



DEUTSCHE
SHAKESPEARE-GESELLSCHAFT
DIE PRÄSIDENTIN

Deutsche Shakespeare-Gesellschaft
Windischenstraße 4–6 | 99423 Weimar | Deutschland

Professor Lisa Roberts
President and Vice-Chancellor of the University of
Exeter

Professor Gareth Stansfield, OBE
Pro-Vice-Chancellor for the Faculty of Humanities,
Arts and Social Sciences

T +49 (0)3643 904076
F +49 (0)3643 904076

office@shakespeare-gesellschaft.de
www.shakespeare-gesellschaft.de

IBAN: DE95 8205 1000 0301 0095 03
BIC: HELADEF1WEM

Prof. Dr. Sibylle Baumbach
President of the German Shakespeare Society

Prof. Dr. Kirsten Sandrock
Vice President of the German Shakespeare Society

24 July 2026

Dear President and Vice-Chancellor of the University of Exeter,
dear Professor Roberts,
dear Pro-Vice Chancellor for the Faculty of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences,
dear Professor Stansfield,

We are writing to express our strongest support for our colleagues in the Department of English and Creative Writing at the University of Exeter, and in particular for those working in Shakespeare Studies. We are deeply concerned by the University's proposed redundancies within the Faculty of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences, and we urge the University to reconsider these plans.

The University of Exeter has established itself as one of the world's leading institutions for Shakespeare Studies. This reputation has been built over many years through exceptional scholarship and the outstanding work of internationally renowned Shakespeare experts who are deeply committed to public engagement and knowledge exchange. Their research has shaped the field and attracted students and scholars from around the world. At a time when universities are increasingly called upon to demonstrate their value and impact, the work of Shakespeare scholars at the University of Exeter exemplifies the contribution of Shakespeare Studies to society in particular but also the contribution of the humanities at large.

As the oldest Shakespeare society in the world, founded in 1864, the German Shakespeare Society has been encouraging engagement with William Shakespeare's work in all its aspects and collaborates closely with academia, schools and artistic practice. Our colleagues at Exeter have been important collaborators, central to our mission. Their work has been ground-breaking for numerous projects, past and present, both within academia but also at the intersection of academia and society.

We are fully aware of the financial pressures facing universities across the UK. Nevertheless, redundancies of this magnitude should take into account the long-term intellectual, cultural, and reputational costs. Shakespeare Studies at Exeter has fostered a remarkable culture of collaboration and exchange across disciplines and institutions around the globe. Weakening this expertise would mean a profound and lasting loss of one of Exeter's distinctive strengths. It would jeopardise existing partnerships and diminish future opportunities for major collaborative and third-party funded research initiatives.

We therefore respectfully urge the University of Exeter to reconsider the proposed redundancies and to explore alternative solutions that preserve this stellar community of scholars in Shakespeare Studies, thereby affirming the University's commitment to excellence in research, teaching, public engagement and international collaboration. We sincerely hope that the University will recognise the exceptional value of its Shakespeare scholars and take the necessary steps to ensure that this internationally admired community can continue to flourish.

On behalf of the entire Executive Board of the German Shakespeare Society,
Yours sincerely,

Prof. Sibylle Baumbach and Prof. Kirsten Sandrock
(President and Vice President of the German Shakespeare Society)