

SOAS - Alphawood

*Postgraduate Diploma in
Asian Art*



Online Prospectus 2025/26



SOAS
University of London

In Association with

The British
Museum

V&A



The SOAS-Alphawood Postgraduate Diploma in Asian at SOAS University of London is a unique programme of immersive object-based study.

We lead you on a journey of exploration supported by 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.

We offer a fully online pathway to either a postgraduate certificate or postgraduate diploma in Asian Art, thanks to the support of the Alphawood Foundation. This online pathway will enable you to access our distinctive approach to the study of Asian Art from anywhere in the world.

Our online pathway offers you flexibility in how and where you study, while retaining our object-based approach. Your online learning will be supported by a range of bespoke, professionally produced videos, shot in situ at the museums we work with.

You are supported by online platforms and technologies that allow you to engage deeply with the objects you study. You can choose to either complete your full programme online, or to augment your online experience with an intensive two-week supporting course offering museum-based study in London (*Asian Art in the Museum*).

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 history, and to careers in museums, the commercial art world and academia.

Online modules offered in 2025/26 include ***Asia's Art Histories***, ***Curating Asian Art*** and ***Arts of the Buddhist World***.

SOAS-Alphawood Postgraduate Diploma in Asian Art

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SOAS
University of London

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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. For a postgraduate diploma qualification, you need to complete three of our core modules. For a postgraduate certificate, you need to complete one of our cores modules.

Both qualifications also require the completion of two of our three supporting courses. All students take *Analysing and Exploring the Arts* in their first term, situating their studies within a practical introduction to art history today. You then choose either our *Independent Study Project in Asian Art History*, or our intensive two-week summer school *Asian Art in the Museum*.

Our programme provides you with the opportunity to gain a broad understanding of Asian art and its curation, allowing you to explore specific areas of cultural or geographic interest that suit your interest. You will learn how to research, identify and document objects, setting them in their cultural context. In addition to SOAS' exceptional academic environment, you will benefit from opportunities to engage

with curators of the Asian collections at 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.

The programme director and module convenors provide you with continuity, academic guidance and close individual support throughout your time at SOAS.

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



An immersive academic programme featuring:

- Pre-recorded lectures offering art historical and curatorial case studies
- A weekly seminar
- A weekly 1-1 tutorial with your module convenor
- An online discussion forum reviewing course content with your peers and convenors
- Access to SOAS Library's digital resources and scanned key texts

Available from anywhere in the world

With each of our online modules, we provide you with a mix of pre-recorded lectures, online study activities to complete in your own time, and live group and 1-1 teaching. You will hear from world leading experts in Europe, Asia and North America, and collaborate with classmates from across the globe.

Close readings of objects, artworks and architecture

Each week you will explore a single theme through selected case studies, exploring artworks, objects, and sites from across Asia and the Islamic and Buddhist worlds. Lectures will be complemented by interactive exercises for you to pursue in your own time. These exercises will consolidate your learning, while also developing skills that can be directly applied in curatorial, academic and commercial arts careers, as well as voluntary roles.

A rigorous grounding in Art History

Explore the diverse arts of Asia and their curation through thematically linked weekly topics, giving you a solid foundation in the discipline today. You will learn from a diverse range of specialists with distinct but complementary approaches. Supported by your convenors, your seminar, activities and assignments will help you develop confidence and precision as you shape your own approach to the subject.

Supported by two dedicated co-convenors

Each of your modules will be delivered by two dedicated convenors. Your convenors will be available for weekly 1-1 online tutorial meetings, as well as offering support via email and in online fora.

A postgraduate qualification accredited by SOAS University of London

Take any one of our online modules alongside two of our supporting courses within one year to achieve a Postgraduate Certificate in Asian Art, or complete three modules and two supporting courses within three years for a Postgraduate Diploma in Asian Art, awarded by SOAS University of London at FHEQ level 7.

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

Students new to SOAS

Our programme is an accessible entry point for postgraduate study at SOAS, whether your next step is onto our MA programme or further modules on the Postgraduate Diploma in Asian Art. A number of our alumni have also progressed to PhD level, including faculty within our own department.

Returning alumni seeking further enrichment

For those who have already studied with us at SOAS, our online modules will consolidate your knowledge and skills, and allow you to revisit topics that excite you with the exceptional academic and administrative support offered by our programme, as well as introducing you to new areas of study.

Aspiring professionals

Our programme is a proven pathway to a career in the arts. Our alumni work for leading universities, museums and commercial institutions across the globe.

Lifelong learners

We are committed to supporting students at all stages of life and pride ourselves on the diverse range of life experience in our classrooms. Whether you are seeking to develop understanding of a topic for which you have a long-standing interest, or to explore something new, we are uniquely positioned to help you develop your interests and knowledge in Asian art.

To find out more please contact: AsianArt@soas.ac.uk

Our Programme Director, Dr Malcolm McNeill, would be delighted to meet with you 1-1 to discuss if our programme is the right fit for you.



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

Each module requires submission of three assessments:

- One written assignment of 1,500 words or 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 enroll 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 eight 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.



Study In-Person

The SOAS-Alphawood Postgraduate Diploma in Asian Art also offers six, immersive, in-person modules, each 11 weeks in length taking place in London. Students can take any number or combination of modules, and these can be combined with online modules to achieve a Postgraduate Diploma award.

In-person modules feature:

- 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

Please note that non-UK residents may require a visa to study in-person.

In-Person Module Schedule

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| ■ 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) |

Assessment Methods

Each in-person module requires submission of three assignments:

- One object analysis of 1500 words (20%)
- One written assignment 2500 words per module (40%)
- One 48-hour, take-home slide test per module (40%)

Fees

The in-person module fee for the 2025/26 academic year is £5,770.

Find Out More

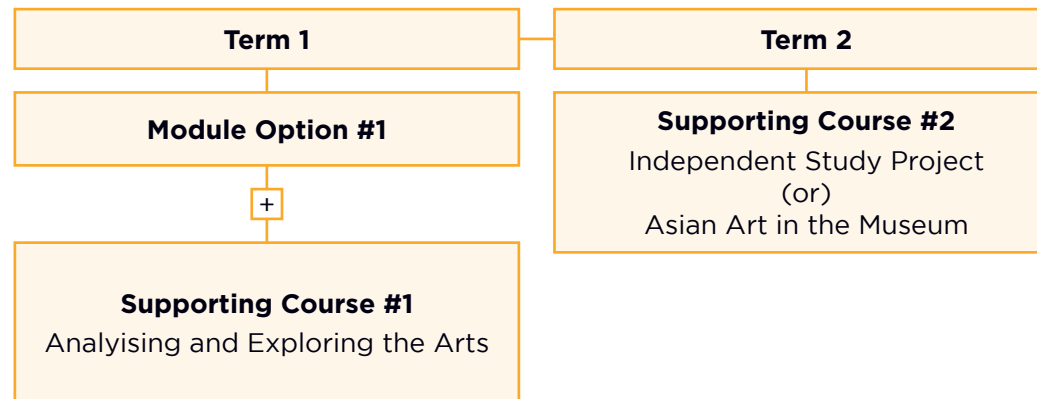
For more information regarding our in-person modules, please view our full prospectus at the link below, visit our website, or contact us.



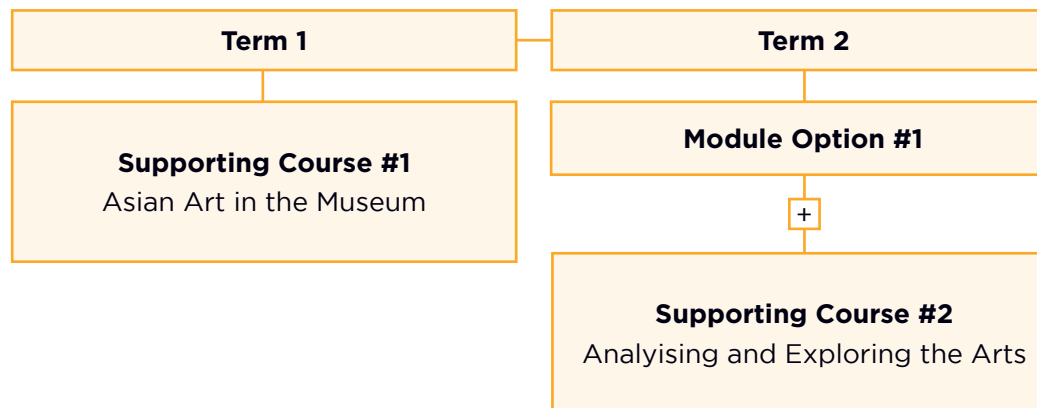
www.AsianArtDiploma.co.uk | AsianArt@soas.ac.uk

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:

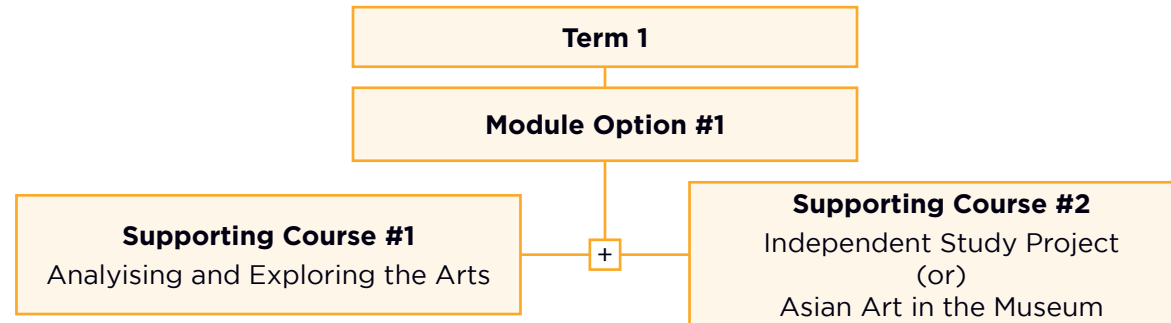
Route A (within one year)



Route B (within one year)



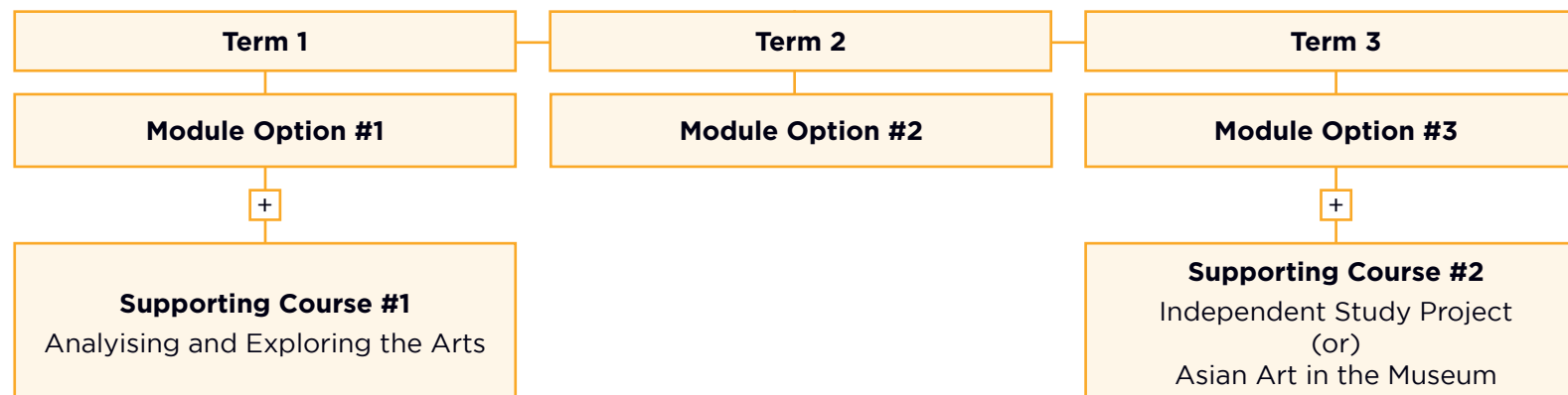
Route C (within one term)



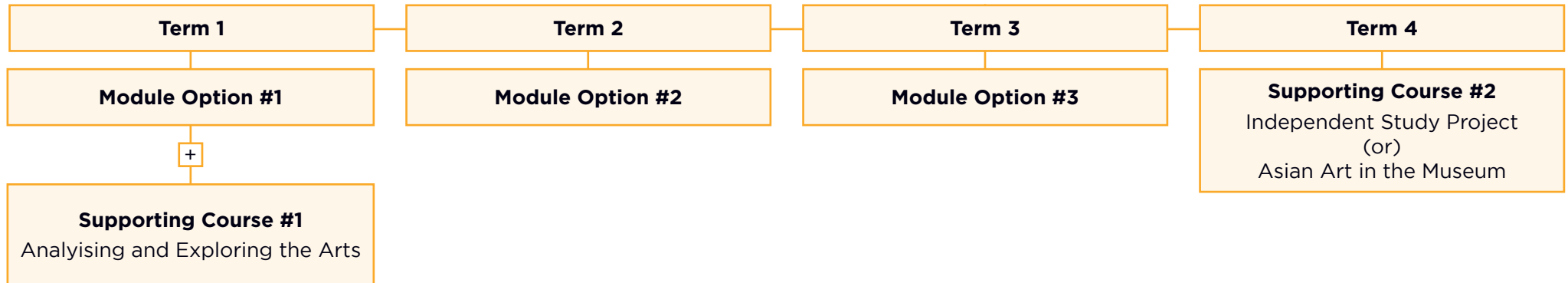
Routes to a Postgraduate Diploma

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:

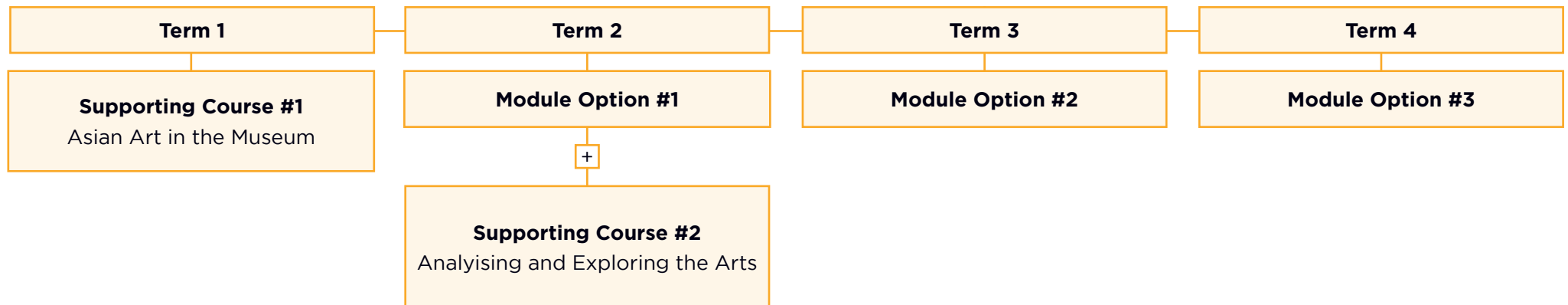
Route A (within three years)



Route B (within three years)



Route C (within three years)



Online Postgraduate Certificate in Asian Art	Online Postgraduate Diploma in Asian Art
Standard Fee: £3,375 With Asian Art in the Museum: £4,345	Standard Fee: £10,125 With Asian Art in the Museum: £11,095

Fees are calculated based on 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 £950.

It can be possible to combine online modules with in-person modules as part of this programme. In-person modules are offered at a higher module fee (see page 11) and therefore 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. International students will also need to consider visa requirements when considering combining in-person and online study.

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.)

Scholarships

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

The Alphawood Online Scholarship

Alphawood Online 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 our online pathway, including the option of attending our in-person, two-week supporting course, Asian Art in the Museum.

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 for the optional in-person element.

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).

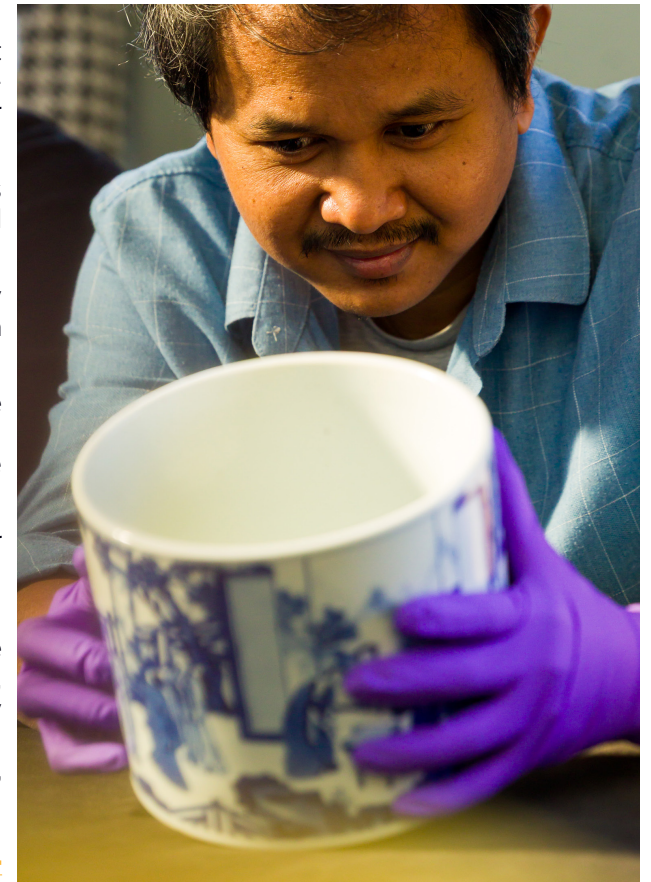
The Alphawood scholarships form part of an academic programme which is generously supported by the Alphawood Foundation (Chicago). The remit of the programme is to support and advance, through study and research, the understanding and preservation of Southeast Asian Buddhist and Hindu art and architecture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

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



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 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.

With the kind support of my convenors, I could frame my assignment in line with my professional interests and current work/research at the Museum.

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



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*.



“ I was very grateful that I did not get left out from receiving an education at SOAS with the SOAS-Alphawood Postgraduate Certificate being accessible online. I knew it would be challenging to live up to the high expectations SOAS imbued into their students alongside my family and job, but it was also an exclusive access to the specialists developing the integrous research in Asian art history I did not want to pass up on.

Having completed the course in a year, it is almost surreal to realise I did it! The autonomous learning platform designed well with manageable tasks meant I could find a harmony that inspired me to work in depth on my specific interests while learning about how they relate to and are relevant to art history scholarship as a whole.

The online course was an exclusive journey led by energetic, intuitive, and highly intelligent authors. On the friends I met online, their work and stories from their parts of the world make me feel honoured that I was a fellow traveller on their critical thinking paths. Thank you for making such an intensive online course elegant and engaging. ” Candice Bressmer, Singapore

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 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 and accepted forms of evidence can be found at:

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

You do not need to provide evidence of your English language ability if any of the following apply:

- You are from a government-recognised majority English speaking country, where you have successfully completed high school or a degree.
- You've completed a degree in the UK or in any Majority English Speaking Country (UKVI defined) within the last 10 years.
- You've completed an appropriate SOAS preparatory English course or passed a Pre-sessional English course at a UK university (2-year validity).

Details of preparatory English courses can be obtained from International Foundation Courses and English Language Studies (IFCELS) at SOAS:
www.soas.ac.uk/ifcels

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 300 words).
- Validated evidence of your undergraduate degree (transcript and/or certificate).
- Evidence of English Language ability (if required).

Although we do not have a closing date for applications, early applications is advised for all modules. The application form can be found on **[our website](#)** or requested by email.



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.

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

