

SOAS - Alphawood

*Postgraduate Diploma in
Asian Art*

PROSPECTUS 2025/26



SOAS
University of London

In Association with

The British
Museum

V&A



SOAS-Alphawood Postgraduate Diploma in Asian Art

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The SOAS-Alphawood Postgraduate Diploma in Asian at SOAS University of London offers a unique programme that will immerse you in the study of Asian art. We offer you an exceptional opportunity to explore and expand your interests and develop your academic abilities in a collegiate and supportive environment.

We lead you on a journey of object-based study through lectures and contributions from a wide range of leading scholars, curators, and art market professionals. We have a formal association with the British Museum and the Victoria and Albert Museum, which allows us to offer exceptional access to the collections and curatorial expertise of both institutions.

Our programme will appeal to all those with a serious interest in Asian art, regardless of your personal, professional or academic background. It is also a proven pathway to further postgraduate study in Asian art and careers in museums, the commercial art world and academia.

In 2025/26 we are delivering the following modules in person: *Arts of India*, *Arts of China*, *Arts of Southeast Asia* and *Arts of the Islamic World*, with on-site visits to museum galleries and reserve collections. We also offer three fully online modules: *Asia's Art Histories*, *Curating Asian Art* and *Arts of the Buddhist World*, which are accessible from anywhere in the world.

These modules are taken alongside two supporting courses, *Analysing and Exploring the Arts* and either the *Independent Study Project in Asian Art History*, or an intensive, in-person course, *Asian Art in the Museum*.

“The superlative collections of the V&A and the British Museum make London one of the most important centres for the appreciation and study of Asian art and culture.

The SOAS-Alphawood Postgraduate Diploma in Asian art gives students unique access to these collections and to the expertise of those who curate them.”

Anna Jackson

Keeper of the Asia Department
Victoria & Albert Museum

Jane Portal

Keeper of the Department of Asia
British Museum



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SOAS University of London is the only higher education institution in the UK specialising in the study of Africa, Asia and the Middle East. The SOAS-Alphawood Postgraduate Diploma in Asian Art is a part of SOAS' College of Humanities.

The SOAS-Alphawood Postgraduate Diploma in Asian Art is a unique programme of object-based study of the arts of Asia. We combine focused surveys of Asian art with a practical approach to the study of objects and their contexts. Leading experts give lectures on the arts of India, China, Southeast Asia, Japan and Korea, the Buddhist world and the Islamic world. We prepare students for work in a variety of professions in the arts and the museum world. Our programme also provides a pathway to a master's degree and PhD for those without an academic background in the subject.

Many of our alumni work in leading international museums, art foundations, galleries, auction houses, and universities. We welcome students from varied academic or professional backgrounds. Your classmates will range from recent graduates pursuing a career in the art world to retired professionals with a serious interest in arts and culture.

Flexibility is one of our programme's greatest strengths.

You can choose any number or combination of our ten, eleven-week modules and two of our three supporting courses. Our programme structure is designed to enrich your academic experience and create a pathway tailored to your interests. You can study with us in-person in London, online from anywhere in the world, or a combination of the two.

Students who successfully complete three of our eleven-week modules and two supporting courses within three years receive a Postgraduate Diploma. Students who successfully complete a single module and two supporting courses have the option to exit the programme with a Postgraduate Certificate.

Our programme provides you with a broad understanding of Asian art, exploring major periods and media, as well as opportunities to study the curation and display of Asian art.

You will learn how to research, identify, document and analyse objects and artworks, and to critically evaluate them within their cultural contexts. In addition to SOAS' exceptional academic environment, you will benefit from the guidance of museum curators in the study of objects from the reserve collections of the British Museum and Victoria and Albert Museum here in London.

We offer you an unrivalled range of opportunities through a unique combination of academic rigour, museum access, and practical experience. A network of leading experts contribute to a challenging and stimulating programme of lectures, seminars and museum visits.

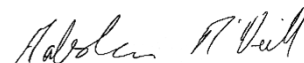
The programme director and module convenors provide you with continuity, academic guidance and close individual support throughout your time at SOAS. Your dedicated administrative and student support team are on hand to facilitate your learning.

Our programme will support you in developing and deepening your research and writing skills, with access to the unrivalled resources of SOAS Library, the UK's designated National Research Library for Asia, Africa, and the Middle East.

Our combination of theory and practice makes the Postgraduate Diploma a unique, object-based programme for the study of Asian art, based within the foremost institution in the world for studies of this kind.

Please email me to book a one-to-one meeting to determine if we are the right fit for you.

I look forward to hearing from you.



Dr Malcolm McNeill FHEA
Programme Director
Senior Lecturer in Arts Education
AsianArt@soas.ac.uk



Programme Content

The SOAS-Alphawood Postgraduate Diploma in Asian Art offers ten immersive modules, each eleven weeks in length, either in-person or online.

Students can take any number or combination of modules and you can begin the programme in September, January or May.

Our in-person modules require full-time attendance in London and feature on-site visits to museum galleries and reserve collections.

Our online modules are accessible from anywhere in the world and also allow you to study alongside other commitments. They feature bespoke contributions from museum curators bringing the artworks of museum galleries and reserve collections to you virtually.

We also offer three supporting courses. *Analysing & Exploring the Arts* and an *Independent Study Project in Asian Art History* are available both in person and online and run alongside each term. *Asian Art in the Museum* is an intensive two-week, in-person immersion in object-based study of Asian art run each April, based at our London campus.

Applicants are expected to hold an undergraduate degree in any subject or equivalent experience. Prior knowledge of Asian art history or archaeology is not a requirement, though candidates are expected to have an interest in the area.



Programme Learning Outcomes

- Acquire a contextualised understanding of diverse artistic traditions, and visual and material cultures from multiple regions across Asia
- Develop skills and confidence in object-led visual and material analysis
- Reflect critically on the contexts in which you encounter objects studied on this course
- Engage critically with current and past scholarship in relevant fields
- Develop rigorous academic skills for postgraduate study, research, writing and argumentation, moving toward autonomous, independent study
- Relate your newly developed skills and knowledge to global opportunities for vocational and voluntary contributions to the arts

Academic Qualifications and Credit Points

The award of Postgraduate Diploma is made on the successful completion of three modules and two supporting courses within three years.

The award of Postgraduate Certificate is made on the successful completion of one module and two supporting courses within one year.

Each of our eleven-week modules carries 30 credit points at FHEQ level 7. Each of our supporting courses carries 15 credit points. The Postgraduate Diploma in Asian Art requires 120 credit points. The Postgraduate Certificate in Asian Art requires 60 credit points.

Unassessed Study for Interest and Enjoyment

We also offer spaces on the programme to those who are not seeking an academic qualification. Those who choose study on this pathway enjoy full access as a SOAS student but are not required to complete the assessments. This pathway is available for the full module fee.

Module Delivery

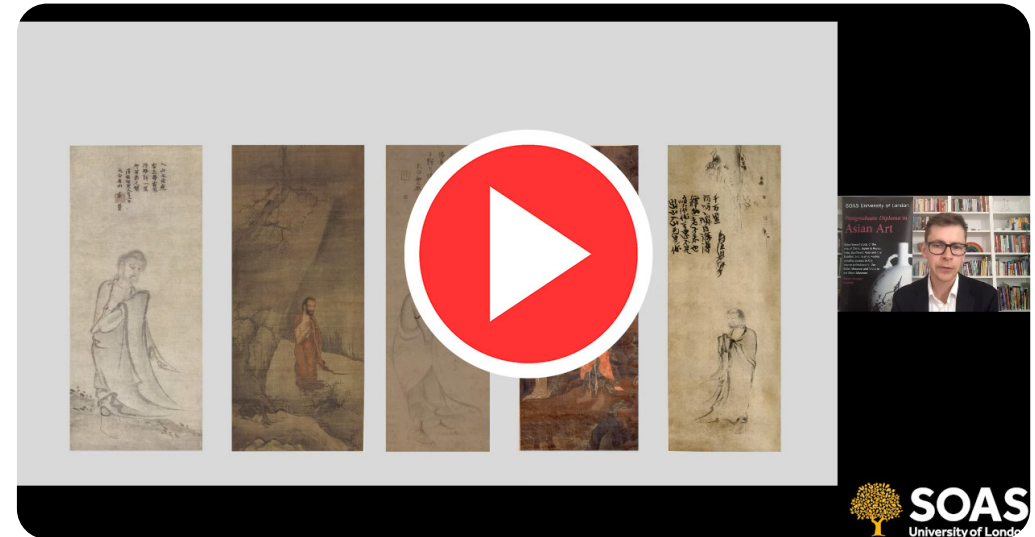
- In-person lectures given by SOAS academic staff, leading national and international scholars, museum curators, and art market professionals, generally taking place between 10.00 and 13.00 Monday through Thursday
- Exclusive contributions from the British Museum and Victoria and Albert Museum
- Visits and object study sessions at a variety of museums, galleries and auction houses
- A series of asynchronous online lectures exploring critical thinking and current methods with associated seminars
- Recommended weekly readings
- Weekly review sessions
- Weekly one-to-one tutorials with your module convenors

Assessment

- One object analysis of 1,500 words (20%)
- One written assignment 2,500 words per module (40%)
- One 48-hour, take-home slide test per module (40%)

In-Person Modules Offered

- **Arts of India** 29 September – 17 December 2025 (annually)
- **Arts of China** 19 January – 08 April 2026 (annually)
- **Arts of Southeast Asia** 04 May – 22 July 2026 (biennially)
- **Arts of the Islamic World** 04 May – 22 July 2026 (biennially)
- **Arts of the Buddhist World** May – July 2027 (biennially)
- **Arts of Japan & Korea** May – July 2027 (biennially)



[Click here to see our showcase video:](#)
Three Objects from the Arts of India, China and Japan:
A Fierce Goddess, A Withered Saint, and A Modern Print

Arts of India

From 2500 BCE to the present day, the *Arts of India* module explores the monumental, fine and decorative arts of South Asia. The module deals with architecture, sculpture, miniature painting, carved jades, carpets, textiles, furniture, jewellery, arms and armour, and the rural arts. The syllabus is broadly chronological and places the art in its religious and historical context. The module begins with an introduction to the Vedas, Buddhism, Jainism and Hinduism focusing on early Jain and Buddhist art and the principles of Hindu iconography, architecture, sculpture and wall painting. It emphasises the relationship between ritual and image in the study of medieval Hindu sculpture and architecture. Lectures cover Buddhist, Jain and Hindu manuscript painting.



The latter half of the module will explore Mughal and Rajput court art from the 16th to 18th centuries, with a particular focus on painting, jewellery and textiles.

Terra-cottas and other rural arts will also be covered and there will be lectures on modern and contemporary South Asian art.

Arts of China

The *Arts of China* module examines the material and visual cultures of China from the Neolithic period to the 21st century. The course covers developments in metalwork, jade, lacquer, ceramics, painting, calligraphy, sculpture, and textiles. Lectures on history, religion, philosophy and literature provide a contextual framework for understanding these developments. The module also considers the importance of patronage (imperial, elite, and popular), the impact of systems of belief (Confucianism, Buddhism, Daoism), and the role played by changes in the lives and social roles of artists. Technology and design approaches as well as the impact of interaction between China and the outside world are among the topics considered.



Arts of Southeast Asia

This module covers the art of mainland and maritime Southeast Asia from prehistoric times to the present day.

A wide range of art objects are considered from the ethnographical to the classical and monumental arts of Buddhism, Hinduism and Islam. Art historical, archaeological and ethnographic interpretations are presented side by side so that this interdisciplinary approach enhances students' understanding of the vast artistic heritage of the region.



The module covers the ethnographic art of the outer Indonesian islands and New Guinea, and the fertility, ancestor and spirit cults it expresses. It surveys the bronze age and the later dramatic development in social complexity engendered as the maritime trade routes developed throughout Southeast Asia and linked China with the Mediterranean. The profound impact of Hinduism and Buddhism is studied as these Indic systems rich in cosmology, philosophy and ritual infused the sacred monumental art and 'real-politik' of Cambodia, Java, Burma, Vietnam and Thailand and produced a boom in magnificent temple construction unmatched in human history.

The module ranges over Southeast Asia's cultural tapestry to offer insight on its statuary and reliefs, its textiles, ceramics, painting, lacquerware, shadow puppets, metalwork, calligraphy, and wood-carving.

Arts of the Islamic World

The *Arts of the Islamic World* module explores the origin and development of the arts produced in the central regions of the Muslim world from the 7th century CE to the present day: architecture, the arts of the book, ceramics, metalwork, glass as well as textiles and carpets.

The module follows a broadly chronological structure, ensuring clarity and continuity, and providing a coherent framework for study. Among the topics covered will be the use of decorative motifs such as calligraphy, the arabesque and geometric ornament and their evolution through different periods and regions. The module will explore what is particular to Islamic art and how artists in the Muslim world borrowed from other cultures as well as the impact Islamic art had on Europe. The influence of the China trade, the exchange of luxury items along the Silk route, and the contacts with Europe and the Mongols in Central Asia will also be examined.



Arts of the Buddhist World



The *Arts of the Buddhist World* module introduces you to the religious, historical and geographic context for the spread of Buddhism and Buddhist art across Asia: from Buddhism's origins two and a half millennia ago in Northern India, to its current status as a global religion.

The module begins with a brief overview of the life and teachings of the

Buddha and considers the earliest Buddhist images in South Asia. We then trace the movement of Buddhist images, ideas and beliefs across the deserts and mountains of Central Asia into China. Exploring the adaptations and developments of Buddhism in China, we go on to examine how these iterations of Buddhist art and culture acted as a catalyst for subsequent developments; first in Korea and Japan, and later in Southeast Asia, Vietnam, Java and Cambodia. The module also explores the distinctive expressions of Esoteric Buddhism developed in Tibet, and the distinctive forms of Buddhist art engendered by the tradition in Burma, Thailand and Cambodia.

In exploring the diverse incarnations of Buddhist art across Asia, this module offers a broad and immersive introduction to the visual and material manifestations of one of the world's most significant religions.

Arts of Japan & Korea

This module examines the *Arts of Japan and Korea* in relation to religious, historical, and social contexts. The module follows a broad chronological progression from pre-history to contemporary, with the first few weeks focusing primarily on religious art and architecture of ancient to medieval eras when the links between Japan and Korea were particularly strong. While the major part of the module is dedicated to Japan, the study of Korean art is integrated into the module in order to compare and contrast the cultural and art historical development of the two countries. The relationship with China is also considered in a larger East Asian context of transmission of ideas and trade.

The second part of the module examines secular traditions of painting, and a wide variety of decorative arts such as ceramics, lacquer, and textiles. The study of innovative modern and contemporary art, architecture and design towards the end of the module will encourage students to gain a sound understanding of both continuation and evolution of aesthetic ideas.



Online Module Delivery

Our online pathway offers you an immersive foundation at postgraduate level in a richly rewarding field of study, with a unique range of digital resources and exceptional pedagogical support.

Our online modules are designed to be accessible from anywhere in the world, and with those who will have other professional and/or personal commitments in mind (although we do recommend allocating 30 hours of study time per week).

Online modules consist of a variety of different modes of learning, including:

- Asynchronous, online lectures given by SOAS academic staff, leading national and international scholars, museum curators, and art market professionals
- Exclusive contributions filmed in the exhibitions, galleries, and reserve collections of the British Museum and Victoria & Albert Museum
- Recommended weekly readings
- Live, weekly seminar discussions conducted via Zoom
- Online discussion fora facilitated by module convenors
- Weekly one-to-one tutorials with your module convenors

Assessment Methods

- One written assignment of 1,500 words or a 15-minute presentation (20%)
- One written assignment of 2,500 words (40%)
- A reflective curatorial or cataloguing exercise (40%)

Online Modules Offered

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| ■ Asia's Art Histories | 29 September – 17 December 2025 |
| ■ Curating Asian Art | 19 January – 08 April 2026 |
| ■ Arts of the Buddhist World | 04 May – 22 July 2026 |
| ■ Arts of Southeast Asia | May – July 2027 |



[Click here to see three showcase lectures from our online module, *Asia's Art Histories*:](#)

[Displaying Gandhara at the British Museum](#)

Dr Sushma Jansari

[Blue and White Ceramics: From Basra to Jingdezhen to Istanbul](#)

Dr Melanie Gibson

[Chan Figure Painting in Transnational Contexts](#)

Dr Malcolm McNeill

Asia's Art Histories

This module will introduce you to the latest ideas, concepts and approaches shaping art history today through focused case studies from across Asia.

Each week, *Asia's Art Histories* will present you with a mix of pre-recorded lectures and professionally filmed pre-recorded virtual visits to the British Museum and Victoria and Albert Museum. Each week your lectures and virtual visits are centred on a common theme and feature a range of speakers, including leading scholars, curators, and art market professionals. During the course of the module you will explore case studies from the following regions, religions and cultures: South Asia, China, Japan, Korea, Southeast Asia, the Islamic world and the Buddhist World. All case studies will focus on a common weekly theme.

Recurrent themes include:

- Art historiography
- Art historical approaches to archaeological material
- Analysing material cultures
- Analysing visual cultures
- Analysing architecture, space and environment
- Religious and ritual uses of objects, artworks and architecture
- Art, gender and agency
- Modernities and the contemporary
- Collection histories
- Curation and display

Asia's Art Histories offers you an immersive foundation at postgraduate level in a richly rewarding field of study, with a unique range of digital resources and exceptional pedagogical support. The module enables you to identify and consolidate your academic interests among the diverse artistic and cultural traditions of Asia.

Curating Asian Art

This module introduces you to the curation of Asian art, and visual and material culture. You will explore a diverse range of contexts in which Asian art is curated: from museums, to monuments, to commercial and private spaces.

Each week you explore a distinct theme or topic connected to curation and museology. These themes link your programme of study to current discussions and debates shaping curatorial practice and museological scholarship today. Each weekly theme is supported by carefully selected case studies, drawing on the diverse areas covered in the SOAS-Alphawood Postgraduate Diploma in Asian Art: South Asia, China, Japan, Korea, Southeast Asia, the Islamic World, and the Buddhist World. These case studies are delivered by a wide range of SOAS faculty and guest speakers, exposing you to a unique range of perspectives from across the museum, university and commercial arts sectors.



You will engage in practical, reflective assignments, with options to select projects and case studies that are relevant to your interests, aspirations, and the collections and institutions you have access to locally.

Curating Asian Art offers an in-depth introduction to curatorial and museum practice today. You will reflect on past and present curation of Asian art, while also developing skills and knowledge that will equip you to help shape the future of Asian Art's curation.

Arts of the Buddhist World (online)

The Arts of the Buddhist World module introduces you to the religious, historical and geographic context for the spread of Buddhism and Buddhist art across Asia: from Buddhism's origins two and a half millennia ago in Northern India, to its current status as a global religion. The course begins with a brief overview of the life and teachings of the Buddha and considers the earliest Buddhist images in South Asia. We then trace the movement of Buddhist images, ideas and beliefs across the deserts and mountains of Central Asia into China. Exploring the adaptations and developments of Buddhism in China, we go on to examine how these iterations of Buddhist art and culture acted as a catalyst for subsequent developments; first in Korea and Japan, and later in Southeast Asia, Vietnam, Java and Cambodia. The course also explores the distinctive expressions of Esoteric Buddhism developed in Tibet, and the distinctive forms of Buddhist art engendered by the tradition in Burma, Thailand and Cambodia.

In exploring the diverse incarnations of Buddhist art across Asia, this course offers a broad and immersive introduction to the visual and material manifestations of one of the world's most significant religions.



Arts of Southeast Asia (online)

This module covers the art of mainland and maritime Southeast Asia from prehistoric times to the present day, with a strong focus on pre-modern Hindu-Buddhist material. A wide range of art objects are considered from the ethnographical to the classical and monumental arts of Buddhism, Hinduism and Islam. Art historical, archaeological and ethnographic interpretations are presented side by side so that this inter-disciplinary approach enhances students' understanding of the vast artistic heritage of the region.

The module covers the ethnographic art of the outer Indonesian islands and New Guinea, and the fertility, ancestor and spirit cults it expresses. It surveys the bronze age and the later dramatic development in social complexity engendered as the maritime trade routes developed throughout Southeast Asia and linked China with the Mediterranean. The profound impact of Hinduism and Buddhism is studied as these Indic systems rich in cosmology, philosophy and ritual infused the sacred monumental art and 'real-politik' of Cambodia, Java, Burma, Vietnam and Thailand and produced a boom in magnificent temple construction unmatched in human history.

The module ranges over Southeast Asia's cultural tapestry to offer insight on its statuary and reliefs, its textiles, ceramics, painting, lacquerware, shadow puppets, metalwork, calligraphy, and wood-carving.



We offer three supporting courses, which are all designed to support, enrich and expand your learning on the SOAS-Alphawood Postgraduate in Asian Art: *Analysing and Exploring the Arts*, an *Independent Study Project in Asian Art History*, and *Asian Art in the Museum*.

You will be required to complete two of these three supporting courses in order to receive either a Postgraduate Diploma or Postgraduate Certificate award.

Analysing and Exploring the Arts

This course is compulsory and will be taken alongside your first module with us.

Analysing and Exploring the Arts offers you bespoke and supportive training in object-based art history.

Seminars and lectures contextualise your studies through thematic case studies on topics such as: how and why we catalogue objects; curation, interpretation and access in museums; cataloguing and curating in commercial contexts; arts journalism; and collaborating with living artists. This course also provides you with supportive training tailored to the skills developed in your main modules, covering topics including: preparing your object analysis; academic arguments and essay writing; exam technique; building a bibliography; and reflecting and acting on feedback.

Analysing and Exploring the Arts is delivered via ten pre-recorded lectures, ten weekly seminars, and an online discussion forum.

Assessment Methods

- Five-minute presentation on approaches to object analysis (30%)
- Written reflection on feedback, 750 words (30%)
- Reflective diary on weekly seminar discussions, 1500 words (40%)

Independent Study Project in Asian Art History

The Independent Study Project in Asian Art History allows you to develop a focused project on a single topic in Asian Art history. You will consolidate the skills and approaches you have developed throughout your programme, by applying them to a single output. Your output can be an essay (3000 words), an exhibition proposal with selected object catalogue entries (3000 words), an extended presentation (20 mins), or a guided tour of a museum gallery (20 mins). You will work with a supervisor to select a topic, develop a formative proposal, select and appraise appropriate sources, and research and deliver your final output. This is an opportunity for you to pursue a singular, focused passion, communicating and consolidating your understanding, enthusiasm and critical engagement with the content of the SOAS-Alphawood Postgraduate Diploma in Asian Art programme.

The Independent Study Project in Asian Art History includes five workshops that help you conceive, focus and develop your project, and six 30 minute 1-1 meetings with your supervisor.

You can complete this course alongside your final module or in a future term, so long as you complete within your maximum period of registration.

Assessment Methods

- Annotated bibliography, 500 words (10%)
- Final submission of 3000 words or a 20 minute presentation (90%)

These two supporting courses are both included within the 2025/26 module fee. You do not need to pay any additional fees to enrol on these courses.

Those seeking a Postgraduate Certificate award can complete one module and both supporting courses within one term if this is their preference.

Asian Art in the Museum

13 - 24 April 2026

Runs annually, in-person in London

This course is an intensive two-week immersion in object-based study of Asian art.

You will explore a range of objects and artworks in situ, predominantly in the British Museum and Victoria and Albert Museum, meeting with the curators who care for these collections.

The course is built around ten focused case studies, each consisting of a lecture, seminar, and related gallery or reserve collection visit. Case studies are drawn from the full range of regions and contexts covered in the SOAS-Alphawood Postgraduate Diploma in Asian Art: South Asia, China, Japan, Korea, Southeast Asia, the Islamic world and the Buddhist world. Each of the two weeks focuses on a single theme or topic that is central to art history and/or museum curation today. You will contextualise the objects encountered on this course within the diverse geographies, cultures and contexts from which the objects you study originate, and through which they have travelled to arrive in London today. You will actively contribute to class discussions and informal presentations in museums and galleries.

This module provides an immersive introduction to the object-based study of Asian art. It is an ideal complement to students studying any of our online distance learning modules who wish to acquire hands on experience of object based learning.

Assessment Methods

Halfway through the module you will submit a short reflection on your experience of direct study of objects in museum galleries and stores. Feedback on this short assessment will help you to hone your final submission: either an analytical essay or a curatorial proposal.

Ways to join Asian Art in the Museum

Prior to your first module

Begin your journey on the SOAS-Alphawood Postgraduate Diploma in Asian Art by joining us for *Asian Art in the Museum*.

This will count as your first supporting course (as an alternative to the Independent Study Project) and you will earn 15 credit points at FHEQ level 6.

This route requires a supplementary fee of £970.

After your final module

Culminate your journey on the SOAS-Alphawood Postgraduate Diploma in Asian Art by completing *Asian Art in the Museum*.

This will count as your second and final supporting course (as an alternative to the Independent Study Project) and you will earn 15 credit points at FHEQ level 7.

This route requires a supplementary fee of £970.

As an independent programme

Asian Art in the Museum is available to take independently of further study for a fee of £2,290 and you will earn 15 credit points at FHEQ level 6.

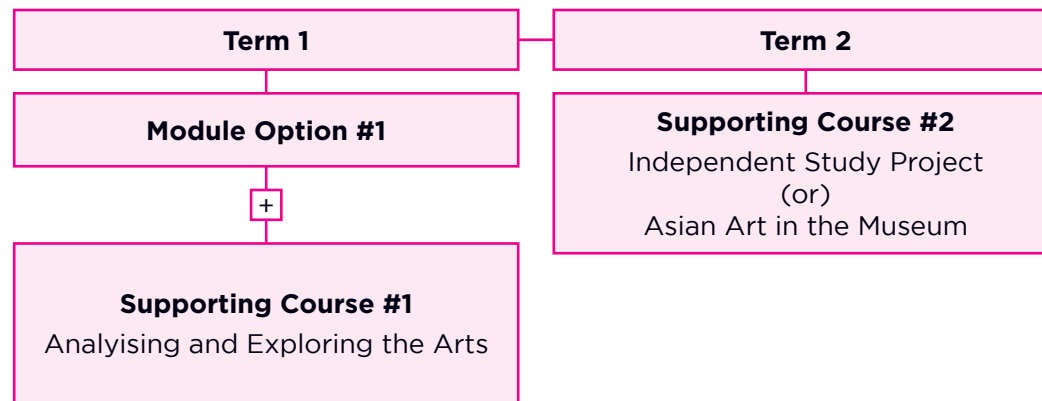
Accommodation

Please note that accommodation is not provided and must be arranged at your own expense.

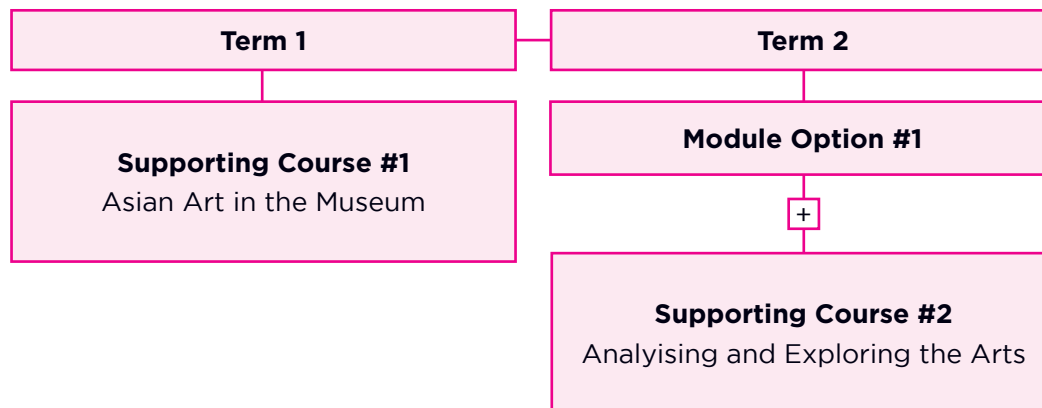


A postgraduate certificate requires 60 credit points. Students can pick any one module of their preference (30 credit points) and two of our three supporting courses (15 credit points each), to be completed **within one year** in line with the below pathway options:

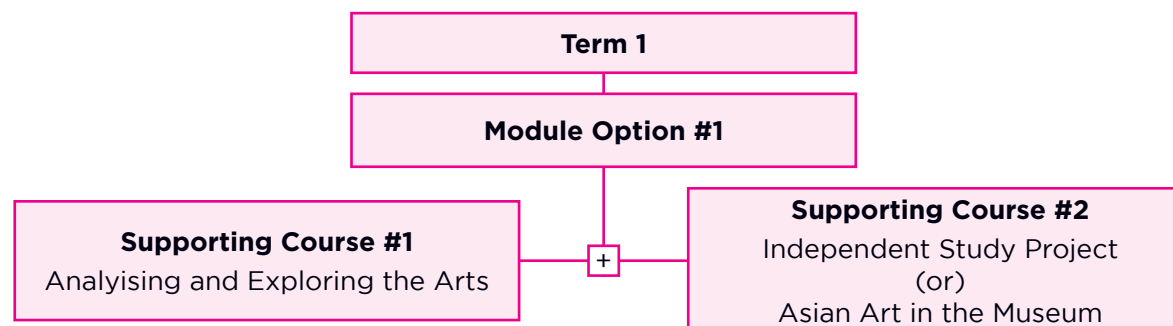
Route A (within one year)



Route B (within one year)



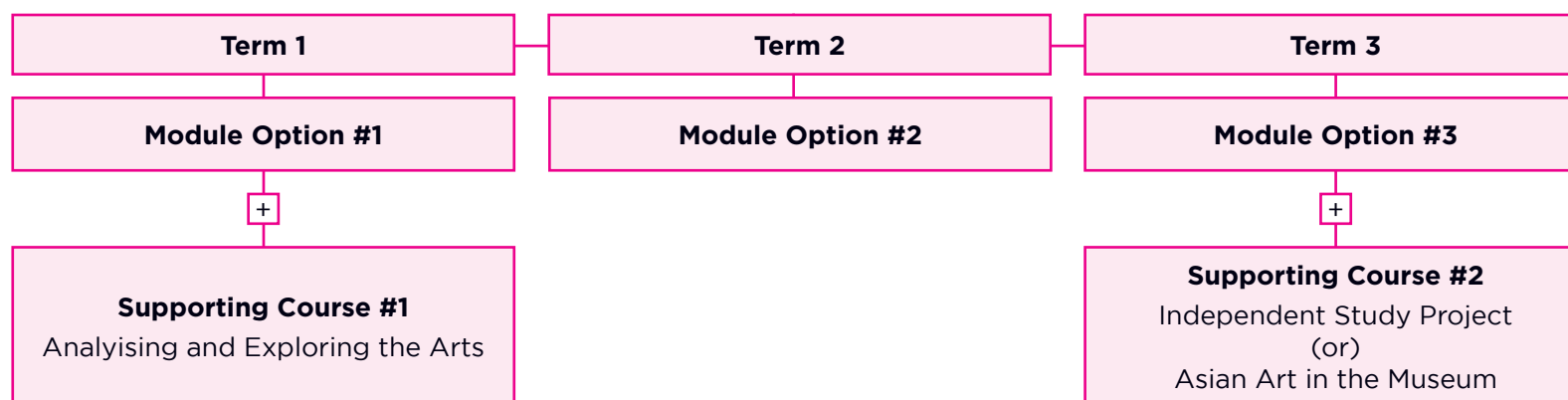
Route C (within one term)



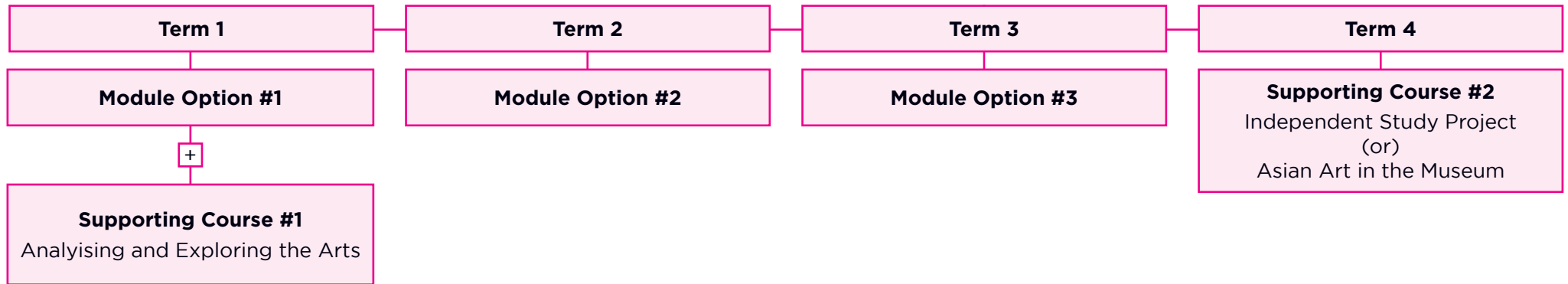
Routes to a Postgraduate Diploma

A postgraduate diploma requires 120 credit points. Students can pick any three modules of their preference (30 credit points) and two of our three supporting courses (15 credit points each), to be completed **within three academic years** in line with the below pathway options:

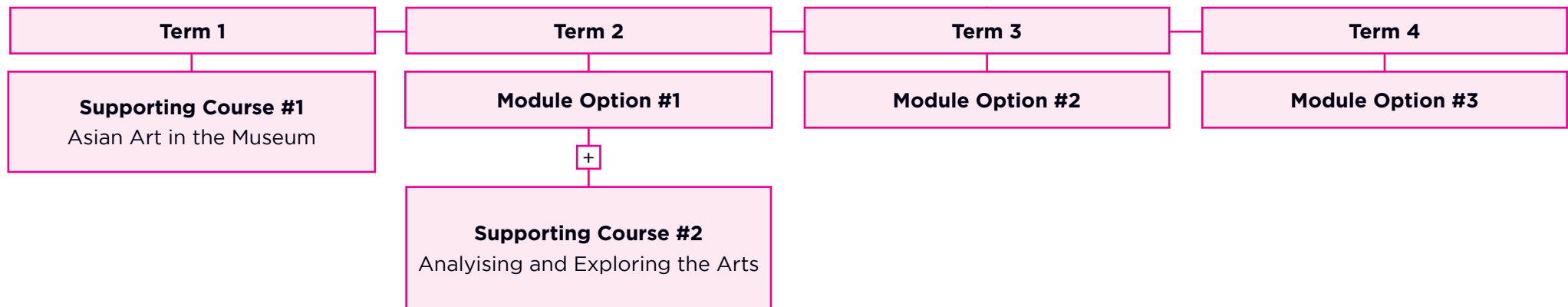
Route A (within three years)



Route B (within three years)



Route C (within three years)



	In-Person	Online
Postgraduate Certificate (with Asian Art in the Museum)	£5,770 (£6,740)	£3,375 (£4,345)
Postgraduate Diploma (with Asian Art in the Museum)	£17,310 (£18,280)	£10,125 (£11,095)

Fees are calculated based on a single in-person module fee of £5,770 and a single online module fee of £3,375 and can be paid on a module-by-module basis.

A single module fee includes the two supporting courses, *Analysing and Exploring the Arts* and an *Independent Study Project in Asian Art History*.

Selecting *Asian Art in the Museum* as a supporting course, as an alternative to the Independent Study Project, requires a supplementary fee of £970.

It can be possible to combine online modules with in-person modules as part of this programme. This will result in a variation to the above stated total fees, which we will be happy to discuss with you prior to or on receipt of an application.

The above fees are accurate for the 2025/26 academic year. Fees may be subject to annual increases.

Deposits and Payment Schedules

Successful applicants must secure their place on each module by making a £500 deposit payment, which will be credited towards your module fee.

The remaining module fee must be paid four weeks prior to each module start date.

If you are beginning your studies with *Asian Art in the Museum*, you will be required to pay a £2,290 fee towards this course (the cost of taking it independently). This will be credited to your total fee and deducted from your initial module balance so that only the £970 supplementary fee is applied.

Alumni Discount

A 20% reduction in tuition fees is available to all students who have an Undergraduate degree in any subject from SOAS, but no higher qualification. (Please note that you cannot receive the SOAS Alumni discount if you have already received another discount/scholarship from the University.)

The Alphawood Scholarships

Alphawood scholarships are available to support residents of Southeast Asia (Brunei, Cambodia, East Timor, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar/Burma, Singapore, Thailand or Vietnam) in completing the SOAS-Alphawood Postgraduate Diploma in Asian Art via either our in-person or online pathways.

The scholarship covers full tuition fees for the complete programme as well as a stipend to cover living costs during term time. For scholars studying in person, financial support is also available to cover travel, visas and other preparatory costs.

Alphawood scholarships also provide support for our students to advance their English-language proficiency through dedicated courses at the SOAS Department of International Foundation Courses and English Language Studies (IFCELS).

The Alphawood scholarships form part of an academic programme which is generously supported by the Alphawood Foundation (Chicago). The remit of the programme is to support and advance, through study and research, the understanding and preservation of Southeast Asian Buddhist and Hindu art and architecture from ancient to pre-modern times.

The remit includes study of the built environment, sculpture, painting, illustrated texts, textiles and other tangible or visual representations, along with the written word related to these, and archaeological, museum and cultural heritage studies.

Alphawood scholars are selected with the expectation that they, as alumni, will be in a position to apply the learning and skills they gain while on award to the benefit of the galleries, museums, heritage organisations, universities, government departments and other institutions in the Southeast Asian region in which they may go on to work.

Since 2014, Alphawood has provided for over 100 scholarships which supported Southeast Asian scholars' postgraduate study at the Diploma, MA and MPhil/PhD levels at SOAS.

The Ortigia Scholarship

This scholarship covers full tuition fees for the in-person pathway of the SOAS-Alphawood Postgraduate Diploma in Asian Art and an allowance to cover living costs during term time.

The scholarship is open to those who were the first in their family to go to university or who are resident in a country where there is conflict, extreme challenge or adversity. We strongly encourage applicants who would not have considered the programme without the opportunity afforded by this scholarship.

We hope the scholarship will be a transformative opportunity, enabling the successful applicant to pursue a career related to Asian art, such as academia, curatorial or museum work, or a position in the commercial art world.



For more details on available scholarships, please visit our website: www.soas.ac.uk/study/find-course/soas-alphawood-postgraduate-diploma-asian-art

Careers and Further Opportunities

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The SOAS-Alphawood Postgraduate Diploma is a pathway to further study or a career in Museums and the art world. Many of our graduates, some with no formal background in art history or archaeology, go on to complete a master's in the History of Art & Archaeology Department at SOAS or other institutions. A number continue to PhD level.

Alumni from the programme have gone on to work in UK and international Museums, auctions houses and galleries including: the British Museum, V&A, the Asian Civilisation Museum Singapore, Sotheby's, Christies, Bonhams, and many more.

“As junior curator of Southeast Asian Art of the Ferenc Hopp Museum, Budapest, it was immensely useful to join the online modules provided by the SOAS-Alphawood Postgraduate Diploma of Asian Art.

Quite naturally, to somebody whose living and working conditions are located outside of the U.K. this online pathway is just the perfect choice to be able to broaden their professional knowledge and perspective as well as to get acquainted with the most recent trends and development of their prospective fields.

I consider my time at “Virtual SOAS” as a fun, demanding and also necessary step in my professional development. (And it was even more exciting to visit the university and meet the team in person as a closing accord/chapter of my studies.) ” Anna Vécsei, Hungary

“Apart from the opportunity to engage with outstanding scholars, I believe one of the greatest benefits has been the active engagement with the objects studied in the lectures. From object handling sessions to gallery and museum visits, I have been able to see and study artifacts in ways that no other program offers, and these experiences have definitely given me a competitive edge as a scholar and future educator.” Kevin Morales Bernabe, Puerto Rico



The Student Experience

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Ensuring you have the best possible experience as a student on the SOAS-Alphawood Postgraduate Diploma in Asian Art is our utmost priority. While studying with us you will be fully supported by the programme director, manager, administrator and your module convenors, who will each do their best to see you get the most out of your time with us.

The flexible nature of study, allowing you to select your modules and complete the course over three academic years, is aimed to fit around those who work or have personal commitments. Each module is a self-contained course and assessed separately.

In each in-person module, art history of a particular region or religious tradition is introduced in a broadly chronological framework. In our online modules you are introduced to current themes and approaches in art history through focused case studies.

Across the programme, you will develop key skills in documenting, analysing and contextualising objects, alongside transferable academic skills in essay writing and presentation. This ensures that candidates who do not have an art history background are able to adapt quickly to art historical academic writing. Many of our students come from varied academic and professional backgrounds and we ensure that they are well equipped to handle the material alongside students from an arts background, with dedicated training offered in our supporting course *Analysing and Exploring the Arts*.



“ The SOAS-Alphawood Post-Graduate Diploma in Asian Art was a life-changing experience for my academic and professional career. The lectures are dynamic and thought-provoking, and the convenors frequently invite truly inspiring specialists to lecture on a wide range of amazing topics. This learning experience is complemented by seminars and visits to museums, galleries, and auction houses.

Object handling sessions were unique opportunities for students to develop an intimate relationship with Art objects, combining the theoretical approach with practical and sensorial experience. I have never met anywhere such a vast range of diverse individuals so affectionately devoted to Asian Arts. The course is an intense immersion in this field, offering great learning and exchange opportunities with lecturers, students, and professionals who work with Art. The program's multi-focal organization is efficient, adapting and corresponding to the demands of students who intend to engage in academic research or those looking for Museum and Galleries positions or working in the Art market. The convenors were always available for advice and guidance, and it was through their support that I was able to develop my Ph.D. proposal. I feel that I am more prepared for the next steps in my academic career and have more professional opportunities after getting this Diploma. ” Diogo Farias, Brazil

Alongside our full-time modules, our specialist short courses have become an integral part of the SOAS-Alphawood Postgraduate Diploma in Asian Art programme.

These courses are open to all and aimed at those from a wide variety of backgrounds seeking to broaden their knowledge of specialised areas of Asian art. Short courses are ideal for those who do not have the opportunity to attend our full-time programme. They also serve as a taster to our longer, more immersive modules. These courses enable you to explore specialist areas which are not covered in depth within the Postgraduate Diploma modules.

In-person specialist art courses explore a single topic over an intensive four-day programme, including lectures by leading experts. Where appropriate we also include practising artists, musicians and object-study sessions.

Online specialist art courses offer eight weekly lectures by leading experts from academia, museums and the art market. Lectures are followed by in-depth discussions moderated by the course convenor.

In 2025/26 we are thrilled to offer a combination of weekly, online short courses as well as four-day, in-person courses.

For more information regarding our upcoming courses, please visit:

www.soas.ac.uk/art-short-courses

or contact asianart@soas.ac.uk



Entry Requirements

We welcome applications from those from all backgrounds. Previous study of art or art history is not required, but students must be able to demonstrate an interest in the subject in a personal statement.

Applicants should normally possess a good Bachelor's degree or its equivalent. Other qualifications such as published works or appropriate professional experience will also be considered. Applications from mature students are encouraged. Non-standard applicants are considered on their merits and may be asked to submit written work for appraisal and/or attend an interview.

Language Requirements

All international applicants where English is not their first language must be able to show that their English is of a high enough standard to successfully engage with and complete the course. The required standard for direct entry is IELTS level 6.5 overall with at least 6.0 in all sub-scores.

More information about these requirements, accepted forms of evidence, and exemptions can be found at:

www.soas.ac.uk/international/english-language-requirements

SOAS offers preparatory English courses via our International Foundation Courses and English Language Studies (IFCELS) department:

www.soas.ac.uk/ifcels



Visa Requirements for In-Person Study

Depending on your nationality and current UK immigration status, you may need to apply for a visa to join our in-person modules.

In-person modules will also be required to be taken in a sequence that meets UK Visa and Immigration requirements for international students. For example:

A Postgraduate Certificate in Asian Art taken in person requires completion of your core module and both supporting courses within one term, under a standard visitor visa (if required).

A Postgraduate Diploma in Asian Art via any of our in-person modules requires the programme to be completed in line with the following sequence options:

1. Join us entirely in-person under a student visa (requiring three, consecutive in-person modules completed within one year)
2. Join us online for your first module, followed by two consecutive in-person modules under a student visa (within three years)
3. Join us online for two modules with one in-person module as a standard UK visitor, in a sequence of your choosing (within three years)

Asian Art in the Museum, as a two-week independent or supporting course, can be joined as a standard UK visitor if it is your only period of in-person study with us, or in combination with the above routes so long as it does not require multiple periods of entry to the UK.

You can use [the UK Government's visa checking tool](#) to find out which type of visa you will require for periods of in-person study over or under six months.

Please note that individuals in the UK with Graduate Visa status are not eligible to enrol on our in-person modules.

Please be aware that, regardless of any offer you hold for our programme, permission to enter the UK is always at the discretion of the UK Visa and Immigration authorities.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss your options and specific requirements, please do get in touch.

Application Procedure

Our [online application form](#) is accessible via our website.

A completed application form must be submitted along with:

- A personal statement outlining your background, interests and why you are applying for the course (approximately 500 words).
- Validated evidence of your undergraduate degree (transcript and/or certificate, officially translated into English if international).
- Evidence of English Language ability (if required).

Although we do not have a closing date for applications, early applications is advised for all modules.

Interviews

Applicants may be invited to attend an interview with the Programme Director, who will assess the candidate's commitment and aptitude. No special preparation for this interview is necessary.



Accommodation

London/UK residency and full-time attendance is required for in-person modules. Those relocating to London are responsible for their own accommodation and are strongly advised to allow ample time to make suitable arrangements before their course begins. SOAS offers support for finding a variety of accommodation options, including halls of residence for postgraduate students, shared student housing or private rental. For more information see: www.soas.ac.uk/accommodation.

Terms Of Enrolment

Those responsible for the programme reserve the right to amend the content and timing of the courses. Where possible, notice will be given but this cannot be guaranteed. They also reserve the right to discontinue any whole or part of any programme.

The information in this prospectus is accurate at the date of publication.

Students cannot be enrolled on more than one SOAS programme at any one time.

Accessibility

Applications are considered on the standard academic criteria, regardless of any disability. We do recommend that you contact the Disability & Neurodiversity Team on disabilities@soas.ac.uk before submitting your application so that any potential adjustments can be discussed and so that you can decide if SOAS is suitable for you. We will do all that we can to make it possible for you to study at SOAS but in the unlikely event that we are not able to make the adjustments necessary we will let you know as soon as possible.

