Office of the Provost

Proposed Change to an Existing Degree: Academic Component

Please answer all relevant questions below. Consultation with the appropriate Associate Provost on a draft of the proposal is recommended.

Using the relevant template, please submit a budget even if no additional resources are needed.

Title of Degree (e.g., Bachelor of Arts in History):

Master of Arts in History of Art & Architecture

1. Please provide the name, title, email address, and phone number of the primary contact person for this academic program:

Gregory Williams, Associate Professor, Director of Graduate Studies

ghw@bu.edu; 617 358-0038

2. Please describe briefly the proposed change to the existing degree:

We plan to eliminate the requirement that students take the MA Examination, an annual exam that requires students to write five one-hour essays on a wide range of questions. In its place, we will raise the academic bar for the MA Paper, a requirement for students in their second year in the program. We are also adding a requirement that students take a course in art-historical methodologies.

3. Please provide a rationale for the proposed change to the existing degree:

During the past decade our department has grown to include faculty specializing in fields (African art, Islamic art, and Latin American art) that were previously not covered in the
decades when our core strengths were in the fields of Western art history. In addition to our colleague focusing on Japanese art, which has been represented in our department since the 1980s, we now have three full-time faculty members whose research fields fall outside of the Western tradition. The MA Examination was originally designed to test students’ general knowledge of art history, but the expansion of the faculty has made it increasingly difficult for students to command such a broad geographical and temporal scope. Over the past several years we have heard from students that they were not sure how to prepare for the exam. Also, the faculty felt that the original goals of the requirement were no longer relevant in our globally oriented department. Our current course requirements already compel students to take a range of courses from cultures around the world and across multiple time periods. Moreover, many MA programs around the country do not require an MA Examination. Thus, in place of the MA Examination, the faculty decided at our first annual retreat (held in May of this year) that we would place more emphasis on the existing MA Paper. We have developed a new, more rigorous timeline for developing this research project, which will now start in the second semester of the first year (students complete the MA degree in two years) so that students can spend part of the summer conducting research. Students will then spend the second year meeting a series of deadlines for drafts of the paper, which will be approved in the spring by two faculty readers before receiving formal approval by the Graduate Studies Committee (composed of the Director of Graduate Admissions and three members of the faculty, a group that consults with the Director of Graduate Studies). We will also introduce a new one-day MA symposium in April when students will give short formal presentations of their research topics to the whole department. Students will thus leave the program with a strong writing sample that will be useful whether they enter the museum field or apply to a PhD program.

4. Please describe how the proposed change(s) advances the Strategic Plans of the department, of the school/college, and of the University:

The proposed changes advance the aim of our department to offer students a curriculum with a global reach. By adjusting our requirements to match the research interests of our diverse faculty, we will give students the guidance they need to be competitive in increasingly global art professions. The new MA requirements also support the 2010 Strategic Plan of the College of Arts & Sciences, especially the aims of Commitment 1, which recognizes the “astounding range of areas of inquiry and methods of approach” of the CAS faculty. As stated in the 2010 Strategic Plan, “the College’s academic structures must be flexible as disciplines change, merge, separate, or disappear. We must therefore be clear-eyed in our willingness to amend the design of our infrastructure.” We believe that the proposed changes reflect developments in the broader fields of art history and museum culture. Furthermore, the proposed update to our MA
requirements is in line with Commitment 8 of the 2007 Boston University Strategic Plan, which calls for the university as a whole to “deliver transparent and student-oriented processes across all of our campuses, schools, and colleges” (p. 24). We are convinced that the elimination of the MA Exam and the simultaneous strengthening of the MA Paper will provide students with a more transparent and constructive learning experience.

5. Please list all the program requirements for the current and revised programs so that review committees can easily see the changes: (expand the table as needed and denote new courses in bold print)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current program</th>
<th>Revised program</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5 courses covering five of eleven areas of concentration (including at least one Western and one non-Western course, one 700-level colloquium, and one 800-level seminar)</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 elective courses</td>
<td>2 elective courses</td>
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<tr>
<td>MA Examination</td>
<td>1 course in art-historical methodologies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MA Paper</td>
<td>MA Paper with revised structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One modern foreign language</td>
<td>One modern foreign language</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

6. Is this change a result of program learning outcomes assessment and/or academic program review? If yes, please describe:

The proposed changes stem from our departmental Learning Outcomes Assessment conducted during the 2014-2015 academic year. In the fall of 2014, we identified the MA Exam and MA Paper as requirements that called for reevaluation. In May of 2015 we held our first faculty retreat (now to be an annual event), at which the faculty unanimously agreed to make the described changes to the MA program.
7. Please list learning outcomes for the revised program:

The new structure aligns with all of the learning outcomes we have listed on our annual report to the Provost’s Office, though the following three outcomes will be addressed in the most direct way:

*Demonstrate ability to write a scholarly essay.*

*Acquire facility with the tools and methods of art historical inquiry.*

*Be prepared for a career as a museum curator or other visual arts careers or advanced studies in art history.*

8. How does the change place your program in the context of programs at peer institutions?

The requirements for comparable MA programs in art history vary in respect to the MA Examination and the MA Paper. Of the two peer institutions we consider our closest competitors, Tufts University and Williams College, only Tufts still requires an MA Examination (what they refer to as a Comprehensive Exam). The trend in MA programs across the United States is to treat the degree as a combination of pre-professional training and graduate education that prepares students to enter a PhD program. We believe that our decision to eliminate the MA Exam and emphasize the MA Paper makes us more competitive and forward-looking.

9. How does the change affect other academic units and existing programs at the University?

This change of requirement has no impact on other programs, since it will not lead to changes in the courses we offer. Our MA program is not directly linked with other graduate programs.

10. How will you notify current students of the proposed changes and implement the requirements? How will you assure that current students are able to complete their programs under the requirements that were in place at the time of their matriculation?

We will notify students by email of the proposed changes. The Director of Graduate Studies will also meet with individual students who have questions about the new requirements. In addition, we will update our annual Graduate Student Handbook to reflect the new structure.
Second-year MA students (those who entered the program in 2014-2015) will be given the option of following the previous requirements.

11. Please document any implications that the change has on professional accreditation or licensure at the program or school/college level:

These changes will have no impact on professional accreditation or licensure.

12. If the change includes a new course or courses, please indicate who will teach the course and how the rest of that faculty member’s course load will be affected (courses(s) redistributed to other faculty, taught less frequently, no longer taught, etc.). Please be specific about affected courses. This information should be reflected in the budget form that accompanies the proposal, e.g. the cost for a new faculty member to teach the new course or a redistributed course:

We will not need to develop new courses as part of the proposed changes. Our new requirement that students take a course in art-historical methodologies can be met by enrolling in courses that are already routinely offered.

13. Please list other resources needed including new staff, IT, technology enhanced classrooms, office space, and other facilities. This information should be reflected in the budget:

N/A

14. Please describe the budgetary impact that the proposed change will have:

These changes will have no impact on the budgets of the department, CAS, or the university.

15. Please provide the bulletin copy (exactly as it should appear) related to the proposed change, including all text connected to the program (requirements, description, learning outcomes)[NOTE: this bulletin copy is in a final form and cannot be changed]:
The MA program in History of Art & Architecture provides a scholarly grounding in the history of art, architecture, and material culture. Students are exposed to a broad range of methods and materials by a diverse, collegial faculty. The rigor and global reach of the curriculum are reinforced by the course distribution requirements, which oblige students to take classes in both Western and non-Western art from a range of historical periods. Offering a foundation for a career either in academia or the museum world, to which the Department of History of Art & Architecture has unusually strong links, our program is intended to nurture independent inquiry. Applicants must have completed a two-semester survey course and three additional courses in history of art and architecture as well as two years of college-level work in a modern foreign language.

**Course Requirements**

Eight courses (32 credits) are required. Five of these eight courses must be distributed among the following 11 areas of concentration, including at least one Western and one non-Western course, and including at least one colloquium and one graduate seminar:

- Ancient
- Medieval
- Renaissance
- Baroque and Eighteenth-Century
- American
- Latin American
- Modern
- Asian
- African
- Islamic
- Other non-Western

Of the three other courses, two may be in areas other than art history with the permission of the director of graduate studies.

Specialized track options are available for students who wish to focus on Asian art and architecture or the history of architecture.

Graduate students in History of Art & Architecture are eligible to enter the department’s Graduate Certificate Program in Museum Studies. The certificate’s required courses may be taken either as part of, or in addition to, the courses required for the MA.

**Language Requirement**

All students pursuing an MA in History of Art & Architecture are required to demonstrate graduate-level reading proficiency in a modern foreign language prior to completion of the degree. Language proficiency can be demonstrated either through a language examination, successful completion of a non-credit graduate-level foreign language reading course offered by Boston University, or the equivalent of two years of undergraduate study of the language at Boston University.

The examination must be taken before the end of the second semester of residence. The language will be determined by the faculty advisor and approved by the Director of Graduate Studies.

Recommended languages include:
All students specializing in Asian art must acquire proficiency in modern Chinese or modern Japanese. Language proficiency in Asian languages can be demonstrated either through the language examination offered by this department or successful completion of third-year modern Chinese or modern Japanese in the Modern Languages & Comparative Literature Department. In the case where the student is specializing in a field of Asian art that is not Chinese or Japanese, the Director of Graduate Studies will determine the language requirement in consultation with the student’s advisor.

Master’s Paper

The final requirement for the MA degree is the preparation of a scholarly paper, which typically begins as a seminar paper that is subsequently revised and expanded according to professional standards of presentation. The Master’s Paper should improve upon the initial seminar paper by aiming for greater originality of argumentation and research. It is intended as an exercise in writing a publishable essay for a peer-reviewed journal. The paper’s length and format reflect the manuscript submission guidelines for the *Art Bulletin*, published by the College Art Association, the primary national organization for art historians. In the spring semester of their second year, students will deliver short formal presentations of their Master’s Papers to an audience of graduate students and faculty.

*The following questions relate to a change in the delivery format of an existing degree.*

16. For proposed changes to delivery format of existing programs, please provide an indication of non-standard scheduling for the proposed format:

N/A

17. Please provide information on a marketing plan and partner for the proposed changed delivery format:

N/A

18. If applicable, please provide a request for non-standard tuition rates for the proposed changed delivery format:

N/A