

Graduate Diploma in Contemporary Art History

Programme Specification

Awarding Institution:

University of London (Interim Exit Awards made by Goldsmiths' College)

Teaching Institution: Goldsmiths, University of London

Name of Final Award and Programme Title:

Graduate Diploma in Contemporary Art History

Name of Interim Exit Award(s): Not applicable

Duration of Programme: 1 year full-time or 2 years part-time

UCAS Code(s): Not applicable

HECoS Code(s): (100306) History of Art

QAA Benchmark Group: History of Art, Architecture and Design

FHEQ Level of Award: Level 6

Programme accredited by: Not applicable

Date Programme Specification last updated/approved: December 2020

Home Department: Visual Cultures

Department(s) which will also be involved in teaching part of the programme:

Not applicable

Programme overview

This Diploma has been designed as a conversion programme for graduates of other disciplines who wish to carry out research at higher levels in the fields of modern and contemporary art history and visual cultures.

The programme sets out to be both introductory and experiential.

Rather than provide conventional chronological surveys, the programme explores and addresses chosen themes within an interdisciplinary context.

Programme entry requirements

Students should normally have, or expect to gain, a first degree of at least second class standard. Non-English language speakers are required to have passed the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) of 6.5 with at least a 6.5 in writing.

Selection Process

Admission to many programmes is by interview, unless you live outside the UK. Occasionally, we'll make candidates an offer of a place on the basis of their application and qualifications alone.

Late applications will only be considered if there are spaces available.

Aims of the programme

The Graduate Diploma in Contemporary Art History has been designed as a conversion programme for graduates of other disciplines who wish to carry out research at higher levels in the field of Contemporary Art History and Visual Cultures. The programme encourages students to develop an independent and critically informed approach to the visual arts and their wider cultural context. It aims to foster the students' awareness of art's cultural and political significance in the past; at the same time it asks students to relate their historical understanding of visual art to critical debates and perspectives that have shaped the discipline of art history in the present. The programme encourages students to deal systematically and creatively with complex issues, to continue to advance their knowledge and understanding and develop the independent learning ability required for research at MA and PhD level, as well as for employment in the cultural field.

What you will be expected to achieve

In addition to the skills expected of all humanities graduates, students on the Graduate Diploma in Contemporary Art History will develop particular abilities in the deployment of visual material in conjunction with written, oral and other forms of communication, such as illustrated essays and seminars, slide, moving image or multimedia presentations.

Students on the Graduate Diploma in Contemporary Art History should acquire the following knowledge and should develop skills in the following areas:

Knowledge and understanding

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
A1	Knowledge and understanding of key philosophical, theoretical, art-historical and aesthetic concepts and debates pertinent to modern and contemporary art history and visual cultures, as	All modules

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
	developed in the work of specific practitioners/thinkers/activists	
A2	Knowledge and understanding of the pertinent historical, geo-cultural, social and political contexts pertinent to modern and contemporary art history and visual cultures, generally, and in relation to specific examples	All modules
A3	Knowledge and understanding of key issues and debates relating specifically to the topics of vision, spectatorship, and visibility	All modules
A4	Knowledge and understanding of key issues and debates relating specifically to questions and practices of cultural participation	All modules
A5	Knowledge and understanding of key factors, from the ideological to the practical, that inform the workings of the contemporary global art world	All modules

Cognitive and thinking skills

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
B1	have a high level of visual literacy with respect to still and moving imagery	All modules
B2	be able to identify and question presuppositions	All modules
B3	understand how to activate, apply and/or test particular philosophical, theoretical and aesthetic concepts in relation to specific visual culture practices and phenomena	All modules
B4	be able to examine issues and phenomena from a variety of critical perspectives	All modules
B5	be able to think speculatively and to critically explore the impact of competing discourses	All modules

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
B6	understand how to access and make appropriate use of a wide range of relevant research and image databases, archives and other research resources (including special collections)	All modules
B7	have independence of thought in terms of developing and carrying out research	All modules
B8	be able to develop and present a convincing argument	All modules
B9	understand the complexities of working in inter- disciplinary or trans-disciplinary contexts	All modules

Subject specific skills and professional behaviours and attitudes

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
C1	Observation: close and systematic visual examination, informed by appropriate knowledge of materials, techniques and cultural contexts	All modules
C2	Description: using ordinary and specialist language to record and describe visual artefacts	All modules
C3	The ability to set artefacts and other visual expressions within appropriate historical, intellectual, cultural and institutional contexts	All modules
C4	The ability to draw upon personal responses to artefacts while recognising how these should be distinguished from other relevant meanings	All modules
C5	The ability to understand the role of artefacts and other visual cultural expressions as carriers of meaning and value	All modules

Transferable skills

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
D1	The ability to use appropriate methodologies for locating, assessing and interpreting primary sources	All modules
D2	The ability to produce logical and structured narratives and arguments supported by relevant evidence	All modules
D3	The ability to bring evidence or ideas of different sorts or from different sources together in a productive way	All modules
D4	The ability to be open and receptive to new things and ideas	All modules
D5	The ability to identify the merits of unfamiliar arguments or cultural artefacts and the merits or shortcomings of familiar ones	All modules
D6	The ability to design and carry out a research project with limited tutorial guidance	All modules
D7	The ability to develop an independent argument that is informed by but not dependent on authorities in the field of art history and visual culture	All modules
D8	The ability to work diligently, to fulfil briefs and deadlines, and to take responsibility for one's own work	All modules

How you will learn

The strategies for learning and teaching on the Graduate Diploma in Contemporary Art History aim to create an intellectually stimulating environment, which embraces intellectual diversity, and encourages and supports the autonomy, confidence and independence of the students.

The programme offers a Compulsory Module with an accompanying Lab (60 CATS) that extend the knowledge base and the understanding of the principles, methodologies and critical perspectives that have shaped the disciplines of art history and visual cultures. In addition, the students choose optional modules at Level 5 (30 CATS) and Level 6 (30

CATS) from the department's undergraduate provision, which enable them to focus on subjects of their interest. The different subjects are taught in the form of:

- lectures that are often supported by visual materials to motivate and excite the students' curiosity
- seminars and the lab that provide the context for discussion and argument
- tutorials for regular contact with and feedback from tutors
- directed reading within the specialist literature of art history, visual cultures, and other relevant subject areas
- student-directed reading of the exploratory and speculative kind, both within and without the immediate subject area
- student presentations, which provide opportunity for oral communication and argument
- guided or independent visits to museums, galleries and other appropriate locations for direct experience
- independent research work

How you will be assessed

The Graduate Diploma in Contemporary Art History includes a variety of assessment methods, which enable students to demonstrate the variety of abilities and skills (outlined above) developed during the programme. All assessed work is double-marked internally and submitted to an external examiner who ensures parity of standards across the modules. Each module component deploys assessment methods appropriate to the specific learning outcomes of the component. Apart from formative assignments, methods deployed may include:

Essays - Essays give students the opportunity to explore a series of theoretical and historical aspects of a question within the framework of the discussion of the objects of art history and visual cultures. They allow students to exercise an intellectual discipline, to mount an argument effectively, to demonstrate a broader knowledge of pertinent issues through referencing, footnoting etc., and to reflect upon the findings of their research.

Research Files / Archive Projects - The Research File / Archive Project is aimed at demonstrating the breadth of research and grasp of a considerable range and diversity of materials. In modules that are interdisciplinary in nature, the Research File / Archive Project will help students locate the disciplinary source and context of arguments and methods. Each Research File / Archive Project will set up a problematic and plot its way towards a research plan. In its final stage, the Research File / Archive Project will have an overall length of 3000 words consisting of a 1000 word report on the problem researched and a commentary that links the collated materials and argues and illustrates the set problematic.

Creative Journals - The Creative Journal consists of weekly entries of 200 words each (overall length 3000 words). It serves to link materials encountered outside the lecture room with those being studied on the module and will allow for the combination of visual and textual materials in one piece of work. The diary like structure aids students to conceptualise the process of learning and allows them to reflect upon their development through an entire module. The Creative Journal will be accompanied on submission by a two-page statement which will allow students to reread their work and reflect coherently on it.

Oral Presentations - Many modules employ individual or group seminar presentations as formative assessment to generate discussion with peers and tutors. They may be based on salient points of some module reading, or on longer or shorter-term research work. The presenters have a great deal of responsibility towards the class to ensure that the material offered is clear, properly organised, relevant and well considered. The Graduate Diploma Compulsory Module and Lab also use Oral Group Presentations as part of the formal summative assessment. Students are asked to engage in participatory, collaborative research and find an issue/problem/question of common interest that will be addressed by making use of art and visual material as well as appropriate theoretical models. Subsequently, each participant also submits a two-page statement which reflects on the process of preparing the presentation and his/her own contribution and critically evaluates the experience.

Marking criteria

Mark	Descriptor	Specific Marking Criteria
80-100%	Distinction (Exceptional)	Represents the overall achievement of the specified assessment criteria/module learning outcomes to an exceptionally accomplished level. Potentially publishable work, showing extensive research, originality and independence of thought. Such work will be highly articulate and demonstrate an equally highly sophisticated critical apprehension of subject matter, theoretical, archival and historiographical questions and issues regarding cultural processes. It will make potentially original gestures towards the advancement and integration of these areas. The work will also demonstrate an acute understanding of developments in the field of Art History, and an understanding of the significance of the emergence and direction of the discipline of Visual Culture.
70-79%	Distinction (Excellent)	Represents the overall achievement of the specified assessment criteria/module learning outcomes to an

Mark	Descriptor	Specific Marking Criteria
		<p>excellent level. Excellent work, taking in all aspects of the question under consideration and showing independence in approach and ideas; shows a high level of critical and analytical skill; has a good grasp of the historiography of the subject; has a good understanding of the main issues and is able to relate them comparatively to other topics and/or periods; well written and presented. Awareness of shifts, conflicts and the development of concerns in the fields of Art History and Visual Culture will be in evidence, as will an advanced apprehension of questions surrounding the interpretation of cultural processes.</p>
60-69%	Merit (Very good)	<p>Represents the overall achievement of the specified assessment criteria/module learning outcomes to a very good level. Good work, showing wide knowledge of appropriate art historical, art theoretical and visual cultures themes and an ability to use this in relevant analysis and argument; shows a grasp of the main issues and the historiography of the subject; on the whole has a good understanding of English grammar, spelling and punctuation. Such work will signal a well-developed awareness of historiographical matters, research methodology, cultural processes and developments in the fields of Art History and Visual Culture. There may be evidence of independence of research and thought.</p>
50-59%	Pass (Good)	<p>Represents the overall achievement of the specified assessment criteria/module learning outcomes to a good level. Has a satisfactory knowledge of appropriate art historical, art theoretical and visual cultures themes, but tends to produce narrative and has not got highly developed powers of analysis and argument. Such work will signal a quite limited awareness of the main issues as well as of historiographical matters, research methodology, cultural processes and developments in the fields of Art History and Visual Culture.</p>
40-49%	Pass	<p>Represents the overall achievement of the majority of the specified assessment criteria/module learning outcomes to a pass level. Shows a limited knowledge of appropriate art historical, art theoretical and visual cultures themes, and weakness in approach; fails to see more than one side of a question; faults in style, spelling and punctuation; unable to</p>

Mark	Descriptor	Specific Marking Criteria
		write to the point. Any grasp or awareness of historiographical matters, research methodology, cultural processes and developments in the fields of Art History and Visual Culture will be weak.
25-39%	Fail	Represents an overall failure to achieve the specified assessment criteria/module learning outcomes. Has inadequate knowledge to tackle the question; serious weaknesses in approach; tendency to jot down a few unanalysed facts. Poor knowledge of the object of study and no apprehension of further critical and theoretical issues.
10-24%	Bad fail	Represents a significant overall failure to achieve the specified assessment criteria/ module learning outcomes. Has inadequate knowledge to tackle the question; serious weaknesses in approach; tendency to jot down a few unanalysed facts. Very poor knowledge of the object of study and no apprehension of further critical and theoretical issues.
1-9%	Very bad fail	A submission that does not even attempt to address the specified assessment criteria/module learning outcomes (shall be deemed a non-valid attempt and module must be re-taken). Scribbled notes indicating little or no research, understanding of the question or attempt to consider theoretical issues.
0%	Non submission or plagiarised	A categorical mark representing either the failure to submit an assessment or a mark assigned for a plagiarised assessment.

How the programme is structured

The programme consists of a Compulsory Module and its Lab (60 CATS) and two further modules (30 CATS each) chosen by the students to suit their specific interests. The research interests of staff inform the optional modules on offer. Full-time students take all three modules over one year. Part-time students spread the three components over two years. They are required to take the Compulsory Module and Lab in year one, while it is optional when the other two components are taken. In consultation with tutors, students may audit additional modules. Students are also invited to join the guest lecture programme that the department hosts on Thursday evenings.

Overseas students, of whom the programme has a high proportion, also take language modules provided by the English Language Centre.

The Graduate Diploma in Contemporary Art History is designed as a conversion programme to prepare students for research at MA and PhD level. The Compulsory Module and Lab thus extend the knowledge base and the understanding of the principles, methodologies and critical perspectives that have shaped the discipline of art history and visual culture. The other two components are selected from the Year 2 or 3 (Option Modules) and Year 3 (Special Subjects) lists of our undergraduate programme. Where the assessment of Option modules is concerned, graduate students are required to produce written work equivalent to that expected of Year 3 undergraduate students (i.e. FHEQ level 6).

Module Title	Module Code	Credits	Level	Module Status	Term
Histories of Art (Compulsory Module and Lab)	VC53065B	45	6	Compulsory	1-2
One 15 credit Option module from an approved list available annually from the Department of Visual Cultures		15	6	Optional	
One Option module from an approved list available annually from the Department of Visual Cultures	-	30	5 or 6	Optional	1-2
One Special Subject module from an approved list published annually by the Department of Visual Cultures	-	30	6	Optional	1-2

Academic support

Support for learning and wellbeing is provided in a number of ways by departments and College support services who work collaboratively to ensure students get the right help to reach their best potential both academically and personally.

All students are allocated a Personal Tutor (one in each department for joint programmes) who has overall responsibility for their individual progress and welfare. Personal Tutors meet with their student at least twice a year either face-to-face, as part of a group and/or electronically. The first meeting normally takes place within the first few weeks of the autumn term. Personal Tutors are also available to students throughout the year of study. These meetings aim to discuss progress on modules, discussion of the academic discipline and reports from previous years if available (for continuing students). This provides an

opportunity for progress, attendance and assessment marks to be reviewed and an informed discussion to take place about how to strengthen individual learning and success.

All students are also allocated a Senior Tutor to enable them to speak to an experienced academic member of staff about any issues which are negatively impacting their academic study and which are beyond the normal scope of issues handled by Programme Convenors and Personal Tutors.

Students are provided with information about learning resources, the [Library](#) and information available on [Learn.gold \(VLE\)](#) so that they have access to department/programme handbooks, programme information and support related information and guidance.

Taught sessions and lectures provide overviews of themes, which students are encouraged to complement with intensive reading for presentation and discussion with peers at seminars. Assessments build on lectures and seminars so students are expected to attend all taught sessions to build knowledge and their own understanding of their chosen discipline.

All assessed work is accompanied by some form of feedback to ensure that students' work is on the right track. It may come in a variety of forms ranging from written comments on a marked essay to oral and written feedback on developing projects and practice as they attend workshops.

Students may be referred to specialist student services by department staff or they may access support services independently. Information about support services is provided on the [Goldsmiths website](#) and for new students through new starter information and induction/Welcome Week. Any support recommendations that are made are agreed with the student and communicated to the department so that adjustments to learning and teaching are able to be implemented at a department level and students can be reassured that arrangements are in place. Opportunities are provided for students to review their support arrangements should their circumstances change. The [Disability](#) and [Wellbeing](#) Services maintain caseloads of students and provide on-going support.

The [Careers Service](#) provides central support for skills enhancement, running [The Gold Award](#) scheme and other co-curricular activities that are accredited via the Higher Education Achievement Report ([HEAR](#)).

The [Academic Skills Centre](#) works with academic departments offering bespoke academic literacy sessions. It also provides a programme of academic skills workshops and one-to-one provision for students throughout the year.

Links with employers, placement opportunities and career prospects

As the Graduate Diploma in Contemporary Art History is designed as a conversion programme, many of the students who complete it successfully go on to MA programmes in either Art History, Art Theory, Visual Culture, Museum Studies or Curating. Some have found employment in museums and galleries, as well as in community art projects in this country and abroad. Others work free-lance as exhibition curators or as critics for art journals. Students who have continued doing research at PhD level, have found long-term or short-term employment in educational institutions.

The requirements of a Goldsmiths Graduate Diploma

Graduate Diplomas normally involve one academic year of full-time study and have a value of 120 credits. Programmes are composed of individual modules, each of which has its own credit value. If a programme has a part-time pathway, the structure will be set out in the section “How the programme is structured” above. Normally, all modules are at level 6 of the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications.

More detailed information about the structure and requirements of a Goldsmiths degree is provided in the [Goldsmiths Qualifications and Credit Framework](#).

Modules

Modules are defined as:

- “Optional” – which can be chosen from a group of modules
- “Compulsory” – which must be taken as part of the degree

Progression

Where a programme of study extends beyond one calendar year, students may be required to pass specific modules in their first year of study before progressing to the second year. Where this is the case, these requirements will be set out in this Programme Specification.

Award of the degree

In order to graduate, students must successfully complete all modules specified for the programme, as set out within the section “How the programme is structured” above.

Classification

Final degree classification is calculated on the basis of a student's mean average mark (based on credit value) across all modules on the programme.

Graduate Diplomas are awarded with the following classifications:

Distinction – 70%+

Merit – 60-69%

Pass – 50-59%

More detail on the [calculation of the final classification](#) is on our website.

The above information is intended as a guide, with more detailed information available in the [Goldsmiths Academic Manual](#).

Programme-specific rules and facts

General programme costs

In addition to your tuition fees, you will be responsible for meeting standard costs associated with your study. Find out more information at gold.ac.uk/programme-costs.

Specific programme costs

Not applicable.

How teaching quality will be monitored

Goldsmiths employs a number of methods to ensure and enhance the quality of learning and teaching on its programmes.

Programmes and modules are formally approved against national standards and are monitored throughout the year, such as in departmental committees, a variety of student feedback mechanisms and through the completion of module evaluation questionnaires. Every programme has at least one External Examiner who reviews comments annually on the standards of awards and student achievement. External Examiner(s) attend Boards of Examiners meetings and submit an annual written report.

Modules, programmes and/or departments are also subject to annual and periodic review internally, as well as periodic external scrutiny.

Quality assurance processes aim to ensure Goldsmiths' academic provision remains current, that the procedures to maintain the standards of the awards are working effectively and the quality of the learning opportunities and information provided to students and applicants is appropriate.

Detailed information on all these procedures are published on the [Quality Office web pages](#).