Why GRADUATE STUDIES in ART CONSERVATION?

Art conservation is an exciting and challenging multidisciplinary field involving the examination, interpretation, analysis and conservation of cultural, historic, and artistic objects.

“...The instruction and education I received at Queen’s has given me unique treatment and research experience that allows me to be confident when challenging myself as a conservator. The co-operations and deep understanding between all the students and the instructors created a supportive and irreplaceable learning environment that I am very thankful to have been a part of.”

– Kaslyne O’Connor, MAC

Why QUEEN’S?

Queen’s University offers Canada’s only Master’s degree program in Art Conservation. Projects and research topics are individually designed to suit the background and interests of students and faculty. Students have opportunities to work with humanities, science, and engineering departments at Queen’s, and may undertake projects with museums, galleries, archives, the Canadian Conservation Institute, and industrial partners.

Program STRUCTURE

There are two possible streams within the Art Conservation Program:

• Treatment stream: A four-term program of theoretical and practical study on campus, advanced lecture courses, lab work in conservation of heritage objects, a research project, and two 12-week off-campus summer internships.

• Research stream: A two-year, full-time research program is offered to science and engineering graduates, leading to a career in conservation science. A one-year, mid-career research stream is also available to practicing conservators with at least five years of experience.

TREATMENT Streams

• Conservation of paintings
• Conservation of artifacts
• Conservation of paper, photographic materials, and new media

RESEARCH Areas

• Degradation and conservation of materials
• History of technology
• Other conservation-related areas

Treatment-stream students need to apply to one of the three treatment streams. Research students should visit the Art Conservation Program website to learn more about faculty members and their research areas. We encourage you to contact a potential supervisor before applying.
GETTING STARTED

ACHIEVE YOUR ACADEMIC GOALS
- Start with key priorities like developing your relationship with your supervisor, and doing your coursework and labwork.
- Meet early with your supervisor to set expectations and discuss roles, responsibilities, program requirements, resources, research/occupational goals, timelines, and any required accommodation plans.
- Look to Student Academic Success Services for support.

MAXIMIZE RESEARCH IMPACT
- Start to think about your research interests and the audiences for the research.
- If you will be continuing graduate studies, apply for SSHRC, NSERC, and OGS funding.
- Be aware of application deadlines as most external awards applications (SSHRC, etc) are due in mid-November.

BUILD SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE
- Serve on departmental, faculty, or university committees. Talk to the Graduate Visual Culture Association for tips on getting involved.
- Check out professional development workshops from SGSPA, Professional development.

ENGAGE WITH YOUR COMMUNITY
- Please visit and, if possible, get experience in a conservation laboratory.
- Consider joining groups like the Emerging Conservators Committee in the Canadian Association for Conservation of Cultural Property (ANAGPIC) and accessing online resources such as conservation online (CoOL).
- Consider volunteering with different community organizations, museums, etc. such as the Kingston Association of Museums, the Kingston Museum of Healthcare, and the Queen’s Archives.

LAUNCH YOUR CAREER
- Finding a career that fits starts with knowing yourself. Get help by taking a Career Services workshop or meeting with a career educator and coach.
- Start reading publications like University Affairs and the Chronicle of Higher Education. Browse non-academic labour market websites. Stay on the lookout for special events like School of Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs Career Week to explore your career pathways.
- Check admission test deadlines if needed for further studies.

INTERMEDIATE STAGE

- Complete your coursework; begin to research and write your research project or thesis.
- Look into taking a 12-week summer internship in Canada or abroad.
- Set up regular meetings with your supervisor to discuss progress and obstacles impeding timely completion.

- Attend or present at a graduate conference such as Context and Meaning.
- Attend and participate in graduate seminars such as Works in Progress.
- Consider participating in the 3 Minute Thesis (3MT) competition.
- Expand your research audience through social media such as Twitter or a blog.

- Participate in your graduate and professional community through activities such as graduate student outreach programs, organizing conferences, and research groups.
- Prepare for work or studies in a multi-cultural environment by taking the Intercultural Awareness Training Certificate hosted by QOCIC and FIDISC.
- International students interested in staying in Canada can speak with an International Student Advisor.

- Explore different careers of interest by using Queens Connects on LinkedIn to connect with Queen’s alumni. Check out Career Cruising for more information.
- If you are considering a PhD, explore programs of interest reach out to faculty, and apply to PhD programs and external scholarships.

WRAPPING UP

WHAT WILL I LEARN?
A graduate degree in Art Conservation can equip you with:
- Knowledge and technical skills
- Effective communication skills in multiple forms for diverse audiences
- Information management: prioritize, organize, and synthesize large amounts of information
- Time management: meet deadlines and manage responsibilities despite competing demands
- Project management: develop ideas, gather and analyze information, critically appraise findings, draw and act on conclusions
- Creativity and innovation
- Perseverance
- Independence and experience as a collaborative worker
- Awareness and understanding of sound ethical practices, social responsibility, responsible research, and cultural sensitivity
- Professionalism in all aspects of work, research, and interactions
- Leadership: initiative and vision leading people and discussion

WHERE CAN I GO?
A Master’s degree in Art Conservation can take your career in many directions. Some of our MAC students choose to continue their academic inquiry with a PhD. Our Master’s students are equipped with a strong foundation for careers in:
- Archives
- Art galleries
- Conservation research institutions
- Museums
- Other cultural institutions

Taking time to explore career options, build experiences, and network can help you have a smooth transition to the world of work after graduation.
Graduate Studies FAQs

What do I need to know to APPLY?

ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS
• Four-year Honours Bachelor’s degree in humanities, sciences or engineering.
• One full-year, post-secondary course in fine art studio or workshop practice.
• Three terms of chemistry lectures and labs at the university level, including organic chemistry.
• Applicants with a humanities background must have a minimum of five full-year courses in art history, ethnology, archaeology, or equivalent.
• Applicants with a science background must have a minimum of two full-year courses in art history, ethnology, archaeology, or equivalent.
• Grade requirements: minimum B+ average (3.3 GPA).

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS
• Good visual sensitivity and manual skills.
• Experience in conservation is highly recommended.
• If English is not a native language, prospective students must meet the English language proficiency requirements in writing, speaking, reading, and listening. The following minimum scores are required: (1) TOEFL iBT: Writing (24/30); Speaking (22/30); Reading (22/30); Listening (20/30). Applicants must have the minimum score in each test as well as the minimum overall score, or (2) IELTS: 7.0 (academic module overall band score and a 7.0 for each test band), or (3) PTE Academics: 65, or (4) CAEL CE -70 (minimum overall score).

KEY DATES, DEADLINES, AND ACCEPTANCES
• Application due: January 15th.
• Interviews: Held in March.
• Number Admitted: Approximately 12 students are admitted for the Treatment Stream and 1-2 admitted for the Research Stream per year.

Before you start your application, please review the Graduate studies application process.

What about FUNDING?

Funding is available through Queen's Graduate Awards and other internal awards. Some students may qualify for teaching assistantships in their second year. See the School of Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs' information on awards and scholarships.