

Programme Specification

1	Awarding Body	University of London				
2	Teaching Institution	Birkbeck College				
3	Programme Title(s)	MA Museum Cultures MA Museum Cultures with Collections Management MA Museum Cultures with Curating PG Dip Museum Cultures PG Cert Museum Cultures				
4	Programme Code(s)	MA Museum Cultures: TMAMUMEM MA Museum Cultures with Collections Management: TMAMUCOL_C MA Museum Cultures with Curating: Museum Cultures with Curating PG Dip Museum Cultures: TPDMUMEM PG Cert Museum Cultures: TCMUMEM				
5	UCAS code	N/A				
6	Home Department	History of Art				
7	Exit Award(s)	PG Dip Museum Cultures PG Cert Museum Cultures PG Dip Museum Cultures with Collections Management PG Cert Museum Cultures with Collections Management PG Dip Museum Cultures with Curating PG Cert Museum Cultures with Curating				
8	Duration of Study (number of years)	1 year full-time; 2 years part-time				
9	Mode of Study	FT	x	PT	x	DL
10	Level of Award (FHEQ)	7				
11	Other teaching depts or institution	School of Arts Departments: European Cultures and Languages; Media and Cultural Studies; Iberian and Latin American Studies; English, Theatre and Creative Writing. School of Social Sciences, History and Philosophy Department: History, Classics and Archaeology. School of Law.				
12	Professional, Statutory Regulatory Body(PSRB) details	N/A				
13	QAA Benchmark Group	N/A				
14	Programme Rationale and Aims					
	Rationale:	The Museum Cultures postgraduate programmes utilise the museological expertise of academics from the following departments of the School of Arts: History of Art and Screen				

Media, European Cultures and Languages, English, Theatre and Creative Writing, Media and Cultural Studies, and Iberian and Latin American Studies; and the department of History, Classics and Archaeology of the School of Social Sciences, History and Philosophy, as well as the School of Law thus creating an innovative inter-disciplinary programme with an international scope. The programme uses modules on museums that already run across the College while the core module/research skills provides an introduction and structuring framework.

The programme aims to appeal to students who prefer to take relatively short courses – the PG Cert and PGDip – and to students who want to enrol on a full Masters degree. The series of awards also enables students who may not initially be able to commit to a full Masters to progress in stages as far as their ability or circumstances allow. By structuring the award as steps and by predominantly using modules that are already taught within Birkbeck, Museum Cultures economically and efficiently introduces four new target awards

The programme structure also has a distinct intellectual ethos and areas of academic competence. The research and correlative modules all concentrate on museums' production, representation, validation or contestation of culture. Research on museums in Europe, the Americas, Africa and Asia makes the programme distinct insofar as British museum studies tend to concentrate on Western Europe and North America. In turn, the focus on regions raises issues of nationality, war, trauma, colonialism and post-colonialism, representation and identity. The emphasis on national and ethnic culture is expanded and complemented by modules which consider different aspects and notions of culture including elite, popular and working class culture; institutional cultures, cultural regeneration and so forth. Thus taken as a whole, the MA offers students a unique opportunity to interrogate the meaning of culture and to investigate specific cultures within a museum context.

The awards can be taken as a purely academic course of study, but for students who are aiming at finding employment in the museum sector we have also introduced a compulsory module with two options: students can choose between a work-placement or 'Museums in Practice'. The work placement module will run in partnership with London museums and will aim to give students valuable work experience and the opportunity to test the integration of museological theory and practice. Students who are less confident, or whose schedules will not allow them to take up placements, or on occasions when it has not been possible to provide sufficient work placements, will be able to take 'Museums in Practice', which involves applied research based on first-hand investigation of museum practice.

By organising placements as part of a Masters degree, the programme directors seek to create opportunities for students who may otherwise find it difficult to secure placements (placements are often awarded to museum directors' young relatives or to other well connected applicants) and thereby to promote widening participation in a relatively elite arena.

Aims:

The aims of the MA, PG Dip, PG Cert Museum Cultures are:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To study the history and operations of museums in Europe, the Americas, Africa and Asia • To investigate the cultural significance of museums, their histories and contemporary issues • To acquire and refine skills in archival and historical research and verbal and written communication • To develop research skills in a project, or gain experience with a work placement in a museum or gallery.
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15	<p>Entry Criteria</p> <p>Good honours degree in a relevant subject or equivalent (for example, professional experience).</p> <p>In addition to the online application, students will need to complete and submit a written exercise, or submit a sample recent undergraduate essay. Interviews January - September.</p> <p>Applicants who do not fulfil the entrance requirements, but who have degrees in other subjects that would provide a valuable additional input into the study environment of the MA, or who have substantial practical or industrial experience, will also be considered. The ability of applicants to think and write about the subject in meaningful and interesting ways is tested through discussion at interview and, where appropriate, through a short written exercise.</p> <p>All prospective students are interviewed, either in person or by telephone, after completing an application. Interviews cover the nature and details of the MA, with the purpose of confirming its appropriateness for each applicant’s interests and future plans (and vice versa) in terms of part-time or full-time study, the balance between physical attendance at taught sessions and personal research and study, and the various skills expected to be developed in the student.</p> <p>Students may take the PG Cert or PG Dip as stand-alone qualifications.</p>
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16	<p>Learning Outcomes</p> <p>On successful completion of the MA, PG Dip, PG Cert Museum Cultures, students will be expected to have:</p> <p><i>Subject Specific</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Substantial knowledge and understanding of the historical and theoretical contexts for museums within a diversity of fields: art, anthropology, archaeology, design or history • Specialist knowledge of a chosen aspect of museological history and theory, acquired during the option modules • In-depth knowledge of a specific institutional culture acquired during the work placement or on ‘Museums in Practice’. <p><i>Intellectual</i></p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to select and acquire relevant material and evidence and to analyse, present and interpret this as appropriate within the context of the course • Ability to select and develop appropriate historical and theoretical methodological frameworks and approaches • Ability to understand advanced abstract material and demonstrate critical awareness and distance <p><i>Practical</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to debate in an atmosphere of open discussion • Ability to undertake short and extended-length academic writing • Ability to communicate ideas effectively, both in writing and verbally <p>On successful completion of the MA Museum Cultures with Curating, students will additionally demonstrate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A solid grasp of key issues in curating practice • Foundational skills in curating practice • Insight into the different working practices of various museums and galleries • Ability to research and test ideas for exhibitions • Skills in research, writing, and documentation that are specifically geared to a museums or galleries context <p>On successful completion of the MA Museum Cultures with Collections Management, students will additionally demonstrate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A solid grasp of key issues in collections management • Foundational skills in collections management • Insight into the different working practices of various museums and galleries • Skills in research, writing, and documentation that are specifically geared to a museums or galleries context
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17	<p>Learning, Teaching and Assessment Methods</p> <p>The standard format for teaching is a combination of lectures and seminars and one-to-one tutorials.</p> <p>Lecturers present an overview of the main issues attached to the week’s subject area, pointing students in the direction of required reading as well as further reading and research.</p> <p>The seminar component of each session enables students to explore ideas and methods, to discuss both the required reading and the results of personal research and study, and to refine their own skills of argument, communication and presentation. Seminars may include structured as well as open debate, as well as the analysis and presentation of visual material, small group discussions and task based work. In addition, seminars may include visits to museums and galleries.</p> <p>There are two work-based learning modules, one of which students must take. Students on the work placement module, or on ‘Museums in Practice’, will work to professional briefs,</p>
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	<p>and gain hands-on experience. In addition, the work placement provides an opportunity to gain valuable work experience and to learn by combining theory with practice.</p> <p>Further support and expansion of students' areas of interest comes in the form of tutorials, arranged by mutual agreement with the lecturer, allowing students to discuss issues on a one-to-one basis.</p> <p>Additional handouts and moodle resources will direct students towards supplementary information and reading.</p> <p>Symposia and series of lectures delivered by guest speakers working in museums and the heritage industry will, wherever possible, be organised throughout the academic year to provide students with an opportunity to engage with current professional debates in the field.</p>
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18	<p>Programme Description</p> <p>Students registered on the MA Museum Cultures programme take the compulsory module 'Museum Cultures: Approaches, Issues, Skills', two option modules, either a placement module or 'Museums in Practice', and a core dissertation.</p> <p>Full-time students take the compulsory module 'Museum Cultures: Approaches, Issues, Skills', and one option module in the autumn term, a second option module in the spring term, and either the work placement module or 'Museums in Practice' in the summer term, and work on their dissertation from the spring term.</p> <p>In Year 1, Part-time students take the compulsory module 'Museum Cultures: Approaches, Issues, Skills' in the autumn term, one option module in the spring term, and either the work placement module or 'Museums in Practice' (depending on work commitments) in the summer term. In Year 2 they take the second option in the autumn term, and begin work on their dissertation from the spring term.</p> <p>The compulsory module 'Museum Cultures: Approaches, Issues, Skills' introduces students to contemporary debates within museum cultures. A linked seminar series allows them to develop research skills appropriate to the museum sector and its academic study.</p> <p>Option modules offer students the opportunity to follow specific interests and areas of research.</p> <p>The Work Placement is located in a museum or gallery. The placement acts as a turning point in the course, as students move out of a highly structured academic programme into work in which they will be expected to use more individual initiative and exercise responsibility. Placements are usually organised for 2-3 days over a period of three months. In some cases it may be possible to offer or negotiate shorter placements or placements in intensive blocks.</p> <p>'Museums in Practice' is the student's first piece of extended, independent research. It draws on the methods, issues and skills that have been raised in the 'Museum Cultures: Approaches, Issues, Skills' module and the Research Skills seminars. It provides the</p>
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	opportunity to pursue research based on first-hand investigation of a topic chosen in discussion with and approval from a member of academic staff. Students will complete the programme with a 15,000-word dissertation (MA).
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19	Programme Structure			
Full-Time Programme: MA Museum Cultures – 1 year				
Year 1				
Level	Module Code	Module Title	Credits	Status*
7	ARVC059S7	Museum Cultures: Approaches, Issues, Skills	30	Compulsory
7	From a range	Option Module 1	30	Option
7	From a range	Option Module 2	30	Option
7	ARVC054S7 ARVC283S7	<i>Either</i> Work Placement <i>Or</i> Museums in Practice	30	Comp
7	ARVC056D7	Dissertation (15,000 words)	60	Core
Full Time programme: MA Museum Cultures With Curating – 1 year (available on alternating years)				
Year 1				
Level	Module Code	Module Title	Credits	Status*
7	ARVC059S7	Museum Cultures: Approaches, Issues, Skills	30	Compulsory
7	ARVC273S7	Curating	30	Compulsory
7	From a range	Option Module	30	Optional
7	ARVC054S7 ARVC283S7	Work Placement <i>Or</i> Museums in Practice	30	Compulsory
7	AHVM019D7	Dissertation	60	Core
Full-Time Programme: MA Museum Cultures with Collections Management – 1 year (available on alternating years)				
Year 1				
Level	Module Code	Module Title	Credits	Status*
7	ARVC059S7	Museum Cultures: Approaches, Issues, Skills	30	Compulsory
7	ARVC272S7	Collections Management	30	Compulsory
7	From a range	Option Module	30	Optional
7	ARVC054S7 ARVC283S7	Work Placement <i>Or</i> Museums in Practice	30	Compulsory
7	AHVM019D7	Dissertation	60	Core
Part-Time Programme: MA Museum Cultures – 2 years				
Year 1				
Level	Module Code	Module Title	Credits	Status
7	ARVC059S7	Museum Cultures: Approaches, Issues, Skills	30	Compulsory
7	From a range	Option Module 1	30	Option
7	ARVC054S7 ARVC283S7	<i>Either</i> Work Placement <i>Or</i> Museums in Practice	30	Comp

Year 2				
Level	Module Code	Module Title	Credits	Status
7	From a range	Option Module 2	30	Option
7	ARVC056D7	Dissertation (15,000 words)	60	Core
Part Time programme: MA Museum Cultures with Curating – 2 years				
Year 1				
Level	Module Code	Module Title	Credits	Status*
7	ARVC059S7	Museum Cultures: Approaches, Issues, Skills	30	Comp
7		Option Module OR Curating	30	Optional or Compulsory
7	ARVC054S7 ARVC283S7	Work Placement Or Museums in Practice	30	Compulsory
Year 2				
Level	Module Code	Module Title	Credits	Status*
7		Option Module OR Curating	30	Optional or Compulsory
7	AHVM019D7	Dissertation	60	Core
Part Time programme: MA Museum Cultures with Collections Management				
Year 1				
Level	Module Code	Module Title	Credits	Status*
7	ARVC059S7	Museum Cultures: Approaches, Issues, Skills	30	Compulsory
7		Option Module OR Collections Management	30	Optional or Compulsory
7	ARVC054S7 ARVC283S7	Work Placement Or Museums in Practice	30	Compulsory
Year 2				
Level	Module Code	Module Title	Credits	Status*
7		Option Module OR Collections Management	30	Optional or Compulsory
7	AHVM019D7	Dissertation	60	Core
Full-Time Programme: PG Dip – 1 year				
Year 1				
Level	Module Code	Module Title	Credits	Status*
7	ARVC059S7	Museum Cultures: Approaches, Issues, Skills	30	Compulsory
7	From a range	Option Module 1	30	Option
7	From a range	Option Module 2	30	Option
7	ARVC054S7 ARVC283S7	Either Work Placement Or Museums in Practice	30	Compulsory

Part-Time Programme: PG Dip				
Year 1				
Level	Module Code	Module Title	Credits	Status*
7	ARVC059S7	Museum Cultures: Approaches, Issues, Skills	30	Compulsory
7	From a range	Option Module 1	30	Option
7	ARVC054S7 ARVC283S7	<i>Either</i> Work Placement <i>Or</i> Museums in Practice	30	Compulsory
Year 2				
7	From a range	Option Module 2	30	Option
Part-Time Programme: PG Cert				
Level	Module Code	Module Title	Credits	Status*
7	ARVC059S7	Museum Cultures: Approaches, Issues, Skills	30	Compulsory
7	From a range	Option Module 1	30	Option
Indicative list of optional modules				
Level	Module Code	Module Title	Credits	Status*
7	AHVM064S7	Curating Difficult Histories: Museums, Exhibitions, Art Activism	30	Optional
7	ARVC225S7	Art Museums in a Global Age	30	Optional
7	ARVC076S7	Exhibiting the Body	30	Optional
7	ARVC257S7	Slavery and its Cultural Legacies	30	Optional

Status*

CORE – Module must be taken and passed by student; *COMPULSORY* – Module must be taken, mark can be reviewed at sub-exam board; *OPTIONAL* – Student can choose to take this module

20	<p>Additional Programme Information</p> <p>Requirements for exit awards</p> <p>Students must have completed the following modules in order to exit with these awards:</p> <p>PG Dip Museum Cultures with Collections Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Museum Cultures: Approaches, Issues, Skills (ARVC059S7) • Collections Management (ARVC272S7) • 1 Option Module (30 credits, from a range of level 7 modules) • Work Placement (ARVC054S7) or Museum in Practice (ARVC283S7) <p>PG Cert Museum Cultures with Collections Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Museum Cultures: Approaches, Issues, Skills (ARVC059S7) • Collections Management (ARVC272S7) <p>PG Dip Museum Cultures with Curating</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Museum Cultures: Approaches, Issues, Skills (ARVC059S7) • Curating (ARVC273S7) • 1 Option Module (30 credits, from a range of level 7 modules) • Work Placement (ARVC054S7) or Museums in Practice (ARVC283S7) <p>PG Cert Museum Cultures with Curating</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Museum Cultures: Approaches, Issues, Skills (ARVC059S7) • Curating (ARVC273S7) <p>Students on the Collections Management and Curating Pathways, who have accumulated the correct number of credits, and have taken Museum Cultures: Approaches, Issues, Skills (ARVC059S7), but have not taken all the required modules above, can exit with the PG Cert Museum Cultures.</p>
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21	Programme Director	Dr Gabriel Koureas
22	Start Date (<i>term/year</i>)	Autumn 2011
23	Date approved by TQEC	Spring 2010
24	Date approved by Academic Board	Spring 2010
25	Date(s) updated/amended	6 May 2021 (for 2021/22)