



PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION FOR

M.ST. IN HISTORY OF ART AND VISUAL

CULTURE

2011-12

1	Awarding institution/body	University of Oxford
2	Teaching institution	University of Oxford
3	Programme accredited by	not applicable
4	Final award	M.St. in History of Art and Visual Culture
5	Programme	History
6	UCAS code	not applicable
7	Relevant subject benchmark statement	History of Art, Architecture and Design (HAAD), February 2008 (no postgraduate benchmark statement)
8	Date of Programme Specification preparation	1 April 2002 Amended Apr 2011
9	Educational aims of the programme	

The M.St. in History of Art and Visual Culture performs four main functions:

- it provides a postgraduate ‘conversion’ course suitable for students who, as undergraduates in the humanities or other relevant disciplines, have developed an interest in visual culture;
- it provides an introduction to advanced study for those who have already specialised in art history at an undergraduate level;
- for both the above groups, it provides a basic training in the extended advanced study of a chosen topic, including fostering:
 - a) critical awareness of current problems in the field;
 - b) ability to reach new insights;
 - c) an understanding of how methods of enquiry advance knowledge.
 It is a potential gateway to further research in art history and related fields;
- it provides an advanced intellectual training, combining visual and verbal reasoning, and develops presentational, organisational and motivational skills. As a post-graduate programme it provides an opportunity to demonstrate self-direction and originality in tackling problems. These skills are all transferable to a wide range of employment contexts and life experiences.

10	Programme outcomes		
	<i>A</i>	<i>Knowledge and understanding of:</i>	<i>Related teaching/learning methods and strategies</i>
	1	the role of images and material objects in the transmission of culture in the past and in the present	The course comprises three papers: a core course on Theory and Methods; a special option course taken from a menu of between four and seven; and a dissertation. Students proceed from understanding the existing range of approaches to image- and object-based historical evidence, to investigating those appropriate to particular topics and types of evidence, and finally operating and developing such techniques themselves in the writing of a dissertation. The course materials concern the Western world from the Medieval period to the present day, as well as other cultures and periods. Students are also offered a weekly series of Departmental Research Seminars and a series of fortnightly Research Seminars run jointly between this Department, the Ashmolean Museum and Oxford Brookes University on an equally wide range of art-historical topics. They are also encouraged to profit from seminars and lectures in the University Museums and other departments and faculties that also consider images and artefacts as historical evidence, for example, at the Institute of Archaeology, the Khalili Research Centre, the Ioannou Centre for Classical and Byzantine Studies, the Museum of the History of Science, and the Pitt-Rivers Museum of Ethnography.
	2	how primary evidence can be employed in art-historical argument	The course is supported by world-class collections of primary sources including the Ashmolean Museum, the Pitt-Rivers Museum, the Museum of the History of Science, the Bodleian Library, and Christ Church Picture Gallery, which are made available to students and lecturers with the co-operation of their expert curators, who also partake in dissertation supervision and research seminars. The last two activities, as well as some of the assessed work for the special option classes, typically depend on the use of primary sources.
	3	the development of the History of Art and Visual Culture as a subject, the changing role of images as evidence of the past, and the intellectual foundations of the discipline	The core paper on Theory and Methods gives comprehensive coverage of past and present approaches, which are designed to be applicable to students' work on the subsequent papers. Since it is both theoretical and historiographic, this paper takes an extended critical, historical and comparative view of the development of the discipline. The proximity and availability of a strong History graduate programme also enhances students' awareness of the limits and possibilities of using images as historical evidence.

4	analytical and practical research skills	<p>All students participate in a week of induction events, which orients them to the main library and primary resources available in Oxford, and in some cases further afield, and also includes a specialised introduction to subject-specific IT resources for art historians by the Humanities Computing Unit. In addition to the formal intellectual techniques of analysis imparted throughout their papers, a series of subject-specific Graduate Training Seminars are offered during the first term by the Department of the History of Art, with further graduate training seminars run throughout the year by the History Faculty. The former include subject-specific sessions on research and presentation skills, among other topics. Special language tuition is also provided in Italian for those working on Early Modern topics, with training in many other languages available through the University's Language Centre. Through the History Faculty, training in paleography is provided as necessary, and a wide range of IT and library/database training courses is offered throughout the year by a number of University entities, including Computing Services and Library Services.</p>
<p><i>Assessment:</i></p> <p><i>Assessment of the acquisition of these skills is carried out by a variety of methods. Formative assessment occurs through feedback on written and oral presentations in classes and in supervision tutorials, where drafts of essays and dissertations are reviewed.</i></p> <p><i>Summative assessment is designed to involve a range of continuous and climactic methods.</i></p> <p><i>For the core paper in Theory and Methods, students give oral presentations and submit a series of short essays, all of which are informally assessed by tutors. Formal assessment for this paper is by a take-home written examination in the third term. The special option papers are formally assessed by means of two 4-5,000-word essays, with titles devised by the student in collaboration with tutors. The dissertation is mainly written in the third term and counts for 40% of the final mark, the two essays for the special option paper count for a total of 40% and the Theory and Methods core paper counts for 20%. All formally assessed work (two essays, one dissertation and one examination) are double-blind marked by two expert assessors and moderated by an external examiner.</i></p>		
B	Intellectual skills: the ability to	<i>Teaching/learning methods and strategies</i>
1	undertake sophisticated analysis	<p>There is emphasis throughout the course upon critically understanding the changing ways that the discipline of Art History has been informed by, for example, museums and collecting practice, imaging and publication technologies, and by broader intellectual and historical conditions. Since artefacts are by their nature subject to rich patterns of interpretation and reinterpretation, often from very different perspectives, students are encouraged to make interdisciplinary explorations, and invited to judge the implications of using a particular approach. The skills specific to advanced academic research (not only evaluating existing</p>

		<p>approaches, but applying them to appropriately selected, employed, measured and deployed primary sources) are imparted through the supervision and writing of the dissertation. They are also prefigured at a less ambitious and experimental level by the special option paper essays. The course develops the specifically art-historical skills of the verbal description, interpretation and historical analysis of visual data, and assembling them into a convincing and sustained narrative. The students are also exposed to further research activity, at doctoral, postdoctoral and advanced professional levels, and participate in critical discussion of it, through the regular research seminars and occasional conferences and special events arranged by the Department of the History of Art.</p>
2	argue persuasively	<p>Practical rhetorical skills are honed by means of class participation, formal presentations, and the frequent submission of written work. The students' oral and written presentations must demonstrate the ability to identify issues and problems, to formulate questions that are susceptible to testing, and to marshal evidence and analysis in a logical and coherent way at an appropriate level for a graduate course. The first two terms' papers attend especially to these fundamental skills, and class discussions often feature an explicit evaluation of the most recent research seminar. Subject-specific Graduate Training Seminars in the first term also address key matters of presentation and argument in both oral and written contexts.</p>
3	approach problems with creativity and imagination	<p>The successful pursuit of art history depends on the creative transformation of sensory impressions into coherent verbal descriptions and arguments. It also demands the interpretation of images with sympathy and imagination towards past and seemingly alien mentalities or cultures, though in a historically justified and disciplined manner. Creativity and imagination are essential to devising essay and dissertation topics.</p>
4	develop the exercise of independence of mind, and a readiness to challenge and criticise accepted opinion	<p>Independence of mind and the ability to criticise orthodoxy are fostered especially by the Theory and Methods paper, in which students are encouraged through robust class discussion to evaluate established authorities past and present, as well as less well known trends and positions. Analytical, discussion and presentation skills are coached in class by the tutor and in individual tutorials, and are concentrated by the formative assessment of written work that is submitted and oral class presentations.</p>
5	complete a demanding research project in the History of Art and Visual Culture	<p>This involves understanding what constitutes an art-historical problem, identifying the appropriate methodological approach, reading the relevant secondary literature, identifying</p>

	primary sources, collecting information, processing it appropriately, setting out the argument and evidence coherently, and presenting it within the available time.
<p><i>Assessment:</i></p> <p><i>Formative assessment is a regular feature of the programme. Students typically meet in small classes and submit written work regularly; this allows for constant monitoring of their progress, some of it on a 'one-off feedback' basis, some of it as part of a redrafting process. In the latter category, the dissertation and assessed essays are guided and monitored on a frequent and regular basis by a specialist supervisor. The final, summative assessment of the dissertation is undertaken by the Board of Examiners with the support of specialist assessors and monitored by an external examiner.</i></p>	

C	Practical skills: the ability to	Teaching/learning methods and strategies
1	write well for a variety of audiences and in a variety of contexts	The organisation and presentation of written work is introduced explicitly in subject-specific Graduate Training Seminars on research and writing skills; it is also an integral part of the course. Continuous and detailed individual scrutiny and commentary on written work, whether of class papers, essays or dissertations, aims to promote written work that is marked by a well structured and coherent argument, in a prose that is clear, fluent and elegant.
2	engage in oral discussion and argument with others, in a way that advances understanding of the problems at issue and the appropriate approaches and solutions to them	The weekly routine of supervision tutorials, classes and seminars, some of them taking place in a museum, archive or collection environment, provides ample opportunity to develop and refine high level skills in oral discussion and presentation, and of tailoring these to different audiences and contexts.
3	ensure, often working independently, that the fullest range of evidence and opinion can be brought to bear on a problem	Emphasis is placed on showing an awareness of the variety of bibliographical resources — library catalogues; electronic information systems; registers of archives — to identify and retrieve materials and commentary. Students are particularly encouraged to continue questioning and redefining the already broad variety of sources, media and types of evidence typically drawn upon in the history of art and visual culture.
4	employ appropriate research tools	Training is provided in the use of the research tools appropriate to each source, option or problem, and their implications for the kinds of results that might be obtained. This is conducted especially through the core course in Theory and Methods, the subject-specific Graduate Training Seminars, and the research skills tuition given individually by tutors prior to and during extended essay and dissertation research.

<p><i>Assessment:</i></p> <p><i>The weekly classes, supervision tutorials and other opportunities for class or seminar presentation enable a continuous monitoring of the development of practical skills. Formal skills courses are assessed by means of both formative and summative assessment, as appropriate. Termly reports identify both points of excellence and of concern, e.g. the ability to present and defend an argument or thesis convincingly and cogently, as well as general performance and study habits.</i></p>		
D	Transferable skills: the ability to	<i>Teaching/learning methods and strategies</i>
1	find information, organise and deploy it	Information retrieval, especially through the critically informed use of IT, is integral to many aspects of the programme. The Humanities Computing Unit of OUCS runs a specialised introduction to bibliographic and presentational tools for graduate students in art history as part of our induction for new students.
2	apply concepts in the analysis of art and visual culture to a wide range of empirical contexts	The development and training of general aesthetic awareness, the recognition that the shapes and appearances of things have histories, and the ability to identify and analyse these patterns and trends, are central to our teaching. Students are encouraged to apply their scholarship to the critical understanding of the visual and material environment at large. Such 'visual literacy' is not only demanded by particular professions in the field of design and marketing, for example, but also more generally in a culture where technologies for the reproduction of images are becoming ever more abundant.
3	work well independently, with a strong sense of self-direction, but with the ability to work constructively in co-operation with others	Students are encouraged to organise workshops, discussion groups and conferences which are attended by students both from within Oxford and elsewhere. The Department also runs a seminar series jointly with the Ashmolean Museum and Oxford Brookes University to which students are invited to contribute work-in-progress. All M.St. students present their dissertation research at an annual symposium-cum-workshop, demonstrating publicly their independent research abilities and benefitting from peer feedback in a group setting. They are also expected to make the most of the University and the city of Oxford's considerable, but relatively decentralised resources for visual culture, thus fostering an especially independent and self-motivated approach to personal and group organisation. Individual and group visits to museums, galleries, libraries and urban/architectural sites further afield, including research trips in the UK or abroad as necessary (often funded in part by college or other grants), are also encouraged, especially in the context of preparing the dissertation, and are organised independently by students.

4	effectively structure and communicate ideas in a variety of written and oral formats	The ability to present ideas effectively and to respond to the arguments of others constructively is integral to the nature and construction of the programme. Peer discussion of student presentations forms an important part of the classes.
5	plan and organise the use of time effectively	Students must produce material against tight deadlines and competing demands on personal time, and learn to judge the appropriate amount of effort to apply to different objectives, whether oral presentations, examinations, essays or dissertations. This imparts good time-allocation habits.
6	draw on information, and with a trained and analytical intelligence, consider and solve complex problems in ways that are imaginative, yet sensitive to the needs and cultural expectations of others	These abilities are all central to the outcomes of this programme. The complexities and sensitivities of representing cultures are especially highlighted when we address the methods, theories and historiography of art history, and how it effects the acquisition and display of artefacts and art-objects by museums and other institutions.

Assessment:

The transferable skills identified above are essential elements of the programme. As such their presence or absence is the focus of much of the comment provided by course tutors and supervisors in their contacts with students, and in the varying forms of formal and informal feedback and assessment provided to students throughout the course.

General teaching/learning methods and strategies

Each of the students' assessed courses (see below, section 11) has a different teaching strategy. This depends in part on the nature of the subject matter, in part on its place in the cumulative process of learning over the course. All employ the interweaving, in slightly different proportions, of five kinds of learning experiences: lectures, classes, supervisions, tutorials, and visits.

1	Lectures: These are provided on topics linked to several of the special option courses, as well as to the core Theory and Methods course. Their task is partly to 'package' large bodies of knowledge into a compact and coherent form that can be assimilated and easily pursued by students, and also to provoke, stimulate interest and prompt reflection. They are not simply 'talking text books', but rather involve elements of the 'live essay'. Lectures provide examples of how complex material can be organised into intellectually persuasive patterns, and enhance the development of intellectual and practical skills. Using digital image projection, they are also one of the chief means of conveying 'visual reasoning' and the historical interpretation and narration of images.
2	Classes and tutorials: These are the main form of interactive teaching. In the core paper, they are mid-size, usually consisting of around twelve to twenty students. Their function is to allow the students to investigate the assigned topics in an interactive forum, or to practice the skills (in the case of conceptual or practical skills, especially using objects, documents and collections) with staff moderation, guidance and supervision. Some of the classes, usually in the special option papers, are often small enough (one to three students, up to a maximum of eight) to be regarded as tutorials.
3	Supervisions: The supervisor's role is to provide general course orientation and guidance, but primarily to guide the development of the student's dissertation and extended essays. This is done by means of frequent face-to-face meetings, which interactively define the problem, choose the

	approach, and monitor the progress of the dissertation and extended essays.
4	Seminars and special lectures: There is a fortnightly seminar series run jointly with the Ashmolean Museum and Oxford Brookes University which features visiting and local speakers, including our own research students, for a one-hour presentation followed by up to half an hour of questions and discussion. There is also a weekly Departmental seminar series. In addition, there are many special lectures, including those of the annually changing Slade Professorship, and regular seminar series in cognate historical, philosophical, archaeological, literary and anthropological subjects.
5	Visits. The History of Art M.St. programme does not restrict itself to the classroom, but arranges occasional group visits to museums, galleries, libraries, archives, collections, urban/architectural sites and other points of interest (for example, to an important temporary exhibition). Here students learn about the wider resources for study and the appropriate manners of presentation, discussion and object-treatment for different, often public, environments.

11	Programme Structures and Features	
	<p>The course comprises a nine-month M.St., spanning the three full terms of a normal Oxford academic year. It comprises three papers or units: a core course on Theory and Methods (taught in the first and second terms); a special option course taken from a menu of four to seven (also taught in the first and second terms); and a dissertation (chiefly written in the third term). Language courses are sometimes recommended by tutors, but they are not formally assessed as part of the degree. Although the full terms provide the most intensive phases of scheduled teaching and supervision for the three successive papers, students are assigned reading and research for the vacations, staff frequently arrange meetings and supervisions during these periods, and the tasks overlap to some degree. Nevertheless, the student proceeds through discrete and moderated stages from largely directed readings and class discussion towards independence in the dissertation. The course also builds upon conceptual and practical skills acquired by the students in undergraduate degrees.</p>	
<i>A</i>	<i>Compulsory element</i>	<i>The core course is designed to ensure that the students are competent to deal with a range of primary material, whether text or artefact.</i>
	Theory and Methods in the History of Art	<p>This compulsory core paper introduces students to the major methodological issues, theoretical questions and historiographical traditions of the discipline of Art History through a critical examination of key writings in the field from antiquity to the present. It is organised around a series of ‘critical terms’ related to the production and reception of art and architecture, each accompanied by a selection of readings. Individual works of art and architecture, including objects displayed in the Ashmolean Museum and other collections in Oxford, are considered as case studies in the required oral presentations, testing how historiographical, theoretical and methodological questions relate to the actual practice of Art history. Attendance at the classes is also compulsory for some new students pursuing research degrees, who thus enrich the discussion. In addition to oral presentations, students write a series of short essays on individual ‘critical terms.’ They have one-on-one meetings with the course tutors to</p>

	prepare and discuss oral/written work. The paper's summative assessment is by a take-home examination taken in the third term, in which students answer three essay questions. It is chiefly taught during the first two terms, although two review sessions are also held in the third term.
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<p><i>Assessment</i></p> <p><i>Formative assessment in Theory and Methods is provided by class-based discussions of the oral presentations given by students, as well as formative assessment of the presentations and short essays by the tutors. A take-home examination taken in the third term, in which students write three essays related to the 'critical terms' covered in the course, is summatively assessed via double-blind marking by two expert examiners and then moderated by an external examiner.</i></p> <p><i>Supplementary consideration of research skills and methodology is also provided by the regular programme of research seminars, individual supervisions, written assessment of essay and dissertation drafts, and Graduate Training Seminars throughout the academic year. There is also a M.St. Dissertation Symposium early in the third term at which dissertation work-in-progress is discussed by peers and tutors, providing additional valuable 'workshop'-style feedback.</i></p>	
B	Optional papers
<p>In the second term, students take one of the following special option papers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Authenticity and Replication in Art and Visual Culture B. Gothic: Artistic Originality and the Transmission of Style in Medieval Art C. Media and Modernity: Art and Mass Culture, 1880-2000 D. Theories of Vision: The Eye and the Gaze E. Women, Art and Culture in Early Modern Europe <p>These papers build in-depth knowledge of particular fields upon the general awareness of themes and issues raised by the Theory and Methods core paper. Their content is reviewed every year according to developments in the field and the tutor's understanding of it; as with all papers, modes of delivery are also reviewed in the light of examiner's reports and student feedback (see section 14 below). Depending on staff preferences and availability, not all these courses are available every year and others beyond those listed above are also offered on a regular basis. Teaching is by a combination of general lectures, compulsory classes and individual tutorials.</p>	
<p><i>Assessment is by two extended essays of between 4,000 and 5,000 words, each on an agreed topic of the student's choice. Formative assessment is provided in the feedback during regular tutorial discussions, and some peer discussion in class, through which students develop their topics, sources and manners of treatment for their assessed essays over the course of two terms. Students are also required to give class presentations which receive similar attention. Drafts of each essay are read and commented on by tutors, then discussed with students in an individual tutorial, after which students revise their essays before final submission. Summative assessment of the extended essays, as with each piece of examined material, is blind-marked by two expert examiners, and moderated by an external examiner.</i></p>	

C	Dissertation	
<p>In the third term, students complete a dissertation of 15,000 words, guided by an expert supervisor, that is designed to bring together research skills, methodological training, substantive historical studies and independent research and writing, and that constitutes tangible evidence of the desired outcomes.</p> <p>The student in consultation with the tutor chooses the title of the dissertation in the second term, with the title requiring official approval. The dissertation is usually developed from the student's work in the option paper, although students are permitted to explore other topics provided they demonstrate they are competent to tackle them and expert supervision can be offered either within or beyond the Department. All students must in any case submit an abstract and preliminary bibliography for official approval early in the third term.</p> <p>Mere summaries of the secondary literature do not count as satisfying the requirement of the dissertation. In order to be acceptable, the dissertation should normally have an element of originality. This can be provided by making use of fresh historical evidence, or by applying a fresh conceptual, analytical or methodological approach to existing evidence, or a combination of these elements.</p>		
<p><i>Assessment</i></p> <p><i>This is regarded as the most thorough index of the student's overall performance in the course, and therefore special store is set by both its preparation and summative assessment. Formative assessment is provided in the regular discussions and tutorial meetings between the student and thesis supervisor. In addition, a draft of the dissertation is read and commented on by the supervisor, then discussed with the student in an individual tutorial, after which the student revises the dissertation before final submission. The dissertation will subsequently be blind marked by two expert examiners and moderated by an external examiner.</i></p>		
D	Language Courses	
<p>Subject-specific tuition is provided in an 'Italian for Art Historians' course by a specialist tutor as necessary for the study of primary sources in optional courses or for dissertations. More general tuition in other languages, provided by the Language Centre, is encouraged and, in some cases, assigned by tutors.</p>		
<p><i>Assessment</i></p> <p><i>Language courses offer supplementary training for the special option papers and dissertation, and are not summatively assessed.</i></p>		
12	Support for students and their learning	
A	<p>Libraries</p> <p>Since Art history draws upon a variety of evidence, students in this programme need access to libraries for secondary and some primary sources, to archives for documents, and to museums and similar collections for object-based work. With its constellation of fine museums and college collections, as well as a copyright library in the Bodleian, Oxford's facilities in all these respects are first rate. Students are also encouraged to use resources available in London, which is cheaply and quickly accessible by coach and rail from Oxford. Tutors, sometimes employing group visits, encourage students not only to use London's world class museums and galleries, but also such resources for scholarship as the Tate archive, the National Register of Archives, the British</p>	

Library, the Courtauld Institute library, the Warburg Library, and the National Art Library. The location of much of the scholarly material available in Oxford is indicated online by the central OLIS (Oxford Libraries Information System); other search facilities are introduced to students by the Humanities Computing Unit and through library/database training sessions run by other University units.

Since part of the course consists of specialised research, some of which might even take them further afield (often with the support of travel grants offered by their colleges) it is impossible to produce a definitive list of the resources used by students in their time. However, they typically will turn to the following.

1. The **Sackler Library** for arts and humanities incorporates the History of Art Library. This large collection has particular strengths in iconography, the historiography of art, and nineteenth-century French salon criticism.
2. The **Bodleian Library**, one of the world's greatest research libraries, has copyright holdings of nearly every secondary text that the student is likely to consult, as well as comprehensive and ancient collections of primary printed and manuscript sources. There are also particular collections of special visual interest, such as the Douce bequest of printed antiquities, the John Johnson collection of Printed Ephemera, and the Gough Collection of cartography and urban imagery.
3. The **Department of the History of Art Visual Resources Centre** has over 170,000 images of art from classical antiquity to the present day on 35 mm slides, and will lend slides to students for study and research, as well as for class or tutorial presentations. It also holds several collections of photographs and postcards. There is a large and rare collection of 19th- and early 20th-century glass lantern slides, including many architectural images, with a lantern slide projector available for their display. Data projectors are available for student presentations involving digital images. A dedicated Visual Resources Curator is actively involved in increasing the digital resources available to students through the Department and is available for training and advice in how to find and deploy multi-media resources.
4. The **History Faculty Library** holds multiple copies on open shelves of some essential titles, and is particularly useful for historical journals and other contextual material.
5. All students are members of **colleges**, each of which has a library, usually with generous opening hours and lending policies. Although their holdings tend to vary according to established college interests and (often undergraduate) teaching duties, they are obliged to cater to their members and frequently respond to recommendations for acquisition. Colleges often hold relevant archives and object collections, such as the Brocklebank Collection of Iznick pottery at Magdalen College. These resources are mostly open to non-members of the colleges with a letter from their tutors.
6. By similar special arrangements students are able to use such non-University resources in the city as **Modern Art Oxford**, which holds an unrivalled collection of later-20th C. exhibition catalogues, or the library of Oxford Brookes University.

B Museums

1. **The Ashmolean Museum.** This is a major teaching resource; several of its curatorial staff also contribute to Department of the History of Art lecture and seminar programmes, as well as serve as expert supervisors and examiners. Its permanent collections are outstanding in many areas of ancient, Western and Non-Western fine and applied arts, and it has an increasingly ambitious programme of temporary exhibitions. The Print Room welcomes students to examine individually some of the finest old master prints and drawings in the world; the museum also holds significant archives.
2. **Christ Church Picture Gallery.** This institution is strongly involved in our teaching, research and supervision programmes.

	<p>3. Pitt Rivers Museum. Staff and students also collaborate with staff based in this famous ethnographic collection.</p> <p>4. Museum of the History of Science. This museum provides important backing and curatorial expertise for students with relevant research interests.</p>
C	<p>IT resources</p> <p>History of Art students can use the Computer Room of the Centre for Visual Studies, which is located in the Department, as well as the Department's photocopier, laser printer, scanner, photographic printer, and data and other projectors.</p> <p>The Department also has access to full-time IT support through the History Faculty and makes key information (such as admissions procedures, the student handbook, programme specifications, teaching resources etc.) available through a regularly-updated website and the History of Art area of 'WebLearn', the University's virtual learning environment.</p> <p>The History Faculty has also a Graduate Student Resource Centre including a large room with numerous computers, connected to the University network and backed up with printers, scanners, statistical packages and other software.</p> <p>Oxford University Computing Services provide facilities for graduate students, and a variety of training programmes, several of which, through the Humanities Computing Unit that runs the Departmental computing induction, are specifically adapted to students in the Humanities.</p>

D	<p>Advice concerning the Syllabus</p> <p>The Departmental and Faculty websites and WebLearn provide basic information concerning learning outcomes, course structure and requirements (including option papers), and the Graduate Handbook (including conventions for the presentation of essays and dissertations and an annotated marking scale and marking conventions). The University and History Faculty also provide tutors, supervisors and examiners with guidelines on their roles. All students are issued with the relevant University Examination Decrees and Regulations and with the marking conventions, giving the formal procedures and provisions for their degree courses.</p> <p>More locally and frequently, the Department provides handouts and weekly e-mail bulletins covering more course-specific information, including events of interest and key dates (deadlines for assessed work, grants and examination applications, etc.). Tutors for the various papers give students bibliographies and course syllabi at the beginning of each course, with additional bibliographic and image resources handed out or put online during the year.</p> <p>Students devise their programmes in discussion with their tutors, under the co-ordination of the Graduate Interviewer (a.k.a., the Coordinator of the M.St. in History of Art and Visual Culture) for the Faculty Board, who acts within the Department on behalf of the History Faculty's Director of Graduate Studies. Online reports on students are made termly, with space allotted for student self-assessment, and any issues raised by the reports may be taken up between these parties and the relevant student representatives or college authorities. Serious matters are dealt with by the Committee for Graduate Studies, consisting of the various Interviewers, and its Director. Academic guidance may also be provided by the student's college advisor or the college's Tutor for Graduates. Their roles are more usually pastoral, concerned with matters of funding, housing, or other personal difficulties.</p>
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E	<p>Other support</p> <p>The University Language Centre offers all students taught classes in general language in a variety of modern languages and materials for private study. This is in addition to the specialist language course in Italian for art historians.</p>
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	<p>The Oxford University Counselling Service provides free, confidential support to all students.</p> <p>College support structures: in addition to the academic support provided by staff of the Department of the History of Art and individual supervisors, graduate students will find other sources of support for graduates within their college. They vary from college to college but may include a Dean or Tutor for Graduates, membership of the Middle Common Room and, through the latter, representation on the College's Governing Body, and access to pastoral tutors, welfare officers or the college chaplain.</p> <p>There are feedback and complaints procedures for graduate students within the History Faculty, within the colleges or via the University Proctors' office. Details of Faculty and University procedures are given in a dedicated booklet given to all new students by the History Faculty Graduate Studies office.</p>
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13	Criteria for admission
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	<p>The course interprets visual culture broadly, and therefore does not limit its intake to those with formal training in either the 'fine' or 'visual' arts, or in the history of these, although evidence of serious interest is expected. The programme aims to combine the functions of the postgraduate 'conversion to art history' course as well as to provide those already possessing undergraduate art-historical training with further in-depth study. With its relatively small numbers, the course provides an environment where all participants can feel they have much to contribute to each other's learning, and much to learn in the process. Candidates qualified in history, literary studies, philosophy, modern languages, archaeology, science, or those from a relevant working rather than an academic background, have all been admitted. The core paper in Theory and Methods, as well as the research seminar series, induction programme and subject-specific Graduate Training Seminars have proved effective in enabling students from diverse backgrounds to develop the technical skills and conceptual frameworks of the discipline. Under intensive levels of tuition, standards are carefully monitored, and variations in prior intellectual/academic preparation can be quickly addressed constructively before they turn into weaknesses.</p> <p>Applications to programmes of graduate study within the History Faculty, including the M.St. in History of Art and Visual Culture, will normally be considered in the light of a candidate's ability to meet the following criteria:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The applicant has provided appropriate indications of proven and potential academic excellence. Appropriate indicators will include three references, academic transcripts or their equivalent, one long or two shorter samples of academic written work produced by the student, a statement of purpose, and, in some cases, an interview. 2. The applicant has provided sufficient evidence, in the view of the assessors, to suggest that he/she has the academic ability and commitment to pursue the chosen programme to a successful conclusion within the required time limits. This includes demonstrating the required linguistic competence, with non-native speakers of English achieving at least the following scores (which are all at the 'higher' level listed on the University's website): 7.5 in IELTS, 630 in TOEFL, 267 in the computer-based TOEFL test, 109 in the Internet-based TOEFL, or a B in the Cambridge Certificate of English Proficiency. Further details of minimum requirements for individual components of these tests can be found on the University's website. 3. The programme of study that the applicant wishes to pursue is well suited to the academic interests and abilities to which he/she has drawn attention in the application, and (where appropriate) the applicant has undertaken any preliminary academic work or course which is normally considered indispensable to acceptance on the proposed programme of study. 4. The History Faculty and Department of the History of Art are able to provide appropriate supervision and facilities for the candidate's chosen programme of work. <p>Well-qualified candidates may not be offered a place because:</p>
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- secure funding is not available (places offered on a conditional basis will not be confirmed without a financial guarantee);
- there are constraints on the availability of research facilities;
- there are limitations to the size of taught graduate courses;
- other candidates have been judged to have greater academic ability;
- Colleges may not have places available.

Each application is considered by at least two course tutors, including the Graduate Interviewer responsible for the History of Art, as well as the Faculty's Director of Graduate Studies. The programme has approximately twenty matriculated students each year.

14 Methods for evaluating and improving the quality and standards of teaching and learning

Reports from external examiners regularly address issues relating to the curriculum, and the quality and standards of teaching and learning. These, and the responses from the Chairman of Examiners, are reviewed at the Department of the History of Art meetings and by the History of Art Teaching Committee, the Inter-Faculty Committee for the History of Art, the History Faculty's Graduate Studies Committee, the History Faculty Board, the Humanities Divisional Board, and the University's Educational Policy and Standards Committee [EPSC].

Regular Department of the History of Art meetings, termly meetings of the History of Art Teaching Committee, and the History Faculty Graduate Studies Committee also independently review course content and practice on a constant basis, partly by soliciting student evaluation on all aspects of the course through evaluation forms and discussion. Elected representatives for the undergraduate, M.St. and research students also attend Department of the History of Art meetings, where they are asked to canvass and raise matters of student concern. All students are notified of this system. Students also provide anonymous feedback on each course at the end of every term, with the Graduate Interviewer providing a summary of this feedback to Departmental meetings and the History of Art Teaching Committee for review and, as necessary, action. Copies of all feedback forms and summaries are kept for future reference.

Graduate students of the History Faculty are represented on the Graduate Joint Consultative Committee, which meets on a termly basis, and whose reports and recommendations are considered by the Graduate Studies Committee. One representative of graduate students of History of Art is invited to attend this committee.

The Graduate Interviewer for History of Art and the History Faculty's Director of Graduate Studies also monitor the termly reports on individual students and follow up queries that they may raise regarding either staff or students.

Any changes to the programme are considered by the History of Art Teaching Committee, the Inter-Faculty Committee for the History of Art, and the Graduate Studies Committee. These make recommendations to the History Faculty Board which reports to the Humanities Divisional Board. This reports in turn to the Educational Policy and Standards Committee which ultimately approves all significant programme changes.

All new academic staff of the History Faculty (including the Department of the History of Art) attend training sessions on teaching run by the Oxford Learning Institute. Mentors are appointed for all new lecturers. Formal review takes place in the second and fifth years of appointment. Teaching is reviewed annually by two peers (including the mentor in the case of new appointees) through the History Faculty's Research Monitoring and Appraisal Scheme. The History Faculty conducts internal workshops on lecturing and small class teaching. All lecturers responsible for graduate students are encouraged to attend training on supervision techniques, provided by OLI.

	<p>Success rates are monitored by the Graduate Studies Committee, the GJCC, the History Faculty Board, the Divisional Board and the Educational Policy and Standards Committee of the University.</p>
<p>15</p>	<p>Regulation of assessment</p>
	<p>The Board of Examiners for the M.St. in History of Art and Visual Culture is appointed by the History Faculty Board, through its Examinations Committee, subject to the approval of the Vice-Chancellor and the Proctors of the University. The Board of Examiners appoints a Chairman of Examiners from their number. Marking conventions are reviewed each year and those agreed for a specific year are made available to candidates prior to the examination.</p> <p>The Board of Examiners is responsible for setting all papers, and marking the scripts, essays and dissertations of the examinees. They may appoint Assessors to assist in the setting and marking of the more specialist papers, and for marking dissertations, where the subject matter is not within the expertise of the examiners. Each script, essay and dissertation is blind-marked by two examiners or assessors; where their marks differ these are discussed in order to obtain an agreed mark. If they are unable to agree, a third examiner will be asked to read the work and give it a mark. After the marking is complete, the Board of Examiners meets to classify the students in accordance with the rules established by the Examinations Committee. The examiners provide a full report on the examination which is widely discussed.</p> <p>Students may submit complaints at any stage of the examinations procedure via the Proctors of the University. Details of complaints procedures are given in the dedicated booklet given to all graduate students of the History Faculty.</p> <p>A key role in this process is played by the External Examiner. He or she acts as an impartial advisor, providing the relevant committees of the History Faculty and the University with informed comment on two major issues:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To verify that standards are appropriate to the award, in part by comparison with the standards of comparable institutions, and to ensure that the assessment procedures and the regulations governing them are fair and otherwise appropriate. 2. To ensure that the conduct of the examination and the determination of awards has been fairly conducted, and that individual student performance has been judged in accordance with the regulations and conventions of the Examining Board. This will entail signing the Class List as an endorsement that the processes of examination and classification have been fairly conducted. <p>External Examiners are expected to report to the Vice-Chancellor in each year in which they act. Their reports are expected to cover all the following points</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the standards demonstrated by the students • the extent to which standards are appropriate for the award • the design, structure and marking of assessments • the procedures for assessment and examinations • whether or not external examiners have had sufficient access to, and the power to call upon, any material necessary to make the required judgements • students' performance in relation to their peers in comparable courses • the coherence of the policies and procedures relating to external examiners and their consonance with the explicit roles required of them • the basis and rationale for any comparisons made

- the strengths and weaknesses of the students as a cohort
- the quality of teaching and learning which may be indicated by student performance

The Report is addressed to the Vice-Chancellor, with the Chair of Examiners responding to the report. Both the Report and response are then considered by the Humanities Board and by the EPSC.

The Report and response will also be scrutinised by the History of Art Teaching Committee, the Inter-Faculty Committee for the History of Art, the Faculty Board of History, and the History Faculty Examinations and Graduate Studies Committees.

Where an External Examiner's Report contains particular suggestions or criticisms, it is the responsibility of the History of Art Teaching Committee to ensure that full consideration is given to these and to the Chair of Examiner's response, to institute further discussion or action, and to inform the External Examiner within a reasonable time of what is done.

16 Indicators of quality and standards

The report on History (which includes History of Art) by the Educational Policy and Standards Committee Review Committee in 2002 endorsed the findings of earlier reviews that the 'quality of the teaching is excellent.' The Review Committee's external members were 'enormously impressed with many aspects of the provision within History, and especially with the commitment of academic staff to the learning and teaching provided for students.' In addition, the 2001 Humanities Divisional Review Committee for the History of Art, consisting of several external members, observed that 'Oxford had world-class resources for the study of the History of Art' and concluded that '[t]he committee was firmly convinced that under successive Professors the Department has established a high reputation, and that it was currently a strong research centre . . . The graduate degrees offered by the Department were also of a high standard. . . the M.St. . . degree had established itself well.' [pp. 1-3]

Reports from Examining Boards regularly address issues relating to quality and standards.

The History Faculty's External Advisory Panel reviews quality and standards and provides valuable feedback from the worlds of international academia, the professions, business and secondary education.

In 2009 the M.St. in History of Art and Visual Culture was formally reviewed by the Director of Graduate Studies of the History Faculty as part of the Faculty review of all M.St. courses. The review covered admissions statistics, welcome programme, examination results (including gender gap), student feedback, alumni feedback and self-assessment of teachers. The response was positive and particularly underlined the positive feedback of students on class work.

Official student feedback is also consistently very positive, with almost uniform marks of 'very good' or 'excellent' across all courses and tutors. Less formally but no less tellingly, students frequently volunteer their favourable impression of the course and their gratefulness to the staff, and keep in touch after they have left. A significant proportion of students continue into doctoral work in Oxford, and at other leading universities in Britain and overseas. Graduates of the course are in high demand in the art trade, museums, business, government, publishing, and voluntary, not-for-profit and advocacy groups. Many former students have continued after their graduate studies into academic employment as researchers and teachers in Higher Education.