

## Course Information Sheet for entry in 2025-26: DPhil in History of Art



### Course facts

Mode of study	Full Time	Part Time
Expected length	3-4 years	6-8 years

### About the course

The DPhil in History of Art is an advanced research degree, awarded on the basis of successful completion of an individual research thesis and an oral examination.

The Department of History of Art, which operates as part of the Faculty of History, offers research degrees in a broad range of fields within the discipline of art history and visual culture.

History of Art at the University of Oxford draws on a long and deep tradition of teaching and studying the subject. The core academic staff work on subjects from medieval European architecture to modern Chinese art. Over fifty associated academic staff (eg in Anthropology, Classics, History, Asian and Middle Eastern Studies, and the Ruskin School of Art) include teachers and researchers across the full global and historical range of art and visual culture. This offers students exciting possibilities to develop their own interests in art history and to receive supervision on a very wide range of topics.

The DPhil enables you to acquire the research skills necessary to complete a substantial piece of original research. You will work under the guidance of a supervisor who is a specialist in their subject. As part of your doctoral research, you will produce a thesis of not more than 100,000 words.

Current DPhil students are writing theses on a diverse range of topics, including the print-making techniques of the eighteenth-century British artist Alexander Cozens; the role played by the political economy of silver in the invention of photography; the elite tombs of late Medieval Castile; the visual and material culture of pilgrimage in the Este courts of fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Italy; the relationship of colour and race in late nineteenth-century French painting; the erotic in Venetian popular prints made between 1550 and 1620; the work of the twentieth-century Italian photographer Ugo Mulas; illustrated books about China published in Edo Japan; the visual culture of the British railway system in Western Anatolia; the pictorial work of the nineteenth-century English polymath John Herschel; and the function and agency of religious images in late-medieval England.

All DPhil students are expected to attend and to contribute to the wide range of research seminars, conferences and workshops organised by the department and faculty. You also have access to specialist training courses offered by the Bodleian Libraries and IT Services.

### Attendance

The course can be studied full-time or part-time with both modes requiring attendance in Oxford. Full-time students are subject to the University's Residence requirements. Part-time students are required to attend course-related activities in Oxford for a minimum of 30 days each year.

Although there will be no requirement to live in Oxford, part-time research students must attend the University on a regular basis in term-time: October and November, mid-January to mid-March, and late April to mid-June. Part-time students are required to attend seminars, skills training and supervision meetings in Oxford. The dates of attendance will be determined by mutual agreement with your supervisor.

### Resources to support your study

As a graduate student, you will have access to the University's wide range of world-class resources including libraries, museums, galleries, digital resources and IT services.

The Bodleian Libraries is the largest library system in the UK. It includes the main Bodleian Library and libraries across Oxford, including major research libraries and faculty, department and institute libraries. Together, the Libraries hold more than 13 million printed items, provide access to e-journals, and contain outstanding special collections including rare books and manuscripts, classical papyri, maps, music, art and printed ephemera.

The University's IT Services is available to all students to support with core university IT systems and tools, as well as many other services and facilities. IT Services also offers a range of IT learning courses for students, to support with learning and research.

### Intellectual life and community

The History of Art Department brings together a tightly knit community of scholars working on a wide range of periods and subjects, including associated academics working on visual culture more widely.

Students are also integrated into the wider Faculty of History, which includes scholars working from circa 300 CE to the present, and embraces an exceptionally broad geographical range. It comprises an active research community of up to 800 academics and graduate students. The faculty's research is organised around historical periods, research centres, or in collaborative and individual research projects, and graduates are key participants in the wide range of seminars, workshops and conferences run by the Faculty of History.

The department's Centre for Visual Studies and The Oxford Centre for Research in the Humanities (TORCH) offer a stimulating range of interdisciplinary activities. History of art graduates are also encouraged to join the Oxford History Graduate Network (OHGN), which fosters friendships, conversations and collaboration.

The Oxford environment provides a unique opportunity to develop intellectual curiosity whilst remaining focused on one's own work without becoming blinkered - an integral part of a successful graduate career.

### **Libraries and archives**

The Bodleian Art, Archaeology and Ancient World Library is a major research centre for the study of art history and the ancient world and the Bodleian Libraries' Special Collections Department attracts scholars from all over the world.

Graduates are also able to draw on the specialist resources offered by the Bodleian History Faculty Library which provides dedicated support and training courses for all graduates. You will also have access to the many college libraries and to college archives which can house significant collections of personal papers as well as institutional records dating back to the middle ages. There are also major research libraries as well as libraries attached to faculties, departments and other institutions.

### **Museums, collections and galleries**

Few universities in the world boast the quality and range of Oxford's collections, which provide an invaluable basis for the study of all forms of art. The Ashmolean Museum, the Pitt Rivers Museum, , Christ Church Picture Gallery, the Museum of the History of Science, Modern Art Oxford and other museum collections – together with the wealth of architectural monuments in the city – are an integral part of studying history of art at Oxford. The department's own Visual Resources Centre is available for student use. Students have the opportunity to work closely with curators on individual objects from many cultures. From drawings by Raphael to totem poles, the range of possibilities is vast.

This range of resources for art historians differentiates the Oxford DPhil from others.

### **Supervision**

The allocation of graduate supervision for this course is the responsibility of the Department of History of Art, and it is not always possible to accommodate the preferences of incoming graduate students to work with a particular member of staff. Under some circumstances a supervisor outside the Department of History of Art may be nominated.

All students for the DPhil in History of Art will be supported by a supervisor or supervisors who will help them develop a programme of research and writing. You will also benefit from the advice and support of other members of the department who will be involved in the progression of students through the transfer and confirmation stages of the degree, and can draw on the expertise of scholars and colleagues throughout the faculty and University.

It will be up to you and your supervisor to decide on the frequency of meetings, though generally speaking in the first year you should plan to meet them at least every few weeks during term time, and keep in frequent contact. As you become more engaged with your research, you may meet your supervisor less frequently, but you are encouraged to maintain regular contact with them.

Please note that if you have contacted a potential supervisor prior to submitting your application, any indication made by an academic that they may be willing to supervise a potential project, is not a guarantee that you will be offered a place or that the supervisor in question has capacity to supervise you in that particular year.

### **Assessment**

All students will be initially admitted to the status of Probationer Research Student (PRS). Within a maximum of four terms as a full-time PRS student or eight terms as a part-time PRS student, you will be expected to apply for transfer of status from Probationer Research Student to DPhil status. This application is normally made in the second term for full-time students and by the fifth term for part-time students.

A successful transfer of status from PRS to DPhil status will require a statement, a piece of written work and the support of your supervisor. Students who are successful at transfer will also be expected to apply for and gain confirmation of DPhil status to show that your work continues to be on track. This will need to be done within nine terms of admission for full-time students and eighteen terms of admission for part-time students.

Both milestones normally involve an interview with one or two assessors (other than your supervisor) and therefore provide important experience for the final oral examination.

Full-time students will be expected to submit a thesis of not more than 100,000 words after three or, at most, four years from the date of admission. If you are studying part-time, you will be required to submit your thesis after six or, at most, eight years from the date of admission.

To be successfully awarded a DPhil in History of Art you will need to defend your thesis orally (*viva voce*) in front of two appointed examiners.

### **Changes to this course**

The University will seek to deliver this course in accordance with the description set out above. However, there may be situations in which it is desirable or necessary for the University to make changes in course provision, either before or after you commence your course. These might include significant changes made necessary by any pandemic, epidemic or local health emergency. For further information, please see the University's Terms and Conditions (<http://www.graduate.ox.ac.uk/terms>) and our page on changes to courses (<http://www.graduate.ox.ac.uk/coursechanges>).

## Costs

### Annual fees for entry in 2025-26

#### Full-time study

Fee status	Annual Course fees
Home	£13,380
Overseas	£34,980

#### Part-time study

Fee status	Annual Course fees
Home	£6,690
Overseas	£17,490

### Information about course fees

Course fees are payable each year, for the duration of your fee liability (your fee liability is the length of time for which you are required to pay course fees). For courses lasting longer than one year, please be aware that fees will usually increase annually. Information about how much fees and other costs may increase is set out in the University's Terms and Conditions (<http://www.graduate.ox.ac.uk/terms>).

Course fees cover your teaching as well as other academic services and facilities provided to support your studies. Unless specified in the additional cost information (below), course fees do not cover your accommodation, residential costs or other living costs. They also don't cover any additional costs and charges that are outlined in the additional cost information.

Graduate students who have reached the end of their standard period of fee liability may be required to pay a termly University and/or a college continuation charge.

The University continuation charge, per term for entry in 2025-26 is £672, please be aware that this will increase annually. For part-time students, the termly charge will be half of the termly rate payable by full-time students.

If a college continuation charge applies (not applicable for non-matriculated courses) it is likely to be in the region of £100 to £600. Please contact your college for more details, including information about whether your college's continuation charge is applied at a different rate for part-time study.

### Additional cost information

#### Full-time study

There are no compulsory elements of this course that entail additional costs beyond fees (or, after fee liability ends, continuation charges) and living costs. However, please note that, depending on your choice of research topic and the research required to complete it, you may incur additional expenses, such as travel expenses, research expenses, and field trips. You will need to meet these additional costs, although you may be able to apply for small grants from your department and/or college to help you cover some of these expenses.

#### Part-time study

Please note that you are required to attend in Oxford for a minimum of 30 days each year, and you may incur additional travel and accommodation expenses for this. Also, depending on your choice of research topic and the research required to complete it, you may incur further additional expenses, such as travel expenses, research expenses, and field trips. You will need to meet these additional costs, although you may be able to apply for small grants from your department and/or college to help you cover some of these expenses.

## Living costs

In addition to your course fees and any additional course-specific costs, you will need to ensure that you have adequate funds to support your living costs for the duration of your course.

If you are studying part-time your living costs may vary depending on your personal circumstances but you must still ensure that you will have sufficient funding to meet these costs for the duration of your course.

The likely living costs for the 2025-26 academic year are published below. These costs are based on a single, full-time graduate student, with no dependants, living in Oxford. We provide the cost per month so you can multiply up by the number of months you expect to live in Oxford.

### Likely living costs for one month

	Lower range	Upper range
<b>Food</b>	£330	£515
<b>Accommodation</b>	£790	£955
<b>Personal items</b>	£200	£335
<b>Social activities</b>	£45	£100
<b>Study costs</b>	£40	£90
<b>Other</b>	£20	£40
<b>Total</b>	£1,425	£2,035

### Likely living costs for nine months

	Lower range	Upper range
<b>Food</b>	£2,970	£4,635
<b>Accommodation</b>	£7,110	£8,595
<b>Personal items</b>	£1,800	£3,015
<b>Social activities</b>	£405	£900
<b>Study costs</b>	£360	£810
<b>Other</b>	£180	£360
<b>Total</b>	£12,825	£18,315

### Likely living costs for twelve months

	Lower range	Upper range
<b>Food</b>	£3,960	£6,180
<b>Accommodation</b>	£9,480	£11,460
<b>Personal items</b>	£2,400	£4,020
<b>Social activities</b>	£540	£1,200
<b>Study costs</b>	£480	£1,080
<b>Other</b>	£240	£480
<b>Total</b>	£17,100	£24,420

When planning your finances for any future years of study at Oxford beyond the 2025-26 academic year, it is suggested that you allow for potential increases in living expenses of 4% each year – although this rate may vary depending on the national economic situation.

More information about how these figures have been calculated is available at [www.graduate.ox.ac.uk/livingcosts](http://www.graduate.ox.ac.uk/livingcosts).

## Document accessibility

If you require a more accessible version of this document please contact Graduate Admissions and Recruitment by email ([graduate.admissions@admin.ox.ac.uk](mailto:graduate.admissions@admin.ox.ac.uk)) or via the online form (<http://www.graduate.ox.ac.uk/ask/form>).