**BPA press release**

**PHILOSOPHY ACADEMICS WARN OF THREAT TO WORLD LEADING STATUS AMID GROWING DEPARTMENT AND COURSE CLOSURES**

* *Warning comes as UK universities launch new campaign to celebrate, promote and champion philosophy in the UK*
* *Threat to philosophy at university comes off back of 50% increase in five years at A-level*

Philosophy academics have today warned that the UK’s world leading status for the subject is under threat following a series of university department and course closures recently.

The British Philosophical Association (BPA) has published a series of ‘asks’ aimed at policy makers, politicians and educators, with recommendations for securing the future of philosophy in the UK.

The news follows [a report](https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/kingston-axes-philosophy-centre-humanities-department-shutdown) that Kingston University is closing its philosophy department, one of the few post-92 universities still offering the subject. This follows the University of Kent and the University of Wolverhampton, which closed their departments in 2024 and 2023, respectively. Several other universities, including Birkbeck, University of London and the University of Roehampton, have also had significant cuts to their courses and staff.

The threat to philosophy departments comes at a time when there is growing demand at school to study the subject at A-level, with a 50% increase in enrolments in the past five years and further projected growth [2].

This week also marks the start of the first ever **British Philosophy Fortnight (17 - 30 March 2025)**, with events taking place at universities across the UK, including Birmingham, Glasgow, Leeds, London, and Warwick.

British Philosophy Fortnight will include a launch event in the **Houses of Parliament** on **Thursday 20 March from 10:00 - 11:00**, which is open for journalists to attend, and at Senate House, University of London, on the same day from 14:00 - 15:30.

Organisers hope to demonstrate how powerful philosophy can be in providing crucial skills for living in a complex world, and for responding to pressing global challenges, from pandemics to climate change.

**Heather Widdows, British Philosophical Association Executive Committee member, said:** *“People often don’t know what philosophy is or what philosophers do. Cliches of philosophers are old men with beards in classical dress, or young men drinking wine and arguing about things that don’t really matter. But philosophy does matter. It transforms what we think and what we do, and is important across disciplines and sectors, including helping us respond to pandemics, defend democracy and improve well being.*

*“Despite its relatively small size UK philosophy punches above its weight, with many philosophers being recognised leaders in their area of specialism. All this could be under threat if we don’t take action soon.”*

**Natalie Bennett, Green Party peer who is hosting the parliamentary event on 20 March, said:** *“Philosophers have been at the centre of human life for most of human history, offering ways of dealing with challenges and human conundrums. There are plenty of those today, and to find our way through our current crises, we cannot leave that to just a few people in universities and think tanks. Everyone needs tools to think about their own lives, and broader questions, and collectively contribute to democratic solutions.”*

**John Lloyd, film producer and writer, said:** *“I discovered philosophy in the mid-1990s when I was about 45. It saved my life and it changed my life - irrevocably, and unquestionably for the better. It’s impossible for me to imagine life without philosophy and I believe it should be taught to every human being from the age of five.”*

ENDS

**[1] Philosophy asks that:**

* Philosophy provision is extended in primary and secondary schools, and colleges, including the launch of a Philosophy GCSE
* University Philosophy education is supported and seen as fundamental
* UK Philosophy research and PhDs are funded to maintain their world-leading status
* Philosophers are invited to be expert members on scientific committees and government taskforces

**[2] AQA A Level in Philosophy figures, 2016 - 2024**

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| --- | --- |
| 2016 | 2178 |
| 2017 | 2134 |
| 2018 | 2808 |
| 2019 | 2781 |
| 2020 | 2440 |
| 2021 | 2905 |
| 2022 | 3275 |
| 2023 | 3835 |
| 2024 | 3819 |

**Notes to editor**

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For more information, visit: <https://bpa.ac.uk/activities/philosophymatters/>