding constraining new Doctoral graduates in teaching-only positions where they risk being cut off from research before getting a chance to establish a track record
- Research-led teaching expertise as a theme for investment: most jobs will include teaching and graduates need to see this as a valuable and rewarding career path with research
- Web-based communication system to provide research related information.
- Creation of substantial postdoctoral fellowships and job security
- Travel, publishing and seeding grants
- Grant development support
- Targeted workshops and training
- Enabling opportunities to develop or maintain teaching experience within research fellowships

Individual support by established academics to ECRs:

- Meaningful mentoring relationships
- Guidance on the intersection of teaching, research and practice.
- Inclusion of ECRs as co-investigators/team members by senior researchers on research grants applications, projects and resulting publications
- Inclusion of ECRs as co-supervisor by senior researchers and to be on supervisory panels of HDR candidates

7. Do ECRs in the humanities experience different or additional challenges compared to their peers in other disciplines?

A highly competitive market for post-doctoral positions substantially limits opportunities for ECRs, along with a prevalence of short-term contracts that diminishes job security and impacts upon wellbeing and intention to stay in academia. The fierce competition within the humanities for diminishing opportunities and external research funding disincentivises teamwork and the sharing of knowledge and experience and contributes to the isolation of some ECRs. A more supportive culture of teamwork and collaboration would be beneficial for those who ultimately seek work outside the academy.

ECRs in humanities experience different and additional challenges in comparison to their peers in other fields of research and teaching due to reduced levels of funding for the humanities. This means that funds for research are limited, teaching loads are higher and, perhaps most significantly, there is a pervasive sense of gloom that hangs over many humanities work environments that one rarely finds to such a degree in other areas of the university.

Humanities research attracts lower levels of institutional investment than the STEM disciplines, both because of the relative affordability of the work and as a result of government priorities and public perceptions of the economic value of science. Over time, the visibly high cost of STEM may have contributed to the perception that its value is greater than that of work in the humanities. This perceived value differential is exacerbated by the lack of a strong narrative specifying the contributions made by the humanities to the economy and society.

An unintended consequence of sustained government support for STEM has been a gradual devaluing of the humanities in public discourse, leading in turn to dwindling demand for undergraduate programs and a corresponding reduction in the size of the academic workforce in some institutions. Therefore, the lack of a coherent value proposition of the humanities and social sciences places the disciplines at risk.

Governmental emphasis on STEM is sometimes replicated in University management structures dominated by STEM scholars, with potential flow-on effects to institutional policy settings and expectations that may not reflect or incorporate an understanding of humanities scholarship, and the more limited funding environment. This has repercussions both practically for humanities ECRs in terms of meeting benchmark/threshold expectations, but also more subtly in terms of feeling valued and included by their employers, and the university-sector more broadly.

In the current climate, humanities ECRs may be further disadvantaged by:

- Fluctuating demand for some undergraduate programs leading to a scarcity of continuing academic contracts in some disciplines and increasing work pressure on the remaining academic cohort.
- Individuals increasingly working as lone researchers in their discipline at their institutions.
- Relatively limited funds for research grants and PhD students.
- Limited public awareness about the relevance and value of the humanities to the economy and society.

However, DASSH wishes to comment that from the vantage point of academic management, humanities scholars must also be more responsive to the higher education sector and its challenges as expressed inside the universities, many of which are common to other areas and disciplines. Such challenges include financial pressures both within universities and across the sector, declining student enrolments in certain disciplines, and global competition for students and staff at all career stages.

8. Do ECRs experience different or additional challenges compared to mid-career or senior staff?

The significant challenge for ECRs compared to mid-career and senior staff is job security. University career pathways are changing, the academic labour market is shrinking, and most contracts will be fixed-term or project/external-funding dependent. In addition to affecting wellbeing, precarious employment affects the humanities community more broadly because collaborative research environments are diminished by self-interest and individualism. A renewed or stronger emphasis on 'tenure track' options for promising young researchers would be important to ensure academic careers remain an attractive option for graduates and ECRs. With respect to career progression, there is often the feeling of being vulnerable or at the mercy of more senior staff who can through their recommendations and decisions either make or break an ECR's rate of progression.

DASSH asserts that in order to develop a competitive research track record, ECRs must demonstrate expertise in an ever-broadening range of skills and capabilities including a substantial quantity of high-quality publications, external research funding, engagement with partners, research impact and translation, alignment with research priorities and capability to collaborate. Another important activity for ECRs to undertake during their ECR period is the building of academic networks, nationally and internationally.

Decreasing access to travel grants in particular will make this aspect of early career work more challenging for current and future ECRs.

9. What do ECRs see as challenges in their career progression?

DASSH leadership acknowledges that short, fixed-term contracts can impede career progression. For ECRs recruited to work on projects led by senior colleagues, time and capacity to develop their own research profile is often limited and disrupts career progression. Further, a substantial proportion of ECRs have limited opportunities to develop or maintain teaching experience, reducing their competitiveness for teaching/research positions.

On the other hand, the perception of being burdened with excessive teaching loads (which is the case for some ECRs) is a significant barrier to producing the research outputs required for career progression. The lack of funding to support humanities research means once again that it is more difficult to undertake the research that is required for career progression. Service is also very important for career progression, but it can be difficult for ECRs to obtain opportunities to perform such service when those positions are dominated by mid-career and senior academics. DASSH leaders, in their current positions, are aware of these inequities.

10. How do we better track the career trajectories of ECRs?

Tracking ECR career trajectories can be achieved with appropriate investment of resources. It would require undertaking surveys at regular intervals that ask relevant questions about ECRs' ambitions and goals, and the extent over time that these aims are realised. The survey would need to enable responses relating to academic careers (including research, teaching and service) and pathways in other industries.

Alternatively, monitoring of ORCID records from PhD registration onwards would allow analysis of researcher pathways and trajectories, throughout their career, through publication records. As with the unique employee number used by the UK's Higher Education Statistics Agency, it could be possible to extend the use of ORCID or a similar system to record the movement of academics through the Australian Higher Education sector. While this method could not include the level of detail possible through a survey, it would result in a larger, more comprehensive data set, and would likely require fewer resources.

11. What are the most pressing inequities in the humanities workforce today?

Structural disadvantage, highly competitive environments, and metric-based hiring practices discriminate against and impede opportunities and perpetuate inequality for those who come from groups which have historically been underrepresented in the humanities and academia more generally e.g.

- Indigenous people
- People of diverse genders and sexualities
- People with caring responsibilities
- People experiencing socio-economic disadvantage
- People first in family to attend University
- People of colour
- People of diverse abilities and disabilities
- People who experience intersectional diversity and difference

Each of these groups have unique histories of disadvantage and face distinct challenges and DASSH is reluctant to define any one group's disadvantages as 'more pressing' than another's.

Further, it is important to consider that pressing inequalities differ both within disciplines as well as at levels of employment. For example, while a substantial proportion of the humanities ECR workforce may be women in some disciplines, significant rates of exit or impeded career progression translate to fewer female employees in senior positions. The development of initiatives, opportunities and systems that understand and respond to diverse needs and correct for latent disadvantage are critical.

The lack of funding in the humanities in general and the excessive use of casual staff affects the ability to address these issues of diversity since casualisation discourages many new staff from continuing (especially those from systematically disadvantaged sections of our community). Hence, casualisation and low funding levels are not only inequitable in terms of the treatment of staff, they also perpetuate forms of injustice related to transforming the make-up of our workforce.

It is clear from discussions in recent public debates and social media among humanities staff that casualisation is the biggest inequity issue for the Humanities Future Workforce.[2] In addition, workloads for permanent staff have increased two-fold over the past 25 years and this increase in workload impacts most heavily on junior staff (ECRs) who are still finding their way with respect to their research. Increased teaching workloads impact upon all staff, by limiting the time available to undertake research. However, this impacts more heavily on ECRs who are still establishing their research programs.

12. What initiatives are most effective in addressing inequity?

DASSH members recommend the following two key initiatives:

(i) Funding continuing posts targeted at equity groups
(ii) Bundling casual teaching and other academic roles into continuing roles

Members also recognise that there are substantial challenges associated with these initiatives that must be addressed: The first requires affirmative hiring practices, and the case for applying such practices would need to be carefully identified and articulated. The second would involve financial recycling of funds from large number of causal roles into smaller number of continuing roles with offer more job security and opportunity for career development.

These measures, though perhaps unlikely to be supported through investment by government or institutions under current conditions, would address many of the obvious inequities in working conditions. They would also encourage the employment of more staff from under-represented backgrounds. On their own however, these initiatives are merely necessary but not sufficient to eliminate inequality in the humanities. Those responsible for recruiting staff need to actively recruit staff from under-represented backgrounds.

[2] As partial evidence of the relevance of this issue, it is worth considering the recent debate over a piece in *The Conversation* on the benefits of casualisation (flexibility etc). A widely circulated response in *Overland* (https://overland.org.au/2019/05/the-casualties-of-academia-a-response-to-the-conversation/) outlines the problems with this casualisation and the article garnered a remarkably large response from HDR Students and ECRs on social media.

Further effective initiatives could include:

- Affirmative action (e.g. Indigenous-only recruitment drives or targeting female candidates for senior positions)
- Improving job security and discussing a wider variety of options for career progression
- Adapting hiring practices, implementing and improving measures to address unconscious biases
- Policies, funding and opportunities that enable workforce participation for under-represented groups (e.g. funding for primary carers to travel with dependent children, availability or funding for childcare on fieldwork etc.)
- Improving support to increase PhD recruitment and completion by candidates from under-represented groups (e.g. Scholarship/stipends that ensure PhD completion is accessible to people with disabilities, caring responsibilities, single parents, first-in-family, Indigenous peoples, etc.)
- Creating a campus environment that enables access and participation by those with disabilities, children, etc.

13. What are the challenges to achieving a more inclusive agenda?

The biggest challenges are the lack of funding in the humanities and the pressure of external competition that encourages institutions to drive for strong performance outcomes while reducing financial risks and minimising costs. The enormous difficulties in creating a more inclusive workforce profile are likely to persist without substantial increases in financial investment.

The current ageing, non-diverse workforce also inhibits the pace of change along with the increasingly competitive and expanding expectations upon the entire academic workforce.

14. Could initiatives within the science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) fields, such as the Athena SWAN and Race Equality Charters, serve as useful models for the humanities sector?

DASSH members agreed that such initiatives would be helpful, but whether they would be as useful as they have been in STEM areas where there are, in general, greater levels of funding was debated. Some members felt strongly that the biggest barrier to a more inclusive humanities workforce is the lack of funding to employ new staff and transition into new areas of enquiry. Others argued that the success of the Athena SWAN initiative across all disciplines in the United Kingdom's Higher Education sector serves as proof of the potential for a similar initiative to succeed in an Australian context.

Ideally, any such initiatives should be implemented in conjunction with political support in the form of funding for education initiatives, training etc. It would be important to offer an overview of career pathways and shift the current debate about the value of humanities in order to support further investment.

Further comments

In terms of 'relevant skills' the value of the humanities is that it can teach people to ask questions such as 'relevant to whom'? And what do you mean by 'skill'? And what about the value of irrelevant non-skills, and purposeless-purposefulness, such as art? And what would a world look like in which only the STEM disciplines get to determine what is of value? Are we already living in that world?