



Securing Your University Offer for Art History

Essay Competition Award Ceremony: July 23rd, 2022

N



Agenda

- Welcome
- Studying Art History at University: an Overview
- Submitting a Competitive Application
- NCH Insights
- Q&A



Studying Art History at University: an Overview

New College of
the Humanities

N



What is the study of Art History?

- The study of global art, from the ancient to the present day - covers virtually every aspect of human history and experience
- Looks at works of art not just as objects, but as a way of understanding the world, its people and their societies
- May include the study of painting, drawing, sculpture, architecture, ceramics and decorative arts
- Considers the conscious and unconscious choices that led to the artworks' form and subject matter
- Typically offers more flexibility for independent study and personal choice than at A Level
- Develops writing skills and critical thinking skills, to enable a detailed analysis of a wide range of art forms



Where and how can you study Art History?

- Single Honours BA Art History
- Many joint and combined honours options, eg. Art History and Fine Art, Art History and Curating, Art History with History (*note that the study balance is likely to be other than 50/50 if it's Art History *with* rather than Art History *and*)
- Option to study visual arts, sculptural and architectural arts from Medieval, Renaissance and Modern Art
- Different degree spans (standard English 3 years, standard Scottish 4 years, 2 year accelerated, sandwich year etc)
- Degree apprenticeships take a more practical approach (potentially useful to fast track toward particular careers)
- Full-time/part-time; online/in-person; study abroad

How is Art History taught?

- **Gallery/site visits:** Visit museums and galleries to view original works of art in order to research and analyse a variety of art forms
- **Reading and visual analysis:** Independent reading and analysis of art works
- **Lectures:** Lecturers can discuss the set themes and analyse various art forms, as well as provide further context to art (e.g.: historical or social)
- **Seminars:** Seminars allow for a more in-depth discussion of a topic and a chance to ask any questions to your lecturer/seminar supervisor. It's probably even more important that you are well prepared for the seminar as you will need to participate
- **Essays:** Formative and summative, to test your analysis of a subject
- **Presentations:** Occasionally presentations are used to assess how well you understand a topic - these may be individual or group presentations



What skills do you develop?

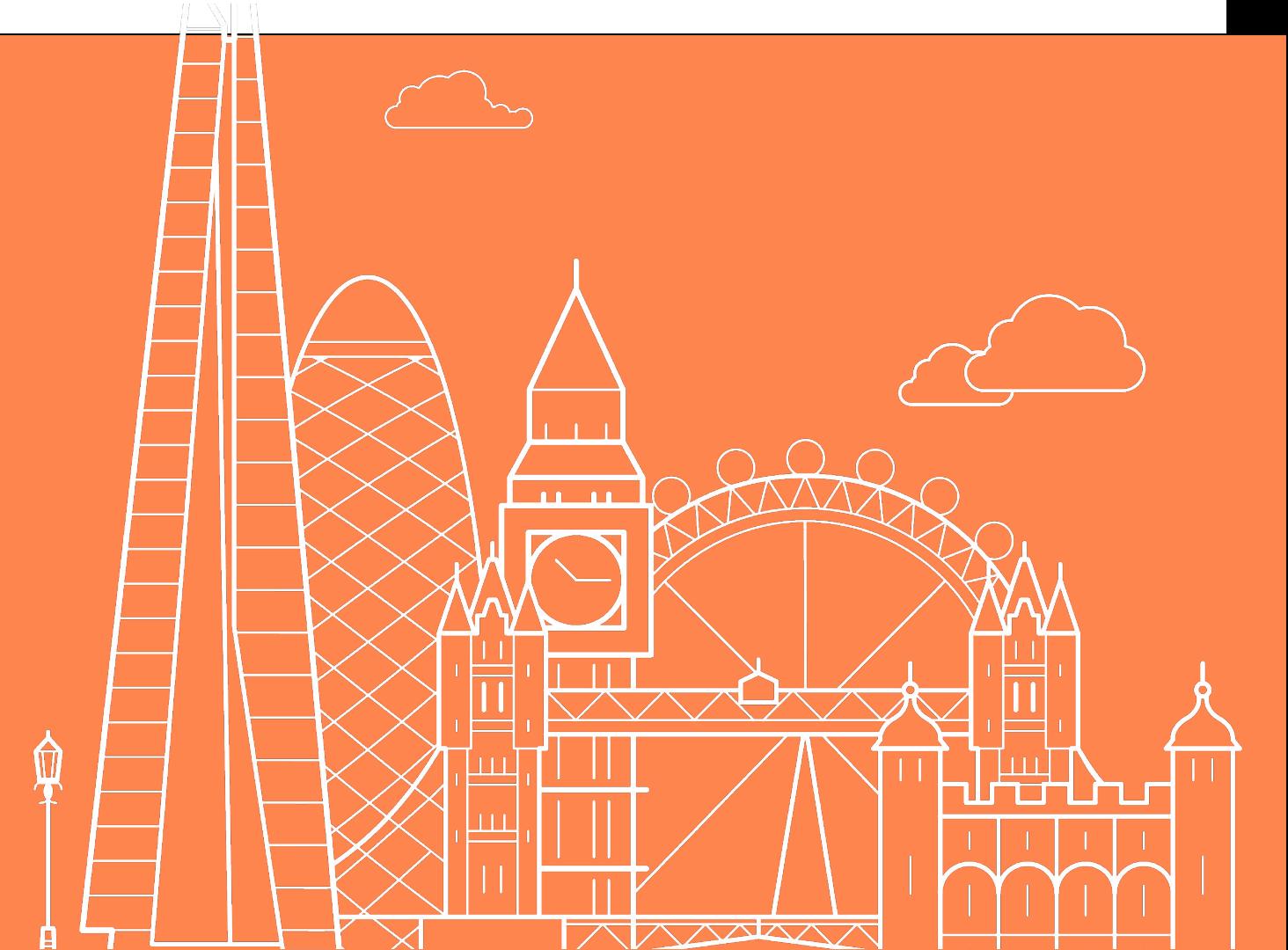
- Essay writing
- Visual analysis
- Research
- Critical thinking
- Interdisciplinary skills
- Referencing skills
- Time management

The skills you will acquire as an Art History graduate will allow you to pivot flexibly into a variety of industries, when you enter the working world.

What can you do after your degree?

As an Art History graduate your transferable skills can take you into ANY industry.
Some of the top graduate destinations are:

- Curator
- Education
- Museum Administrator/Director
- Conservator/Art Restorer/Conservation Scientist
- Art Authenticator
- Museum Reproductions/Retail Manager
- Art Publishing



New College of
the Humanities

Submitting a
Competitive
Application for
Art History

N



What are the entry requirements?

UCAS

Information provided by ucas.com

A levels:

- Usually need a minimum of two A levels, with three A levels and A-B grades required for the most popular courses
- Entry requirements range from CCC to AAB
- Other useful subjects to hold for Art History degrees include any other humanities subject

International Baccalaureate Diploma:

- From 30-39 overall in the IB Diploma

Scottish Highers:

- From BBBB to AABBB (most frequently AABBB)



What are admissions tutors looking for?

- Enthusiasm and motivation to study Art History
- Credible evidence that supports your subject passion
- Proactive subject exploration and engagement - e.g.: gallery and museum visits
- Relevant extra-curricular/super-curricular activities
- Interests outside of school, relating to Art History
- Relevant and transferable work experience
- Aims and goals; career plans if known
- Understanding of the demands of studying at university, and how this is different from school



What super-curricular activities would support my application?

Super-curricular activities take the subjects you study further, beyond what you have learnt at school or college. Some examples for Art History may include:

- Wider reading beyond the set texts
- Reading specialist magazines and journals
- Attending university taster lectures or taster days
- Listening to podcasts, TED talks or online lectures
- Attending an Art History Summer School
- Taking an online (MOOC) Art History course
- Visiting art galleries and museums
- Visiting sites of architectural or aesthetic interest
- Taking part in university essay competitions! N

Why is the personal statement so important?

- Often your only chance to ‘sell yourself’ to the university and impress the admissions tutor
- Helps to differentiate between equally excellent candidates with similar or identical grade profiles, especially for competitive courses
- Helps if you are a borderline candidate
- Demonstrates your reasons for applying for a course
- May form basis of an interview - tutors may ask questions arising from the statement
- May help if on results day you don’t quite make your grades

How can I write a compelling personal statement?

- Invest plenty of time in the brainstorming/thinking stage, before starting to write your statement
- Structure your personal statement
- Use positive and enthusiastic language
- Make every sentence count - word count is tight!
- Ensure it reflects your ‘voice’, and your ‘journey’
- Use evidence to support claims/statements
- Be prepared to draft and redraft
- Be honest - don’t exaggerate and don’t plagiarise
- Double check grammar and spelling for errors
- Ask for support, especially with proofreading and checking - it’s easy for mistakes to slip through!





What might an admissions interview look like?

- Unique opportunity to discuss a subject you are passionate about with an academic tutor
- Opportunity for tutor to get to know you and your motivation for applying - you can also ask questions!
- May take the form of a 'taster' tutorial
- Unlikely to be a test of knowledge - tutor will be more interested in how you think, rather than what you know
- Discussion-based; questions will probe your subject interest, enthusiasm and aptitude
- Questions may build on your personal statement
- Questions will be challenging - don't panic if you don't immediately have an answer; take your time to think
- Some interviews may include a task, or pre-reading



How can I prepare for my admissions interview?

- Carefully reread your personal statement, and be prepared to expand upon any of the points you have included
- Re-read or re-familiarise yourself with any texts you referenced, so these are fresh in your mind
- Undertake any reading or pre-interview tasks in good time
- Practice talking about the points in your statement
- Research who will be interviewing you
- Make sure you are clear regarding interview logistics
- If you will be undertaking a virtual interview, make sure you have somewhere suitable for this task, with good wifi
- Prepare questions you would like to ask in the interview



NCH Insights

New College of
the Humanities

N

Faculty insights

- Human beings created art long before the written word. To understand the history, evolution and ongoing production of visual culture is to understand a large part of what it means to be human
- Art History provides an excellent opportunity to develop the essential skills and talents that lie at the core of a liberal arts education, including informed and critical reading, writing, and speaking
- Because today our society is so reliant on visual storytelling, studying Art History is not just a way of coming to terms with our past artistic legacies - it's a way of actively preparing for the future
- We look for students with analytical and critical minds, who are interested in the world and curious about visual culture. Look at visual culture as you move through the place where you live... how does it affect you?
- London is the global capital of the art world, and an unrivalled location in which to study Art History
- Visit galleries and museums and think about how the works have been interpreted and displayed...what stories has the curator chosen to tell using the works of art? Read widely on arts and culture. Prepare to answer why you want to study Art History and why Art History is valuable

Student tips and hints

- Visit galleries and museums. Be prepared to talk about art, design and architecture that grabs you, that you love or that you hate
- The Metropolitan Museum, NY, The National Gallery of Art, Washington DC, and The Museum of Fine Arts in Boston have fantastic podcasts
- The websites for all the London museums and galleries have valuable material
- Often exhibition reviews in newspapers like the Guardian can be interesting and provocative
- Check out <https://www.theartnewspaper.com/>
- The Art Fund matches volunteers with institutions, and can help to locate internships - <https://www.artfund.org/>



Suggestions for wider reading

- D'Alleva, A (2010), ***How to Write Art History***. 2nd edition, London: Laurence King
- Gombrich, E H (2007), ***The Story of Art***. 16th edition, New York: Phaidon Press
- Woods, K (Ed.) (2007), ***Making Renaissance Art***. London and New Haven: Yale University Press (in association with the Open University)
- Kirby, J (2011), ***A Closer Look - Techniques of Painting***. London: National Gallery
- Cormack, R (2018), ***Byzantine Art***. Oxford: Oxford University Press, second ed
- Berger, J (2008), ***Ways of Seeing***. London: Penguin Modern Classics



Q & A

N



NCHLondon



@NCHLondon



@NCHLondon



New College of
the Humanities



@NCHLondon

Devon House

58 St Katharine's Way, London,
E1W 1LP, United Kingdom

nchlondon.ac.uk

info@nchlondon.ac.uk

+44 (0)20 7637 4550

**New College of
the Humanities**



N