

Careers for Art History Majors

There are a great many career fields which build on studies in Art History. In exploring options, reflect on the skills you have developed through your major, the ones you prefer using and the careers which are most strongly related.

What skills and knowledge do I develop by studying Art History?

In an increasingly image-based culture – with a rapidly expanding museum and gallery industry - training in the kinds of visual literacies essential to art historical methodology are critically important for a variety of professions, and for daily life. In studying art history, students develop specific research, analytical and rhetorical skills:

- are able to understand and analyse the role of images as the carriers of explicit meaning - a skill which is becoming progressively more significant as we enter an increasingly visually oriented world,
- learn how to combine research and analysis to present arguments with clarity and economy,
- are able to conceptualise relationships between structure, agency, and culture,
- obtain the specialised skills necessary for expert curatorship.

What careers build on these skills and knowledge?

The table below lists a range of careers which make use of studies in Art History. The list is not definitive – depending on your own interests and experiences, there may well be other ways to build on your major.

More information on many of these career areas is available at:
http://careers.unimelb.edu.au/student/online_career_tools/exploring_your_options
(Career Exploration - Career Links by Degree – Arts)

Next Steps

The table also provides some information about ‘next steps’ ie what you might need to do to start a career in the particular field, specifically whether graduate study is required or whether immediate employment is possible.

There are two employment types for Bachelor graduates:

- General employment positions suitable for new graduates
- Graduate Employment Programs

Graduate Employment Programs are offered by some employers – generally large commercial organisations and government. Graduate Employment Program positions are jobs that include a substantial component of training and development. Recruitment for these programs takes place early in the year (around March-May). Final year tertiary students and recent grads can apply.

For more information on Graduate Employment Programs:

http://careers.unimelb.edu.au/student/find_a_job/professional_and_graduate_work

Career field	Employment setting	Next Steps: Employment and/or graduate study
Policy work – Visual Arts/Arts related	Government/Public Service – relevant departments Arts organisations eg Arts Victoria	Government Graduate Employment Programs (post BA or post graduate study), or Graduate study – Public Policy eg University of Melbourne Master of Public Policy and Management; Arts Management eg University of Melbourne – Master of Arts and Cultural Management
Curating	Art galleries, museums – public sector and private	Gallery assistant roles possible - graduate study usual to start career as a curator eg University of Melbourne – Art Curatorship
Museum professional - education, public programming, development	Art galleries, museums – public sector and private	Education roles in large organisations generally require school teaching qual eg Master of Teaching In smaller organisations, education and public programs roles may be combined – open to more varied backgrounds eg Honours, Arts Management
Art valuation, investment advice, dealing, sales, auctions, heritage consultancy	Art valuation companies, dealers, auction houses, heritage organisations	Various eg Graduate study – Arts Curating eg University of Melbourne – Arts Curatorship, or Honours/Masters/PhD – Art History Expectation of highly specialised knowledge
Art conservation	Large galleries, government agencies eg ArtLab, private sector	Graduate study – Cultural Materials Conservation eg University of Melbourne – Master of Cultural Materials Conservation
Arts Law	Law firms with specialty in Arts Law	Graduate study – Law eg University of Melbourne – Juris Doctor
Teaching	Secondary schools	Graduate study – Teaching eg University of Melbourne Master of Teaching (requires studies to cover 2 ‘learning areas’ – refer to guidelines – Master of Teaching site) <i>Note: to teach Visual Arts in schools, need to have practical art skills in addition to history</i>

	Universities	Graduate research study path – Honours/Masters/PhD
Research (academic)	Universities, research institutes	Graduate research study – Honours/Masters/PhD (Research Assistant roles require Honours minimum)

What other careers could I consider?

Art History majors may also pursue careers which are not directly related to the study of Art History but make use of transferable skills and/or pick up on other interests.

- **Careers via graduate study** – many careers are available via graduate study which is accessible to Bachelor of Arts graduates; these include both Arts-related careers eg Journalism, Information Management/Librarianship, International Development; and careers in more diverse fields such as Urban Planning, Nursing, Information Systems, Accounting.
- **Careers via Graduate Employment Programs** - in addition to government, some other large organisations have programs open to all disciplines where graduates are generally recruited for general management careers. Some management consultancies also consider applicants from all disciplines. Opportunities are advertised (generally early each year) on *Careers Online*, and graduate recruitment sites eg Graduate Opportunities, GradConnection.

Where can I find out more?

Further information on career areas:

http://careers.unimelb.edu.au/student/online_career_tools/exploring_your_options
(Career Exploration - Career Links by Degree – Arts)

Other discussions about what you can do with a major in Art History:

- University of Tennessee <http://whatcanidowiththismajor.com/major/majors/>
- University of Victoria, Wellington, New Zealand:
www.victoria.ac.nz/st_services/careers/Resources/career_publications/career_view/index.aspx

Professional Associations:

Australian Institute of Art History: <http://artinstitute.unimelb.edu.au/>

Art Association of Australia and New Zealand: <http://aaanz.info/>

International Committee of Art History: <http://www.ciha-arthistory.org/>

Other related associations:

http://careers.unimelb.edu.au/student/online_career_tools/exploring_your_options

(Career Exploration – Professional Associations by Degree - Arts)

Graduate study at University of Melbourne:

<http://futurestudents.unimelb.edu.au/courses/graduate>

<http://graduate.arts.unimelb.edu.au/>

<http://government.unimelb.edu.au/>

Researching courses which are not offered at Melbourne: www.myfuture.edu.au