

Subject Benchmark Statement: History of Art, Architecture and Design

The Basics

This summary is designed to provide a short and accessible overview of the Subject Benchmark Statement for **History of Art, Architecture and Design** for students, employers and academics. It is not intended to replace or alter the Statement, which should be referred to in the design and approval of courses and when any further detail is required.

Subject Benchmark Statements describe the nature of study and the benchmark academic standards expected of graduates in specific subject areas, and in respect of particular qualifications. They provide a picture of what graduates in a particular subject might reasonably be expected to know, do and understand at the end of their course or programme.

Subject Benchmark Statements are presented in four sections. Section 1 outlines the contextual information - providing the operational landscape,

and boundaries, of subject discipline. This includes consideration of the ways in which the discipline addresses wider social goals, specifically in relation to: equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI); accessibility and the needs of disabled students; education for sustainable development (ESD); enterprise and entrepreneurship; and the impact of generative artificial intelligence on the subject.

Section 2 covers distinctive features of the course, including curriculum design, partnership arrangements, flexibility of delivery, progression and ongoing monitoring processes. Section 3 explains any features relevant to teaching, learning and assessment activities for the subject. Section 4 describes the benchmark standards of achievement reached by all graduates with a bachelor's degree with honours in the subject, with some subjects also including achievement at master's level.



Why study a degree in History of Art, Architecture and Design?

HAAD courses address a wide range of artefacts from visual and material culture. In terms of their medium, artefacts can encompass painting, sculpture, architecture and applied arts, and as well as lens- or screen-based media and performance art.

Additional sub-categories may include but are not limited to sand, mural, panel, canvas or screen painting, drawings, mosaics, stained-glass, prints, and book illumination for painting; carvings, reliefs, and statues for sculpture; buildings, gardens, monuments, landmarks, axiomatic structures and installations for architecture; vehicles, furniture, jewellery and clothing for applied arts; happenings and sound art for performance; photography, film, television, video, social media, and computer games for lens- and screen-based media.

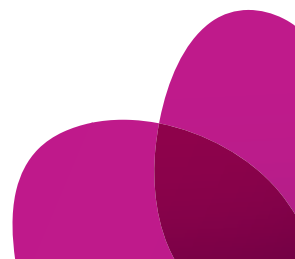
HAAD courses engage with critical, historical and theoretical writing and other discursive forms in all these categories and sub-categories.

HAAD courses combine description with critical contextual study to map the ways artefacts are products of their time and can fundamentally shape the world as well.

They may use written sources ranging from historical and literary texts to archival records and scientific evidence from multispectral imaging to chemical analysis, thereby providing interdisciplinary training that crosses traditional boundaries in the arts, humanities and sciences.

They investigate negotiations between patrons, clients, communities, designers and makers around beliefs, aspirations, desires, finances and artistic choices, together with the modalities of access and ideological or lifestyle impact on beholders, users, and customers.

The study of visual and material culture also identifies inequalities of power in global and local contexts that are centred on class, ethnicity, race, gender, sexuality, health and the environment.





What are the main teaching and learning approaches in History of Art, Architecture and Design?

The methods of delivering HAAD courses are diverse and dynamic. This includes a mix of traditional lectures, seminars and tutorials, group, and one-to-one teaching as well as self-reflective and peer-learning activities.

Off-campus study experiences play an important role; these include trips to museums, galleries, libraries, archives, special collections and artists' studios as well as visits to see art, architecture and design that can only be experienced in situ.

Emphasis is also placed on the role of digital and generative artificial intelligence technologies from documentation and interrogation (research) to writing and presentation (resolution). The diverse methods and contexts of delivery means that the subject is highly accessible to all students.

All learning materials and assessment processes are designed to be flexible and can be adjusted in order to accommodate individual student needs.

HAAD courses cultivate historiographical awareness through study of the complex and contested histories of the discipline, including the inherent partiality of historical knowledge and the cultural specificity of notions of 'art, architecture and design'.

They also examine the physical properties of artefacts and cover the contemporary contexts for historical knowledge, including political discourses and professional practices in the arts, heritage, and creative cultural industries.



How are students assessed?

Assessment methods reflect content and learning outcomes. Repeated opportunities for self-assessment and peer assessment help students to develop as confident independent learners who reflect critically on their own capacities as well as the subject matter. Those designing assessment consider methods and outputs that will give students opportunities to demonstrate their own capacities throughout the assessment process. This may include, for example, using forms of in-person, offline, real-world and/or peer assessment.



Benchmark Standards

The minimum threshold and typical standards that a student will have demonstrated when they are awarded a bachelor's and/or master's degree in **History of Art, Architecture and Design** are outlined on **pages 17-19** of the Subject Benchmark Statement. The vast majority of students will perform significantly better than the minimum threshold standards. Each higher education provider has its own method of determining what appropriate evidence of this achievement will be and should refer to [Annex D in The Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies](#). This Annex sets out common descriptions of the four main degree outcome classifications for bachelor's degrees with honours - 1st, 2.1, 2.2 and 3rd.

The full statement was developed by subject experts drawn from across the sector. Details of the Advisory Group can be found on page 20 of the Statement.

Subject Benchmark Statements are published in QAA's capacity as an expert quality body on behalf of the higher education sector.

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