



Graduate Handbook

Department of the History of Art

2025-26

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I. INTRODUCTION

This handbook provides basic information on navigating the Ph. D. degree in History of Art at the University of Michigan. The document includes a guide to milestones required of graduate students as well as departmental policies pertaining to the graduate program. It is intended for use by both students and faculty.

NB: These policies are subject to revision. Unless otherwise stated, students should refer to the departmental graduate handbook in place when their cohort began, but they may be superseded by new policies established by the department, [Rackham Graduate School](#), or the University of Michigan.

PROGRAM MISSION

The graduate program in the Department of the History of Art at the University of Michigan is designed to prepare students for academic and curatorial careers as well as other professional positions related to history and the visual arts. Its mission is to provide a broad intellectual foundation necessary for developing independent critical judgment as well as the specialized training needed to conduct advanced scholarly research. The program is noted for its emphasis on theory and methods grounded in historical inquiry, its commitment to cross-cultural and interdisciplinary study, and its large and distinguished faculty, representing a broad range of historical and geographical expertise across media. We understand art expansively, encompassing a range of visual, material, and spatial practices. Graduate students are encouraged to develop several areas of specialization relevant to their subfields and to investigate the production, reception and function of artworks in a range of media, including new media, architecture and public monuments, and other elements of visual cultures past and present.

Graduate study and research are sustained by our department's position within a major research university that supports interdisciplinary study. The outstanding library collections at the University of Michigan include one of the top ten research libraries in North America, a dedicated Fine Arts Library, and the renowned Asia Library. The Department's Visual Resources collection, with special strength in the Asian field, is committed to making digital resources available to faculty and students. Students have opportunities to work with the art collections in the University of Michigan Museum of Art, the Kelsey Museum of Archaeology, and area museums including the Detroit Institute of Art, the Toledo Museum of Art, and the Cleveland Museum of Art.

II. ADMINISTRATION AND CONTACTS

Students should consult with their primary advisor continually at all stages in the program. Questions or queries about program requirements may be directed Rackham Graduate School or the [Graduate](#)

[Coordinator](#) in the Graduate Office (Tappan 50, 734-764-5401). For more information or when problems arise, the Director of Graduate Studies and members of the Graduate Committee are a resource. Policy questions are sometimes referred to the Chair Executive Committee, or Graduate Committee. Students are encouraged to meet with the Chief Administrator [Tamika Mohr](#) (Tappan 110, tamikanm@umich.edu) at least once a year to discuss plans for funding and summer research support.

Useful information can be found on the [departmental website](#), including everything from announcements of upcoming departmental events, to lists of current students, to descriptions of sources of external funding. Students should also consult the [website of the Horace P. Rackham Graduate School](#). This site gives detailed information on university rules and requirements and on internal funding opportunities, in addition to [resources](#) for support of graduate students' professional development, mental health, and well-being. The Rackham Student Government lists other resources, including student communities and affinity groups, on their [website](#).

III. PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The University of Michigan offers a PhD in History of Art. The program is designed to be completed in six or seven years, four or five of which are normally spent in residence. The first two years are devoted to intensive coursework intended to train students in the principal methods and materials used in the historical study of the visual arts and visual culture. In the third year, after taking preliminary examinations and satisfying language requirements (competence in two research languages) students advance to candidacy. Also by the end of the third year, they prepare a dissertation prospectus, which is reviewed by the preliminary exam committee at a prospectus defense. The fourth through sixth years are spent conducting research and preparing a dissertation. During this phase of their careers, students typically spend substantial time doing on-site research, supported by internal and external fellowships. The dissertation is defended in a formal dissertation defense. In most cases, that defense should take place by the end of the sixth or seventh year. If students have not defended the dissertation by the end of the eighth year, they may need to withdraw from the program and reapply to defend. There is no terminal M.A. degree, but students may apply for the M.A., normally after two years in the program, upon completing the requirements described [below](#).

Certificate programs, pursued alongside the Ph.D., offer opportunities for further professional and specialized training. Once enrolled, students may apply for admission into the Certificate Program in Museum Studies. Other options with Rackham include [certificate programs](#) in Medieval and Early Modern Studies and Women's and Gender Studies

The Center for Research on Learning and Teaching (CRLT) offers an array of specialized training and certificates dedicated to pedagogy.

IV. REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

A. OVERVIEW

The doctorate is awarded in recognition of significant art historical expertise in a specific area within the discipline, which is demonstrated through coursework, the demonstration of reading proficiency in two research languages, the Preliminary Examination and Prospectus Defense, and submission of a dissertation that makes an original contribution to the literature of the field. Through a process of annual review and discussion, the Graduate Committee and advisors work with the student to maintain satisfactory progress to degree.

B. COURSEWORK

1. OVERVIEW

Students must complete a minimum of ten courses (30 credits) including the First Year Graduate Seminar (HISTART 615), two cognate courses (graduate level courses outside History of Art), and no fewer than seven upper-level seminars (500- to 800-level). These should be in History of Art, unless otherwise approved by the advisor. For courses at the 400-level, students must verify that a given course is offered for graduate credit before registering. Up to two **directed reading** (independent study) courses, usually with History of Art faculty members, may count as part of the graduate seminar requirement, although students are strongly encouraged to take seminars rather than directed readings.

After achieving candidacy, students are enrolled in HistArt 995.

Modifications to these requirements. In certain cases, students can streamline the required coursework slightly. Consult with your advisor and the DGS, and see explanation of [“students entering with an M.A. Degree,”](#) [“Dual Degree Students”](#) and [“Certificate in Museum Studies.”](#)

2. DISTRIBUTION REQUIREMENTS

All students are encouraged to take advantage of the global breadth of courses offered in the Department and must take at least two courses outside their primary field of interest, at least one outside their primary geographical area and at least one outside their time period (see groups below). The same course may not be used to meet both distribution requirements, nor may the First Year Graduate Seminar (HISTART 615) be used to meet

either requirement. Students may petition to have courses taken in a prior MA program satisfy distribution requirements, though this is not encouraged. Typically, the categories for chronological and geographical distribution for a given course are indicated in parentheses at the end of the course description on the department website—when in doubt, ask the instructor.

Time Periods for distribution

1. Ancient
2. Medieval
3. Early Modern
4. Modern and Contemporary
5. Transhistorical

Geographical Areas for distribution

- A. The Middle East (includes Western and Central Asia, and North Africa)
- B. Sub-Saharan Africa
- C. Asia (includes China, Japan, India, South and Southeast Asia, and the Pacific)
- D. Europe and the US
- E. Latin America, Caribbean, and indigenous arts of the Americas
- F. Transregional

3. COGNATE COURSES

As mandated by the Rackham Graduate School, students must take at least 4 credits of cognate courses in related disciplines at the graduate level (courses numbered 400 or higher). In practical terms, this is generally two 3 credit courses. Under certain conditions, students entering the program with an MA may have one of their two cognates fulfilled “in spirit” based on their previous MA coursework. This option requires the approval of the Director of Graduate Studies who will petition the Office of Academic Records and Dissertations (OARD) on the student’s behalf.

4. REQUIRED GRADES FOR COURSEWORK

The Rackham School of Graduate Studies requires that students maintain a B average in all courses, and History of Art additionally requires that students must have received a B+ or higher in all graduate History of Art coursework and a minimum of B in language courses and B- in cognate courses. Failure to receive an acceptable grade means course credit will not be applied toward requirements for the degree. Students performing only at

minimal grade levels will have difficulty in persuading the Graduate Committee that their progress has been satisfactory or justifies the continuation of support.

5. INCOMPLETES

Satisfactory and timely completion of the program depends on managing time effectively and completing coursework on schedule. The accumulation of incompletes can have significant negative impact on a student's career (hindering students in fellowship competitions) and has led in certain cases to students having to withdraw from the program. Students should be aware that under the rules of the Rackham School of Graduate Studies, the granting of incompletes is not automatic and, indeed, is discouraged in all but extreme circumstances, and when the unfinished part of the student's work is small. Any student wishing an "I" grade in a course must officially request permission from their instructor and then set up a schedule for completing the unfinished work. Students are normally expected to make up late work before the end of the subsequent term. "I" grades may be changed to letter grades only if the incomplete work is made up by the end of the fourth full term beyond the term for which the grade of "I" was given; every subsequent term (Fall, Winter, Spring/Summer) is counted regardless of whether or not the student is enrolled. During this time, the grade point average continues to be based on hours of completed work. Incompletes are noted on students' transcripts even after a final grade has been given for the course.

C. LANGUAGE STUDY AND EXAMS

OVERVIEW

Our department is committed to undertaking research in primary sources, in the original languages, and to broadening horizons beyond the student's native language. Students are advised to begin language study before entering the program and to continue it early in their studies at Michigan.

1. REQUIREMENTS

By the time they achieve candidacy, students must demonstrate reading proficiency through departmental examinations or approved coursework in at least *two relevant research languages*: the choice of which is discussed and approved by the student's faculty advisors. It is advisable that the language requirement be met early, in the first year if possible, since knowledge of languages has a direct bearing on the level of research a student is able to conduct. Students cannot advance to candidacy at the end of the third year if they have not satisfied the language requirement, and their progress to the degree is halted.

Language needs vary and are determined by faculty advisors and the DGS in consultation with the student, taking into account professional standards and research needs in the student's chosen field. Students with exceptional language needs, who require more than two research languages, will be encouraged to use their summers for language study and to apply for competitive Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) and other fellowships to fund additional language study. Although it is understood that the need for extensive language work may cause the student to extend their program beyond the sixth year, students are encouraged to use their summers for language work to make progress as efficiently as possible.

2. LANGUAGE EXAMS

Departmental language examinations may be administered any semester, but students are required to pass both language exams before the take preliminary exams.

Language exams last two hours and require the student to translate an extract from a scholarly text or primary source (c. 750 words). Dictionary (print or digital) is allowed. Other use of the internet is not permitted.

Students whose research languages fall outside the expertise of the faculty of History of Art, may fulfill the requirement in one of two ways. They may arrange with a faculty member in another department to administer a test (a translation test and/or oral examination as appropriate), or they may offer proof that they have passed a language course with a grade of B+ or above on a level that their advisor deems adequate to their research needs (intermediate or advanced). In the latter case, the advisor will inform the DGS in writing that a given course adequately fulfills the requirements; the student then has an official transcript forwarded to Student Services.

If one of the research languages happens to be the student's native tongue, the department may grant a waiver to the exam in that language. In such cases, the DGS and Graduate Office should be advised by the student's advisor so that the fulfillment of this requirement is formally recorded with the Rackham Graduate School.

Retaking language Examinations: A student who fails a language examination is advised to consult with the grader of the language attempted to learn strengths and weaknesses. The student may retake the examination on subsequent scheduled dates. Exams in two languages must be passed before the student can be advanced to candidacy.

D. MODIFICATION FOR STUDENTS ENTERING WITH AN M. A. DEGREE

OVERVIEW

In principle, all students (those entering with a B.A. and those entering with an M.A. degree) fulfill the same requirements, take the preliminary examination in January of the third year, advance to candidacy, and submit a dissertation prospectus at the end of the third year. Students entering with an M.A. degree are encouraged to take advantage of the learning opportunities at the University by following this same timeline, which also allows them to form relationships with a range of faculty in the department.

REQUIREMENTS

In rare cases, when an incoming student has already completed substantial work in their proposed area of specialization and demonstrated breadth as well as depth through an M.A. program, in consultation with their advisor they may consider requesting to accelerate or “fast-track” the timeline. This request takes the form of a letter to the Graduate Committee in early April of the first year in the program, for consideration at the Committee’s next meeting. However, regardless of timeline all students must complete at least 18 credits of coursework that includes 3 credits of cognate study and fulfill the commitment of at least four years of GSI work.

Students who are approved to fast-track then take the preliminary examination at the end of their second year, having passed language requirements, and schedule a dissertation prospectus defense early in September of the third year. Requirements for coursework are reduced to eight graduate-level seminars (including HISTART 615, one or two cognates and one or both distribution requirements). On a case-by-case basis, the DGS and advisor can decide that departmental distributional requirements are fulfilled if a student has taken appropriate courses at the M.A.-granting institution.

E. PRELIMINARY EXAMS, CANDIDACY, AND PROSPECTUS DEFENSE

1. PRELIMINARY (PRELIM) EXAMS

A. OVERVIEW

The preliminary examination forms a bridge between coursework and dissertation research. It is designed to consolidate and test students’ command of the art and scholarship of their general area of study as well as specialized literature and conceptual issues that will support their future dissertation research. The process of defining topics and compiling and revising bibliographies of readings is a valuable part of experience. Students usually take the preliminary examination over

the course of two consecutive days during the first half of January of the third year (check candidacy deadlines on Rackham website).

B. PREPARATION

During the second year, as part of the Third-Term Review, students provide a tentative list of the three members of their Preliminary Examination Committee. This committee consists of the student's primary advisor (normally the anticipated chair of their Dissertation Committee) and normally two but at least one other faculty member from History of Art. In the last weeks of the winter term of the student's second year, the whole committee, but certainly the chair of the committee, should meet with the student to define the areas of questioning and to help with the initial compiling of reading and monuments lists. In late April or May, students attend a "Prelim Workshop," in which faculty members and advanced students share guidance and answer questions about processes of and preparation for Preliminary Examinations. The student should begin reading over the summer and continue through to the January test date. They should plan to meet with their advisor every few weeks throughout the Fall semester.

A full meeting of the Preliminary Examination Committee should take place early in the fall semester of the third year and at periodic intervals until the test date. Students preparing Preliminary Examinations are encouraged to discuss past exams with advanced students who have completed them, and consult the ["User's Guide" to Preliminary Exams](#) in the appendix.

C. FORMAT OF THE EXAM

The written examination, taken on two consecutive days, consists of four areas of questioning: two in the general or teaching field (historically and geographically defined) [=Day I] and two in the research field (represented by two focused areas relevant to the proposed dissertation topic) [=Day II]. Each of the four parts of the test is two hours in length. Students then submit the exam to the Graduate Program Coordinator and to the Committee via email.

The tests are proctored; they can either be handwritten or taken on a clean laptop; plagiarism or downloading of pre-prepared material will lead to the student's failing the exam.

The written test is followed by an oral follow-up discussion with the full Preliminary Examination Committee: it runs about 1½ hours and is held within the following week.

D. COMPONENTS OF THE EXAM

1. DAY 1: GENERAL OR TEACHING FIELD

The student, in consultation with their primary advisor, decides on a temporal/geographical area covering an appropriate range of material. Examples include: “Modern European Painting and Sculpture, 1848-1945”; “Arts of China in the Song Period, 960-1279”; “Islamic and Christian Worlds in the Mediterranean Basin, Tenth to Thirteenth Centuries;” “Global Modern Architecture.” As a general rule, studying for the general field portion of the preliminary exam should prepare the student to teach an undergraduate survey course in the area.

In preparation for the test in the general or teaching field, the student compiles a **monuments list** (about 100-150 works) and a bibliography of essential reading in the field (about 25-50 books/articles). These two lists are refined in discussion with the primary advisor and the committee. The precise format of the test on Day I is determined by the student and the committee in consultation.

Day I, Part I: Discussion of images

This section lasts for two hours. It consists of responses to a series of questions posed in relation to images, chosen from the Monuments list, shown on PowerPoint. The examination sometimes consists of questions asked of a series of single images (e.g. eight works for 15 minutes each), or of questions asked of compared images (e.g. 4 pairs for 30 minutes each).

Day I, Part II: Questions based on reading in general field

This section lasts for two hours and consists of three forty-minute essays based on questions pertaining to the student’s list of readings in the general literature of the field. The student, in advance, organizes their readings into five subtopics (five “nodes”) representing trends in the field. For example, a student working on early modern Islamic art might organize nodes on “conceptualizing the field of Islamic art,” “collecting and display,” “Islam and the image,” “Ornament: its sources and theory,” and “Islam and East Asia.”

The Committee provides five questions related to the subtopics highlighted in the student's general bibliography and the student chooses three to answer. This is the opportunity to identify and think with the writing that has shaped scholarship in the field.

2. DAY II: RESEARCH FIELD

On Day Two, the student writes two essays based on questions derived in advance from the list of readings in aspects of the subfields that will support the student's research project. Where Day One lays out background information, Day Two attends to concepts, subfields, and bodies of scholarship relevant to proposed dissertation research. Depending on the character of the dissertation and the needs of the student, the areas of questioning on day two may focus on a particular medium or genre, a critical category or concept, a theoretical, historiographical or methodological issue, a body of comparative material, or a related minor or cognate field.

In preparation for the test in the research field, the student compiles bibliographies (circa 50 books/articles each) in two chosen special fields. For example, the student planning to write a dissertation on early modern Islamic book arts could compile lists and prepare questions for "Islamic manuscripts and book arts," and a minor field of "gender theory and the pre-modern Islamic world." As part of the preparation for the test, students are asked to develop three "questions" in each of the two fields: in this way the student should come to terms with crucial scholarly currents. The advisor and committee help the student define and hone the three topics as part of the process of reading and study. When setting the day two exams, the examiners select and refine two of the three questions.

Day II, Part I:

The student is asked to choose one of two questions and to write a two-hour essay answering the question. The Committee provides two questions, developed from the three questions proposed by the student, and the student chooses one to answer.

Day II, Part II:

The student is asked to choose one of two questions and to write a two-hour essay answering the question.

3. ORAL EXAMINATION

The final component is an oral examination of 1½ hours that takes place within two weeks of the written portion of the examination. The entire committee participates in the oral exam. The meeting offers an opportunity to discuss issues not addressed or insufficiently treated in the written exam and can thus provide the committee with further information about the student's knowledge of the field. The meeting is also the occasion for looking forward and beginning to discuss preparation of the dissertation prospectus.

4. RE-TAKING EXAMINATION QUESTIONS

A student must pass all parts of the preliminary examination in order to proceed in the program. Students whose initial exams were problematic in some way will be asked to retake unsatisfactory portions of the exam.

E. ASSESSMENT

After the student completes the exam and oral follow-up the committee decides whether to approve the student to advance to candidacy and forwards their recommendation to the Grad Coordinator.

At this point the Graduate Committee consults the student's overall record and, in rare occasions where the student has not met requirements and made satisfactory progress, may—in conjunction with the student's advisor—consider recommending that the student leave the program with the awarding of a terminal M.A. degree (see "[Obtaining the M.A. Degree](#)" below).

2. CANDIDACY

By conferring candidacy, the Department officially confirms that a student is qualified to conduct dissertation research in the area proposed. In order to be advanced to candidacy, a student must have completed all required coursework (30 credits with no incompletes), including cognate courses and courses satisfying distribution requirements, met the foreign language requirement, received a favorable Third-term Review, and passed the preliminary examination. Once advanced to candidacy students are eligible to apply for certain additional fellowships.

3. DISSERTATION PROSPECTUS

A. OVERVIEW

The Dissertation prospectus serves as a bridge to dissertation research and builds on the research portion (Day Two) of the preliminary exams. Students work on the prospectus during the winter term of the third year and usually plan to submit and defend it by the end of the term.

B. DESCRIPTION

The prospectus is a detailed description of the proposed dissertation project that situates the project within the field. The body of the text should total no more than 2500 words. The prospectus should address: 1) The topic of the dissertation; 2) questions driving the dissertation and why they matter; 3) situate the topic within major trends in current scholarship with which it plans to enter into conversation; 4) a tentative chapter outline; 5) a research plan (including travel and access to materials needed to undertake the research). It should include a working bibliography.

Typically, the Dissertation Prospectus is read by the same committee that assessed the Preliminary Examination, though it is possible to change or add a member at this stage to better align with the future Dissertation Committee.

C. PREPARATION

The student should consult with the advisor and members of the committee when formulating this important document, which serves as the intellectual plan for subsequent dissertation research and as the basis for future grant writing. The proposal is discussed in a prospectus defense usually held, according to deadlines set by Rackham, at the end of the third year

D. PROSPECTUS DEFENSE

The 1½-hour prospectus defense – which typically opens with the student offering a brief presentation of the proposed dissertation project with images – provides a crucial opportunity for the committee and the student to discuss intellectual and methodological aspects of the project and formulate research plans and strategies. Ideally, as many members of the future Dissertation Committee as possible are present at the prospectus defense. A minimum of three members is mandatory. It is not required that the cognate member be present.

At the defense, the committee may recommend corrections and revisions to the prospectus.

E. APPROVAL AND FINAL SUBMISSION

A copy of the corrected prospectus, approved by the committee chair, is filed with the graduate office two weeks after the defense.

F. DISSERTATION

1. OVERVIEW

The dissertation is an original piece of scholarship that advances or contributes to its field and is supported with thorough documentation. The typical structure includes an Abstract, an Introduction (chapter one), two or three intermediary chapters, plus a concluding chapter. It is advised by a committee who then read and evaluate the finished dissertation and question the author during an oral defense.

This guideline is intended to help students plan the research and writing of the dissertation, making it possible to finish within three years of passing the preliminary examinations. Students should bear in mind that the successful completion of a dissertation is a two-way process of negotiation between student and advisor(s), drawing where appropriate on the advice and expertise of the other members of the dissertation committee.

2. DISSERTATION COMMITTEE

FORMATION AND MEMBERSHIP

Often, the faculty advisors who serve on a student's Preliminary Examination Committee later serve on the student's Dissertation Committee. Advisors and committee members may change if the student's scholarly interests shift significantly during their time in the program.

The Rackham Graduate School requires that each dissertation committee have a minimum of four members, three of whom must be regular members of the Rackham faculty. One of these three Rackham faculty members must hold an appointment in a **cognate** field outside of the Department of History of Art. The Department further requires that the committee include at least two regular History of Art faculty members. Emeritus faculty do not normally serve on dissertation defense committees after three or more years of retirement. On the committee composition, refer to the [Rackham guidelines](#).

The members of the dissertation committee should be registered with the Department soon after the prospectus defense. When necessary, changes may be made in the committee's membership in consultation with the DGS through an amendment form available from the Student Services Office. All changes must be registered with the DGS and the Graduate School. The final list of committee members must be registered with the Graduate School at least six months prior to the dissertation defense.

COMMITTEE RESPONSIBILITIES

The dissertation chair or co-chairs are the only members of the faculty who are required to respond to a students' work-in-progress on the dissertation. Committee members other than the chair or co-chairs are not obligated to read substantial written drafts prior to the submission of the completed dissertation.

While on sabbatical or other leave of absence from the department, dissertation chairs are obligated to continue supervising their students' doctoral dissertations. They are expected to respond to students' chapter drafts and outlines within a month of receipt of the material when these have been completed according to the schedule agreed upon.

3. DISSERTATION RESEARCH AND WRITING

The fourth, fifth and sixth years in the program are devoted to dissertation research and writing. It is expected that students will consult regularly with the dissertation chair and, where appropriate, with other members of the dissertation committee. While students are away from the University, they should submit written material to their dissertation chair on a regular basis and should expect to receive feedback and advice. It is recommended that chapters also be forwarded to committee members in the department who may choose to give responses, but a student should keep all committee members updated on their progress.

4. PREPARING AND MODIFYING DISSERTATION OUTLINES AND TIMELINE & ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT

During the fall semester of the fourth year, the student is asked to draw up a provisional calendar for completion of the dissertation and a provisional chapter outline.

By the beginning of the fall semester of the fifth year in the program, student should generate drafts of the following materials and consult with their primary advisor. Once approved, they should submit to the Graduate Committee (through the Graduate Coordinator) the following evidence of their progress on the dissertation:

- A revised chapter outline of the dissertation, with section headings and summaries of content (no more than two pages). For each chapter indicate how much research has been done, how many pages are drafted, and whether or not it has been approved by your advisor.
- An updated timeline to completion of the dissertation, including deadlines and other milestones.
- This submission may, when appropriate, include a formal request to the graduate committee for an extension to the normal defense deadline (see [exceptions](#) below), when

the proposed research project requires unusual and particularly time-consuming field work or acquisition of new language skills.

Students should also share a copy of these documents with other members of the dissertation committee to keep them informed of their progress.

5. COORDINATING RESEARCH AND WRITING, SUBMITTING DRAFTS AND CHAPTERS

Students need to be aware that the success of their research project depends as much on their ability to process and write up their work as it does on the quality and extent of their primary research. Students will find that they have a much clearer sense of what essential research remains to be done, and which is less necessary to the overall project in the time remaining, once they have begun to commit their findings and thoughts to paper. Therefore, it is departmental policy that students begin to submit chapter drafts to their dissertation chairs well in advance of the project completion date. By the beginning of the winter semester of a student's fifth year in the graduate program *at the latest*, the student should submit a *substantial piece of writing*, such as a draft chapter or equivalent (usually thirty or more pages), to their primary advisor. It should also be noted that many fellowship applications require submission of a writing sample from the dissertation.

The dissertation-writing workshops, tutors, groups, and fellowships organized by Rackham and the Sweetland Writing Center offer structured support and advice as well as [workshops](#) on various aspects of writing.

If a student fails to meet the agreed upon deadlines for submitting chapters to their advisor, the dissertation chair is under no obligation to read a student's material until the student has re-negotiated the missed deadline. While chapter deadlines may shift, students should make every effort to maintain the original defense date and discuss any proposed changes with the advisor.

Faculty will notify the graduate committee if chapter submission deadlines are missed. In this situation, students' funding and nomination for grants may be affected.

6. TAPPAN TALKS

In order that students may receive constructive critique from faculty and fellow students, each student is required to present a paper to the Department based on their dissertation research. Normally this happens during the fourth or fifth year, depending on when the student is resident in Ann Arbor. The presentation gives students an opportunity to develop their skills in explaining the scope and nature of their work to a broader audience.

7. SUBMITTING & DEFENDING THE DISSERTATION

A student will be expected to present the completed dissertation and defend it at an oral defense conducted by the dissertation committee. It is the student's responsibility to obtain information on dissertation deadlines, format, and procedures from the Rackham Graduate School well in advance of the defense. Procedures are outlined in the [Rackham dissertation handbook](#).

Students continue to register for HISTART 995 (8 credits) during the semester in which they defend the dissertation. Once the defense date is scheduled with Rackham it may not be moved.

A final draft of the dissertation must be submitted to all members of the dissertation committee at least one month in advance of the defense date. It is to a student's great advantage to submit the preliminary final draft to the dissertation chair well before this date. This ensures that any suggested revisions may be properly discussed and incorporated in the final draft in a satisfactory manner.

DISSERTATION DEFENSE

If a dissertation is to meet the deadline for completion in year six, a defense date must be set before the end of April. A dissertation can be completed within a given academic year only if the defense takes place before the end of the winter semester. This ensures that the chair and members of the dissertation committee will be in a position to attend the defense. Spring or summer term defenses may also be scheduled if the committee members are in agreement.

The entire dissertation committee (minimum four members) must be present at the dissertation defense. A speaker phone or Zoom call will be set up if any of the members are resident outside of Ann Arbor. The defense is public and peers may attend. It is often the practice that one or more fellow students take notes recording the substance of the group conversation.

FINAL REVISIONS AND FILING

After the defense, the student must incorporate recommended corrections and file a final version with Rackham, approved in advance by the dissertation chair or a proxy by a given date. The due date for filing the final, approved dissertation in a given term is set by Rackham

and is *absolutely inflexible*. Should a student miss the deadline for a given term even by a day, they will be compelled to pay tuition to enroll the following term.

Rackham sets specific dates each academic year for receiving the degree. These roughly correspond to the following: early October for a December degree; mid-April for a May degree; and late June for an August degree. Students and advisors should consult the [Rackham website](#) for specific dates, including the designated “grace periods,” in a given year.

8. EXCEPTIONS TO A SIX OR SEVEN-YEAR COMPLETION, EXTENSIONS

MODIFICATION TO TIMELINE

If a student is unable to complete the dissertation within six years, they should discuss a new deadline with the dissertation chair and register the new plan with the Graduate Coordinator for approval by the Graduate Committee. Possible grounds for an extension include:

- time-consuming language study is needed in order to complete dissertation research satisfactorily,
- extensive fieldwork or archival work in unusually difficult circumstances is required,
- a student receives a major external award. In this case, Graduate Committee must approve the plan before the end of the academic year prior to taking up the award.

[See below](#) for information on requesting formal leave from the program.

Students to plan to take more than seven years to complete their program must apply to Rackham for approval. This is not guaranteed.

As part of a request for a modified timeline, the student should apply for fellowships and talk to the Chief Administrator about funding. If the request is approved the Department will continue to cover tuition and Grad Care but not a stipend or summer grant.

If the dissertation is not completed by the approved extension date, the student is no longer making satisfactory progress and—unless Rackham formally grants an extension—is no longer eligible for departmental tuition fellowships and GradCare. Exceptions to the seven-year rule, which are discussed by the graduate committee and must be reviewed by Rackham, will be granted only if, for example, the student has received a major pre-doctoral grant and needs to remain enrolled in the program.

CONSEQUENCES BEYOND THE APPROVED EXTENSION

On behalf of a student, the program may request an additional one-year extension, but a student who does not complete the degree after two years of extension may be dismissed from the program or returned to pre-candidacy status and required to meet candidacy requirements again. Rackham will notify graduate programs of students who have not completed their degree within the stipulated period.

Students who are disenrolled from the program may apply for readmission through the Rackham Graduate School. If readmitted, candidates may still complete the degree, normally within three years, exceptionally beyond three years. If the student goes beyond three years, then the advisor must write a letter to the DGS attesting that the student's knowledge and understanding of the field is up-to-date, otherwise the student will have to re-sit all or part of the preliminary examinations as a condition of re-entry into the program. The student seeking to re-enroll must be certain that the dissertation chair and members of the dissertation committee are willing to continue to serve as advisors. The student applies to the graduate committee for permission to re-enroll when the dissertation is virtually complete. The student enrolls for one term to defend the dissertation, prepare the final text (incorporating corrections), and submit it to Rackham. The student is responsible for paying tuition fees for this term.

In considering the financial and academic implications of these options, be sure to consult your primary advisor, the DGS, the Chief Administrator. See "[Modifications to Timeline](#)" above.

V. YEAR-BY-YEAR SUMMARY OF THE PROGRAM: PROGRESS AND PURPOSES

FIRST YEAR

The first year is devoted to developing the skills in critical reading and visual analysis that are essential to art historical research. This is an opportunity to broaden the base of your knowledge and to explore new fields and ideas. Choose a variety of courses, periods, and approaches. Be aware of, and start to fulfill, the departmental distribution requirement (2 courses providing you with chronological and geographical range) and the university cognate requirement (2 courses outside History of Art department). You should pass at least one of two language examinations.

The summer is typically devoted to language study, pre-dissertation travel and research, and/or internships; to supplement the basic grant, talk to the Chief Administrator and investigate internal fellowships and museum internships.

FALL TERM

- HISTART 615 (Introductory seminar for entering cohort)
- Two additional graduate courses
- Optional: language class (credit or audit) and/or undergraduate lecture course to fill out knowledge in your field or art history more generally (for credit, as an official audit, or an informal visiting arrangement determined by instructor and student)

WINTER TERM

- Three graduate courses
- Optional: language class and/or undergraduate lecture class (audit)

SECOND YEAR

Coursework continues as you focus increasingly on your field of interest and begin to define the area of your dissertation research. Use your seminar work to develop and test topics. Dissertations and scholarly articles frequently begin as seminar reports. In this year, you will also begin teaching as a Graduate Student Instructor (GSI). In order to prepare you for leading discussion sections and grading, you will take a required 1-credit seminar with your cohort on teaching the History of Art. You should pass a second language examination. Early in January, you will submit materials for the Third-Term Review. At the end of the winter term, the second-year cohort meets with the DGS for a “Preliminary Exams workshop” (see “[Preliminary Examinations](#)” above for details). In the summer, you will continue, as necessary, with language study, undertake pre-dissertation travel and research and/or internships, and make headway on study for examinations in the following January. To supplement the basic summer grant, plan in late Fall or early Winter to talk to the Chief Administrator and investigate internal fellowships and museum internships.

FALL TERM

- 2 graduate courses
- HISTART 993: 1-credit pedagogy seminar
- Graduate Student Instructor (GSI) leading discussion sections in undergraduate lecture course

WINTER TERM

- 2 graduate courses
- Graduate Student Instructor (GSI) leading discussion sections
- Settle on Prelim Committee, discuss exam structure with Committee Chair and work on first draft of reading / monuments lists—aim for May 1.
- M.A. requirements should be met by the end of this term

THIRD YEAR

By the end of the third year, you should be ready to focus primarily on dissertation research. During the course of the year, you will be studying for and taking your Preliminary Examinations and then preparing a dissertation prospectus that will serve as a discussion document in the prospectus defense that typically takes place at the end of the winter term. Students may opt to officially audit or informally sit in on a course during the third year. Discuss with your advisor the advisability of applying for substantial research grants to support an extra semester off campus in the fourth year. To supplement the basic summer grant, plan in late Fall or early Winter to talk to the Chief Administrator and investigate internal fellowships and museum internships.

FALL TERM

- Graduate Student Instructor (GSI) leading discussion sections
- Optional: audit a class
- Preliminary exam study, enrolled in HISTART 990 (8 credits). You should meet regularly with the chair of your committee and occasionally with the full committee or members thereof.

WINTER TERM

- Graduate Student Instructor (GSI) leading discussion sessions.
- Take Preliminary Examination at the very beginning of January.
- Advance to candidacy, enrolled now in HISTART 995 (8 credits)
- Prepare dissertation prospectus for April defense with Preliminary Exam Committee. At conclusion of defense, submit approved prospectus (corrected if necessary) to the Graduate Office. This is a recommended deadline that can be changed in exceptional circumstances in consultation with the student's advisor and the DGS.

FOURTH YEAR

From the fourth year forward, students focus on dissertation research and become increasingly active in applying for fellowship and research support. Typically, fourth-year students are eligible

for the department funding that allows them to pursue research off campus from January through August of the fourth year. Some win external fellowships to supplement this funding to cover on-site research in the Fall as well; others teach as GSIs in the Fall. Throughout the next three years, when you are engaged in dissertation writing and research you should remain in regular contact with your dissertation advisor and keep the advisor updated on your progress.

From the fourth year forward, students submit a [progress report](#) each Winter as part of the annual review.

To supplement the basic summer grant, plan in late Fall or early Winter to talk to the Chief Administrator and investigate internal fellowships and museum internships.

Fourth-year students are also eligible to apply for departmental funding for academic-semester internships that are awarded on a competitive basis each year.

FALL TERM

- Register for HISTART 995 (8 credits).
- By September 1, submit to Grad Coordinator a request for departmental nominations for external fellowships to the Graduate Committee, along with CV and a list of all fellowships for which you plan to apply (in advance, discuss strategy with your advisor) and a research proposal, i.e. a description of your dissertation—topic, purpose, tentative structure, progress to date—that will develop into a component of a grant application.
- Attend Grant Proposal Workshop, usually on the second Friday of the term. All students are welcome to participate in this workshop.

WINTER TERM

- Register for HISTART 995 (8 credits).
- Submit Progress Report in February

FIFTH YEAR

Ideally, the fifth year is dedicated to dissertation research supported by external, University or departmental fellowships. Alternatively, certain fifth year students apply for support for an internship or support themselves with GSI work.

To supplement the basic summer grant, plan in late Fall or early Winter to talk to the Chief Administrator and investigate internal fellowships and museum internships. Also ask the Chief

Administrator about the availability of support for one or two semesters of “finishing grant” in the final year of dissertation work.

FALL TERM

- Register for HISTART 995 (8 credits)
- Apply for internal and external fellowships for the following academic year

WINTER TERM

- Register for HISART 995 (8 credits.) Continue to submit chapters as completed.
- Submit Progress Report in February

SIXTH YEAR

Students in the sixth year focus on dissertation writing and often aim to defend the dissertation by the end of the academic year. Although they are beyond the limit of the full fellowship package, they remain eligible for a “TOF” (tuition and health insurance coverage). Some win fellowships or are eligible for one or two semesters of departmental “finishing” grant; others apply for support for an internship or GSI work (not guaranteed).

FALL TERM

- Register for HistArt 995 (8 credits).
- Those with a dissertation near completion and able to set a defense date can begin looking at CAA listings and apply for jobs and postdoctoral fellowships.

WINTER TERM

- Register for HistArt 995 (8 credits).
- Submit Progress Report in February
- Plan completion of dissertation and defense by end of term or include plans for extension in the Progress Report.

BEYOND YEAR SIX

If a dissertation project requires extensive field or archival research or demands unusual language preparation, a student may need to submit the final product in the seventh year. In this case, the student should discuss a plan with their advisor and, when possible, submit the revised timeline with their materials for the annual review in year six. For more detail see “[Exceptions to a six or seven-year completion, extensions.](#)”

VI. ADVISING, MENTORSHIP, ANNUAL AND THIRD-TERM REVIEWS & MAINTAINING SATISFACTORY PROGRESS

A. ADVISING AND FACULTY MENTORSHIP

OVERVIEW

The Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) oversees graduate advising and serves as the initial academic mentor for incoming graduate students, providing cohort orientations and helping entering students choose their first-year courses as well as suggesting faculty advisors. By the end of their first year, students should select a faculty advisor in their chosen field who will work closely with them to shape a rigorous and appropriate program of study. It is expected that first-year students meet with the DGS and their faculty advisors at least once per term. Advisors and students should meet each Fall to set guidelines for their interactions during the coming academic year. We encourage each advisor and student to attend a session of Rackham's MORE (mentoring) workshop at some point during their work together.

Faculty advisors assist the student in designing a program of study that fulfills minimum distribution guidelines (see below) and provides the best possible intellectual preparation for teaching and research in the student's field of interest. They also offer advice on resources within and outside the Department and mentor students, giving advice on professional development, including the writing of grant applications, preparation for conferences, and publication possibilities. At the completion of the dissertation, faculty advisors aid students in their search for professional and academic positions. In rare cases when a student's interests or needs change, the student may initiate a request to change advisors in consultation with the Director of Graduate Studies and the Associate Chair. For more ideas on the mentoring and advising relationship, see [Rackham's guide](#).

YEARLY MENTORING MEETING

Many common mentoring issues can be prevented by a frank discussion between advisors and advisees, *before any conflict arises*.

Each fall (by October 1), every graduate student should schedule a meeting with their advisor to specifically address mentoring expectations. Together with their advisor(s), they should complete this [mentoring template](#). Students with co-advisors should also complete [this document](#) with them (a copy of the Google document is useful). After this conversation, this document should be available for reference by both the advisor and advisee.

The mentoring worksheet is meant to be a *starting point* for an ongoing conversation and it should be revisited at least once per year.

DEALING WITH ISSUES IN MENTORING

The department strongly encourages you to be proactive about your mentoring relationships. Always endeavor to communicate as clearly and directly as possible with your mentors, addressing issues well before they become intractable. If conflict arises, the first step should always be to talk with your advisor, ideally in person. If that fails to address the situation to your satisfaction, you might ask your graduate student mentor for advice. After that, the next step should always be the DGS. If those avenues do not yield a satisfactory result, students may consult with the department Chair. Finally, Rackham provides various advocates and the [Graduate Student and Program Consultation Services](#) (GSPCS). See their [webpage](#) for more information.

B. OFFICIAL FEEDBACK, PROGRESS REPORTS, & ANNUAL REVIEW

In their first two years of coursework, students receive grades and written evaluations for each course. We encourage students to meet informally with their instructors, advisors, and other faculty whenever they seek clarification or feedback on their work in a class or on a project, or to discuss the final course evaluation.

We also recommend that students set up a schedule for regular meetings with their advisor.

In addition, the program schedules the following means of supervising and assessing a student's progress:

ANNUAL REVIEW/PROGRESS REPORT

The Department conducts an annual review of all graduate students enrolled in the Department. The goal is to track students' progress, recommend resources, and identify developing strengths as well as areas for improvement. The Graduate Coordinator compiles dossiers of relevant documents for each student (see [details above](#)). This review is conducted over the course of the winter semester, beginning with a review by the Graduate Committee of relevant documents and discussion when appropriate with the student's advisor and other faculty members. The DGS may meet with each student to discuss the review and goals for the coming year. The process concludes with a brief letter from DGS to the student that summarizes the assessment.

PRE-CANDIDACY

For first-year students, the annual review dossier is based on comments and grades submitted by course instructors; in the second year, comments from instructors are supplemented by the third-term review material; in the third year the preliminary exam forms the basis of review. The DGS also solicits comments from instructors who have supervised the student as a GSI.

POST-CANDIDACY

From the fourth year onward, each student is asked to submit an annual [Progress Report](#) using the form distributed by the Graduate Coordinator in early January. Students should consult with their advisor when preparing the Progress Report. These reports are discussed by the Graduate Committee as part of the annual review, and in some cases referred to other faculty members for comment. In the event that the Graduate Committee determines that a student is not making adequate progress, then the Dissertation Chair will communicate a list of recommendations for improvement to the DGS who will then convey the report to the student. Students who are not making adequate progress on the dissertation will be reviewed the following semester again. If the student's progress is still deemed not to be adequate, then departmental funding could be affected, or faculty may recommend that the student withdraw from the program.

For more detail see "[satisfactory progress](#)" and "[probation, dismissal](#), and reinstatement."

THIRD-TERM REVIEW

This diagnostic allows the student to interact with faculty and for faculty to assess a representative sample of the student's writing and scholarly work.

In early January of the second year, each student submits a dossier for the Third-Term Review. This consists of: (1) a form in which students document progress in the program to date and give a sense of future plans (research area, possible dissertation committee, etc.); (2) a Third-Term Review paper. It should be a copy of a paper already written for a graduate course at Michigan. Students should choose for submission the paper that they best feel demonstrates their command of skills in research, writing, and critical thinking. They should submit a clean copy of the paper: typographic errors should be corrected and instructor comments removed, but the student should not revise the paper.

Students are encouraged to talk with their advisor and/or the DGS to identify *two readers* for the third-term review who *did not supervise the original paper* but who will offer useful perspectives on the subject or who could become valued interlocutors for the student. These could be faculty the student has studied with in the past or has been wanting to work with in the future, possibly potential members of a prelim or dissertation committee. They will evaluate the

Third-Term Review paper, assessing it as evidence of the capacity to complete a dissertation. The two faculty evaluations will, in turn, be reviewed by the Graduate Committee, along with evaluations of coursework submitted by all UM faculty members who have taught the student. The evaluations allow the Graduate Committee to develop an overall picture of the student's progress toward the degree, to assess the student's ability to succeed in the program, and to determine future directions. At the conclusion of the review process, the DGS prepares a written evaluation and gives students the option to individually discuss the committee's assessment. If the student is not making satisfactory progress overall, these discussions will include steps for improvement but eventually will consider the advisability of remaining in the program.

Although the faculty readers' evaluations of the third-term review paper are confidential, students are encouraged to contact their readers informally to discuss the paper. Some readers may choose to share a summary of their comments with the student.

C. SATISFACTORY PROGRESS TO DEGREE

Satisfactory Progress is defined as maintaining an appropriate (as distinct from minimally acceptable) academic record, reaching the various stages of progress in the program at or near the time expected of the majority of students, and, for students supported by teaching assistantships, giving evidence of satisfactory teaching. The Department takes satisfactory progress into account in awarding teaching support and dissertation and candidacy fellowships. Cases of students not maintaining satisfactory progress will be reviewed by the Graduate Committee for appropriate action. If a student is deemed not to be making satisfactory progress and cannot correct this within a reasonable amount of time (generally one semester), then the Graduate Committee, in consultation with the student's advisor, may recommend [probation or dismissal](#).

VII. FUNDING AND LEAVES

A. BASIC FUNDING PACKAGE

OVERVIEW

All students receive five years of full funding (tuition fellowship, medical insurance, and stipend based on a Graduate Student Instructorship at the pay level set in the GEO/UM contract) and additional years of tuition only fellowship (TOF) with health insurance. This support is guaranteed so long as students continue to meet the standards for satisfactory progress in the degree.

Of the five fully funded years, students are granted up to four non-work semesters: two in the first year, another typically augmented to extend from January through August for non-residential research in the fourth year; an additional non-work semester is usually available in the student's final year in the program.

Students generally serve as a Graduate Student Instructor (GSI) for at least two years and may compete for a department-funded internship at a museum or other institution for one of the other semesters, if such positions are available. In addition, every student in years 1-5 receives a partial grant each summer and is eligible to apply for additional summer funding to be used for travel, language study, and research. We help our students apply for both internal and external grants to augment summer research and to enable an extra year of dissertation work away from campus. Students must be resident in Ann Arbor to receive stipend funding during the semesters supported by GSI work.

Students should consult with their original offer letter and the department's Chief Administrator for information specific to their cohort year.

BUDGETING

Students are encouraged to plan their annual budgets with the understanding that:

1. Paychecks are issued at the end of the month and the first check of the academic year is issued at the end of September (see Rackham's [stipend disbursement calendar](#) for details). Please plan accordingly.
2. Funding may change depending on negotiations with the graduate union (GEO).
3. The partial summer funding grant awarded to all students in years 1-5 is usually insufficient to cover four full months of living expenses. Students often set aside funds from their stipends during the academic year to help with summer expenses, then supplement the basic summer grant with internships, grants for research and language study, or short-term work.
4. Internships and fellowships conducted off campus do not always include funding for travel. Plan to apply to the department for supplemental travel funds in conjunction with a fellowship or internship off campus.

B. SUPPLEMENTAL FUNDING

In addition to the basic package, limited funds are available to subsidize attendance at conferences in the area of the student's dissertation research and to support publication costs. If the student is presenting a paper at a conference, they should apply to the Rackham School of Graduate Studies

for support. The maximum amount varies for national and international conferences. When funds are available, the department will consider supplementing a Rackham award.

Rackham Graduate School also has funding available for pre-candidacy and candidacy research: students should consult the [Rackham website](#) to make themselves aware of possible sources of research support.

The [departmental website contains a partial list of available fellowships](#) – local, national and international. Students should consult the list and be aware that some deadlines occur very early in the academic year. Some of the fellowships require departmental nomination and students may ask to be considered in a formal process that takes place each September. The department is committed to helping students gain support for their research and holds an annual Grant Writing Workshop in the fall. Students should ask advisors to read and comment on drafts of their proposals.

The [UM Library also has a “research guide”](#) for internal and external student funding.

C. HEALTH INSURANCE

Rackham regards certain fellowships as “benefits-eligible”: these include Rackham-administered fellowships (e.g. Rackham Candidacy Fellowships and Predoctoral Fellowships) and certain external fellowships (e.g. Fulbright Fellowships) – for the latter they will cost share with departments to supply Grad Care. For the present the department regards most departmental and external fellowships as “benefits-eligible” and commits to awarding Grad Care health insurance through the years that the student is enrolled.

D. CONTINUOUS ENROLLMENT & LEAVES OF ABSENCE

Rackham mandates that all students must be enrolled (registered and paying tuition) for the entire period in which they are active in the program, whether in residence in Ann Arbor or conducting research elsewhere (see details on Rackham [website on continuous enrollment](#)).

The History of Art Department commits to awarding at a minimum a basic package of tuition and healthcare coverage each semester to all students who are not otherwise supported by fellowships or teaching/research posts, provided that they maintain adequate progress toward the degree.

“Leave” is granted only for short periods during which students are unable, for personal or medical reasons, to pursue their studies (depending on circumstance, for one or two semesters). Rackham will also allow one year of maternity leave for each child and will allow a leave for heavy care for

a spouse, elder or dependent. During leave, funding is suspended. Students considering a leave of absence are encouraged to first discuss options with both their advisor and the DGS. For more see Rackham's [leave of absence policy](#).

VIII. TEACHING AND INTERNSHIPS, PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

A. OVERVIEW

Professional training is an integral part of the program. The faculty works closely with students to provide them with necessary teaching skills. Beginning in their second year, students develop their professional capacities through teaching assistantships as “Graduate Student Instructors” (GSIs) and also, in individual cases, through research assistantships and internships in museums and public arts institutions.

B. TEACHING WORK (GSIs ETC.)

OVERVIEW

Fellowships are based on the expectation that students will serve as Graduate Student Instructors during their second and third years in the program and for subsequent semesters not supported by research grants. Exceptions may include students on Foreign Language and Area Studies fellowships, or students who secure a Graduate Student Research Assistantship for a given semester.

GSI APPOINTMENTS

GSI assignments are usually determined in November or early December for the upcoming Winter semester and in April or May for the upcoming Fall term. The Chief Administrator circulates a call for GSI requests, asking each eligible Grad Student to rank their top choices for the courses in which they would like to teach. Assignments are based on the student's year in the program, with priority given to accommodating second and third-year students' top choices when possible. Efforts are made to place new GSIs in courses alongside experienced GSIs, and to allow each student some opportunities to teach courses related to their specialty but also to develop experience in other fields. Options for GSI assignments can depend on undergraduate enrollment in courses. The final array of GSI assignments is then approved by the faculty instructors before students are notified of their GSI appointment. GSI appointments are subject to change when enrollments fluctuate, though the department is committed to the basic funding package for each student.

TRAINING AND SUPERVISION

All new GSIs attend an orientation organized by the Center for Research on Learning and Teaching (CRLT), followed by a series of teaching workshops organized in the Fall semester by the department's Graduate Student Mentor. GSIs work closely with the specific faculty instructor who teaches and supervises the course for which they lead sections. The faculty instructor will observe at least one section and offer suggestions to the GSI; in the Fall the Graduate Student Mentor also observes each new GSI teaching a section.

Students are encouraged to make use of the resources of the Center for Research on Learning and Teaching. CRLT organizes workshops and publishes white papers on pedagogical strategies; a GSI can also arrange one-on-one meetings and classroom observations with CRLT staff.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION FOR GSIs

When questions arise about the GSI's relationship with the faculty member serving as course instructor, the workload, or other matters, the GSI should:

1. meet with the course instructor,
2. contact the DGS or Associate Chair for help in resolving the issue, and/or
3. consult with the GEO steward, who can assess if the conflict represents a breach of contract and convey a student's concern to the union and/or department leadership.

The Graduate Employees' Organization (GEO) is the labor union representing Graduate Student Instructors (GSIs) and Graduate Student Staff Assistants (GSSAs) at the University of Michigan. GEO determines GSI contracts and represents GSIs. Each year, a different graduate student or students may serve as the departmental GEO steward. Stewards are the first point of contact between graduate workers and the union. They represent the interests of their department within GEO and they keep their department updated and informed on GEO activities and events.

LIMITS TO GSI WORK: THE TEN-TERM RULE

The ten-term rule, enforced by the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts (LSA), specifies that no graduate student may receive more than ten terms of support through GSI appointments of .25 or greater. More information on the current status of the ten-term rule can be found [the LSA website](#).

C. INTERNSHIPS AND MUSEUM WORK

OVERVIEW

The department encourages students to develop experience in museums, archives or libraries, and public institutions by offering funding for internships. In most cases the student, after consulting with their advisor, approaches the institution and then applies to the department for funding support. Note that most internships and fellowships conducted off campus do not include separate funding for travel. Plan to apply to the department for supplemental travel funds in conjunction with a fellowship or internship off campus.

SPRING/SUMMER INTERNSHIPS

Short-term internships for four to eight weeks, to be undertaken in the spring and/or summer term, are open to students at any level in the program. These are approved on a rolling basis. Emails are sent out periodically regarding internships, but if you have questions, please contact the Graduate Coordinator in the Department.

SPRING/SUMMER INTERNSHIPS AT THE DALLAS MUSEUM OF ART & THE AGA KHAN MUSEUM

Our department has an established relationship with the Dallas Museum of Art and the Aga Khan Museum. Each Fall, the museum issues a call for both undergraduate and graduate-level interns in departments at the museums that have specific projects in the works. Student applications are forwarded to the institutions and the museum chooses among the applications. The deadline for applications is typically in December with offers made during the Winter term.

ACADEMIC SEMESTER-LONG INTERNSHIPS

Students who have achieved candidacy, and who have discussed their plans with their advisor, may apply for funding to support a semester-long internship in lieu of GSI work. The total number that can be approved depends each year on the department budget. Priority goes to advanced students who establish a connection with a program, museum department or institution that will support their professional or research goals. Calls for applications go out each semester.

RACKHAM DOCTORAL INTERN FELLOWSHIPS

The Rackham Graduate School sponsors a program of internships that place graduate students in area partner institutions engaged with public scholarship. The funding and benefits are equivalent to a semester of GSI work. This program offers a support network and regular meetings for interns across the university. For more information see [Rackham's website](#).

CERTIFICATE IN MUSEUM STUDIES

Students enrolled in the Museum Studies Program undertake a semester-long internship, funded by the MSP, as part of the program requirements. For more detail [see below](#).

WORK AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN MUSEUM OF ART AND KELSEY MUSEUM OF ARCHAEOLOGY

The UMMA and Kelsey hire graduate students to assist with specific projects on an ad-hoc basis. Positions are sometimes posted on the UMMA website or arise from conversations with curators.

The Irving Stenn Fellowship offers a year of support to an advanced student for work with the UMMA's public engagement department. The call for applications typically goes out in late March or early April.

C. ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Each Winter, the department's Graduate Student Mentor organizes a series of professional development workshops.

Students who have been invited for job interviews often ask the DGS to organize a mock interview or a dry run for a job talk.

Consult the [website of The Rackham Graduate School](#) for additional events and training related to professional development.

IX. ADDITIONAL DEGREES AND CERTIFICATION

OVERVIEW

These are some of the options available for accreditation that complement the doctoral program. Some of them entail modifications to the basic degree requirements. Please consult your advisor, the DGS, and/or the Graduate Coordinator if you are considering any of these.

OBTAINING THE M.A. DEGREE

An M.A. is awarded under two circumstances: 1) as a step toward the PhD by means of a formal application to Rackham, which is initiated by the student in consultation with the Graduate Office; or 2) in exceptional cases when a student, in consultation with advisors, elects to terminate their progress toward the PhD. In both cases, all of the following requirements must be met in order to earn the M.A.:

1. Students must complete a minimum of ten courses (30 credits) including the First Year Graduate Seminar (HISTART 615), two three-credit cognate courses (graduate level courses outside History of Art), and no fewer than five further upper-level courses in History of Art (500- to 800-level) or approved coursework taken at the 400-level. (Note: For courses at the 400-level, students must verify that each course is offered for graduate credit before registering.)
2. Students must demonstrate reading proficiency in at least one approved research language, normally through departmental examination.
3. Students must earn a grade of B+ or better in all History of Art courses and of B- or better in two cognate courses maintaining a B average in all graduate coursework.
4. Students must fulfill the distribution requirements as for the PhD.
5. Students must undergo a successful Third-Term Review, demonstrating through the Third-Term Review Paper a command of skills in research, writing, and critical thinking.

It is expected that students will fulfill requirements for the M.A. degree by the end of the second year. To earn the credit, you must contact the Graduate Coordinator and request that the M.A. plan be added to your record. The Grad Coordinator will then contact the Registrar's Office to have the plan added. After it is added, you apply for graduation in Wolverine Access.

CERTIFICATE IN MUSEUM STUDIES

Graduate students in the History of Art PhD program often apply to the [Museum Studies Program](#). This is an interdisciplinary certificate program involving 18 credit hours of study. Students generally apply to the Program during their first year of graduate study. The Museum Studies Program requirements include a yearlong two-semester proseminar, six credit hours of cognate courses (400-level and above), and six credit hours of practical engagement (usually involving internships, independent study, or research at institutions that may be located virtually anywhere in the world). Six of the Museum Studies 18 credit hours may be 'double-counted' with coursework undertaken for the History of Art degree, as long as they are not also double-counted in another program. The remaining 12 credit hours (normally four courses) are therefore taken in addition to the History of Art degree requirements. While History of Art coursework must be completed by the semester of the preliminary exams (by the end of the third year), the Museum

Studies credit hours can be fulfilled within the longer degree period, but they must be completed within five years of entering the certificate program.

In order to avoid carrying too heavy a course load during the pre-candidacy period of study, the following strategies are recommended for History of Art graduate students enrolled in the Museum Studies Program.

- Students can ‘double-count’ the two-semester Museum Studies proseminar taken during their second year as their two required History of Art cognate courses
- Alternatively, students can “double-count” two of their History of Art required departmental or cognate courses as the Museum Studies cognate courses
- Special arrangements can be made for students taking their additional six-credit hours of Museum Studies coursework (equivalent to two seminar courses) during post-candidacy periods when their History of Art coursework is lighter – especially during the winter semester of the third year following preliminary exams (this is subject to the permission of the Director of Graduate Studies) and during the fall semester of their fourth year, if they are still in residence.
- Students can use the Spring/Summer semesters and post-candidacy period to fulfill some of the six credit hours of practical engagement for the Museum Studies Program

ADDITIONAL CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS

See “[Program Overview](#)” or consult with your advisor.

DUAL DEGREES

Students admitted to the graduate program of another unit in the University who wish to be admitted as well to the Graduate Program in History of Art may petition after they have been in residence one year and have completed a minimum of two seminars in History of Art. The application consists of:

- Curriculum vitae (CV)
- Research Statement
- Personal Statement
- Writing sample (~25 pages)
- Letters of recommendation from two faculty members in History of Art and one in the home department

The application is forwarded to the Director of Graduate Studies who presents it to the graduate committee and the case is reviewed.

If admitted, the student works with faculty representatives of the two units to devise a program of study. Normally the student will take no fewer than six seminars in History of Art, including HISTART 615 (taught in the fall term every year) and two courses that satisfy the distributional requirements (geographical and chronological). Language requirements (two for History of Art) are normally maintained. The format of the preliminary examination, drawing elements from standard tests in both departments, is determined through discussion. The dissertation committee is comprised of two members from each unit, one person acting as principal advisor or two acting as co-advisors. Financial arrangements are negotiated at an early date, the home department bearing most of the costs. The student is expected to participate fully in the life of the department, to attend lectures and symposia.

X. PROBATION, DISMISSAL, REINSTATEMENT

A. OVERVIEW

Probation and subsequent dismissal are rare and one does not necessarily lead to the other. They are considered when a student fails to maintain satisfactory progress over a period of time. The annual review identifies potential problems and offers an opportunity for the DGS to discuss them with the student and their advisor.

B. PROBATION

PROBATION PRE-CANDIDACY

Probation is considered when a student exhibits difficulties in any of these areas:

- a. Repeatedly fails language exams
- b. Repeatedly receives low grades in coursework or receives grades below B+ in History of Art courses. One B grade is sufficient for probation. In such a case, the student must redo the work for the course in which said grade has been earned or they must make up the grade by doing another course during the probation period. Two or more Bs is serious enough to warrant discussions regarding dismissal of the student from the doctoral program.
- c. Fails multiple efforts at prelim exams. The student must pass half (that is, two out of four parts) of the preliminary examinations in order to be able to retake those parts which they have failed. Failure to pass the preliminary examinations successfully shall lead to dismissal from the doctoral program.

PROBATION POST-CANDIDACY

Probation is considered when:

1. A student repeatedly fails to submit reasonable timelines and fails to adhere to them as much as possible
2. There are consistent patterns of failure to submit viable written work—especially after seven or eight years in the PhD program. Persistent problems with submitting viable work over time can also lead to eventual dismissal from the program.

CONDITIONS OF PROBATION

To ensure that students who encounter academic difficulties receive fair and equitable treatment and to align the History of Art Department's policies with Rackham Graduate School guidelines, the Department stipulates the following:

- Length of Probationary Period: The minimum probationary period is two months of the fall or winter term and will ordinarily conclude at the end of the term. For a student placed on probation within two months of the end of the fall term, the probationary period will extend into the winter term for a total of at least two months. For a student placed on probation within two months of the end of the winter term, the probationary period may include the spring or summer half-terms or the fall following term, for a total of two months. A student may be placed on probation starting in the spring or summer half term for a minimum of two months, and does not need to be enrolled during these half terms.
- Procedures for Placing a Student on Probation and Notifying the Student: The Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) will notify the student and Rackham Office of Academic Records in writing before the probationary period begins, explain the reasons and conditions of probation; the start and end dates of the probationary period; funding support, conditions, if any, for returning to satisfactory standing; and options for appeal. A student who has been placed on probation may request a leave of absence from Rackham or withdraw. The leave or withdrawal will stop the clock on the probationary period, which resumes when the student returns to active status or is reinstated. Probation will remain in effect until the conditions are remedied or the student is dismissed.
- Commitment to Maintain Student Funding During the Probationary Period: The Department will continue the level of basic (TOF) funding prior to the probationary period through the probationary period.
- Option of the Student to Appeal to a Faculty Committee of Review: In the probationary letter sent by the DGS (see IX. 3. b, above) the student will be informed of his or her right to appeal the probation to a faculty committee of review, after he or she has completed a

minimum of two months on probation. The appeal should be made in writing to the DGS. Upon receipt of the letter, a faculty committee of review consisting of the Department Chair (or the chair's designee), Director of Graduate Studies, and the student's primary advisor will be set up. Students may use the Graduate School's Academic Dispute Resolution process only for procedural issues of fair and equal treatment under the policy of the program, and not to appeal the academic reasons for the decision.

- At the end of probation, and upon the recommendation of the DGS and the consent of the Graduate School, a student may either be returned to good academic standing or dismissed from the program.

C. DISMISSAL

The decision to dismiss a student must be made by a group of faculty that comprises the Department Chair (or the chair's designee), DGS, and the student's advisor. The DGS will notify Rackham OARD of a recommendation for dismissal.

OPTION TO APPEAL ACADEMIC PROBATION OR DISMISSAL:

A student who learns of the Department's recommendation to Rackham OARD to dismiss the student in writing has an opportunity to appeal the recommendation by writing to the DGS in a timely manner. Upon receipt of the letter, a faculty committee of review consisting of the Department Chair (or the chair's designee), Director of Graduate Studies, and the student's Academic Advisor will be set up. Students may use the Graduate School's Academic Dispute Resolution process only for procedural issues of fair and equal treatment under the policy of the program, and not to appeal the academic reasons for the decision.

Students who fail to meet standards of academic or professional integrity or who have been found responsible for violations of other University standards of conduct may be dismissed in accordance with separate procedures described in [Rackham Academic and Professional Integrity Policy](#) and [Responsible Conduct of Research and Scholarship \(RCRS\)](#).

D. REINSTATEMENT FOR DOCTORAL CANDIDATES

Deadlines for reinstatement:

- March 15 (for reinstatement as an active candidate in the Fall semester)
- August 15 (for reinstatement as an active candidate in the Winter semester)

To be considered for reinstatement, the student is expected to have continued dissertation work while away from the program and be prepared to submit a substantial draft of the entire dissertation. The department needs to see that the student would be able to complete the dissertation expeditiously—often within one year—upon reinstatement. In order to be considered, a former candidate must clear any financial holds in their student record and then concurrently submit the following materials by the above deadlines:

1. Complete and submit the required application form to the Rackham Graduate School and any supporting materials, such as transcripts and other required information. See the [Rackham website](#) for details.)
2. The following documents must be provided to the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) in the History of Art Department:
 - a. A cover letter in which the applicant addresses the following questions: When and why they discontinued their studies in the PhD program; why they wish to return to their doctoral studies in the History of Art; and how their experiences since their last enrollment have provided them with new knowledge and skills relevant to the History of Art.
 - b. An up-to-date CV.
 - c. A polished draft of the full dissertation.
 - d. A letter from a primary advisor stating that they have approved a draft of the full dissertation; that they support the former student's reinstatement; and that they consent to serve as the chair of the dissertation committee from the time of reinstatement up to the defense, and through the dissertation's final submission. The primary advisor must be a current tenure-track/tenured professor in the History of Art Department and must consult with the DGS in making the decision to support reinstatement.
 - e. A letter from each member of the dissertation committee stating their willingness to read a full draft of the dissertation and tend to the defense.
 - f. A timeline with approximate dates of when the applicant intends to complete each pending step (for example: date that a full draft of the dissertation will be circulated to committee members, date by which they will incorporate committee members' suggestions, dissertation defense date, and final submission date). The applicant must defend their dissertation within the course of the semester in which they are reinstated into the PhD program.

Upon receiving the reinstatement documents from Rackham and from the former student seeking reinstatement, the DGS will share them with the Graduate Committee of the Department of the

History of Art. The Graduate Committee will assess all the documents. In addition, prior to reinstatement, the applicant will take a 90-minute-long oral examination to assess the currency of their knowledge of their subfield within the discipline of the History of Art. This oral exam will be constructed and given by the student's primary advisor and other members of the dissertation committee. In consultation with the primary advisor and dissertation committee, the DGS will notify the former student of how best to prepare for it. For former students seeking reinstatement in the Fall semester the oral exam will be held in April; for former students seeking reinstatement in the Winter semester this exam will take place in September. The primary advisor and other members of the dissertation committee will evaluate the oral exam and inform the DGS of the results.

The final reinstatement decision is at the discretion of the Graduate Committee of the Department of the History of Art. If the Committee recommends reinstatement, then Rackham will review records, ascertain that there are no holds (academic or financial), and verify all documents before notifying the student of the decision.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: HISTORY OF ART PRELIMINARY EXAMINATIONS: A USER'S GUIDE

The following is a summary of the structures and procedures related to the preliminary examinations in UM History of Art.

Overview

There are two consecutive days of testing. On each day a student sits two 2-hour written exams (four in all, for a total of eight hours). There is an oral exam soon after the written test.

These days are generally divided into two parts:

Day 1: Teaching Field (monuments and general sub-field)

Day 2: Research Field (scholarship related to your specialty and expected dissertation topic)

The UM preliminary exam system gives students the opportunity to come to terms with key works of art and significant scholarly literature in their general and special fields of interest. As students define important scholarly currents, they begin to situate their own work and ready themselves to enter into the scholarly conversation throughout their dissertation writing process and beyond.

The exams are taken on a laptop. The honor code is in place.

Committee Composition and Student Responsibilities

The Preliminary Examination Committee is comprised of three people: the student's primary advisor and normally two other faculty members from History of Art (one member maximum can be from another department). The student should begin studying over the summer and continue through to the January test date (or April date for M.A. students on the fast-track). A meeting of the student and the Preliminary Examination Committee should take place at least once during the semester before the test. Some advisors prefer to meet individually with students, while others prefer to meet periodically with the committee. Whichever model is used, it is crucial that all committee members review the monuments list, bibliographies, topic areas ("nodes"), and questions over the course of the semester, and are kept informed about changes in these documents leading up to the exams. Should students receive conflicting advice they should consult with their advisor(s), who act as mediators with the other committee members.

Details of the Four-part Examination

Day 1, Part 1: Teaching field – monuments

Preparation: 100-150 monuments

Exam: 2 hrs., format varies

Students study an approved list of about 100-150 monuments in their teaching field (the number varies depending on the nature of the works: a complex building vs. a single image). They are tested on a selection of works from this list.

The committee composes a test with images on a slide deck. The specific format is determined by the committee in consultation with the student. It consists of single images and/or comparisons, possibly with accompanying questions or simple rubrics like “patronage.” The timing of questions varies from test to test, but should take no more than two hours (e.g. 4 single questions for 15 minutes each and 3 comparisons of 20 minutes each; 4 comparisons for 30 minutes each; etc.). The format should be discussed and decided on as early as possible, at the latest a month before the exam date.

Day 1, Part 2: Teaching field – scholarship

Preparation: Student & committee select 5 “nodes” with about 50 total readings; committee (optionally in conversation with the student) formulates specific questions for each node

Exam: Committee provides five questions; student answers three questions, for 40 minutes each

Students study an approved list of a total of about 50 crucial writings in their teaching field (the number varies according to whether the list is composed of books or articles). Students are free to consult the lists compiled by past test-takers in the same field as they develop their own lists. They are tested on issues that emerge from these readings.

In order to help the student control the material, the student and committee agree upon five overarching issues (“nodes”) around which to group the readings (e.g. Materiality, *Kunstgeographie*).

Students should consult with the committee as their preparation progresses. The committee prepares five questions that engage with these issues in some way.

Students answer any three of the five questions. They write for 40 minutes per question.

Day 2, Parts 1 and 2: Research fields

Preparation: Student & committee select 2 “nodes” with about 50 readings each; students & committee formulate three questions for each node (a total of six questions)

Exam: Committee selects two questions for each node (a total of four); student answers one question for each node, writing 2 hours for each

Students develop and study an approved bibliography in two “research fields.”

These research fields are selected and defined in relation to the proposed dissertation topic. The purpose is to help students orient themselves in their chosen field of specialization by coming to terms with two major bodies of scholarship relevant to their work. The aim is not to conduct research for the dissertation but to develop an understanding of scholarly currents: a research field in which there is not a good deal of thought-provoking scholarly literature to read is not a good prelim research field.

Students compile lengthy bibliographies and read extensively. These bibliographies evolve over the course of exam preparation, based on feedback from the advisor and committee members and practical time limitations as the test date nears. During their months of study, while students read, they formulate three questions within each research field—questions on which they feel prepared to be tested. They work with their committees to focus these questions.

The committee sets the exam by choosing, two of the three questions for each node that the student has formulated. The committee retains the option of rewording questions for clarity or slightly tightening their focus. During each half of the second day, the student chooses one of these questions to answer and writes for two hours.

The bibliographies students compile for their research fields may be quite long, but during the test, the specific questions are generally answered with reference to the key texts and images that are part of the official monuments list and bibliography agreed upon in advance.

Oral Examination

Preparation: Schedule a 1½-hour meeting with full committee; students and committee members should review test answers

Exam: Committee members ask follow-up questions about the student's answers and, after closed-door deliberation, decide whether to advance the student to candidacy.

The student arranges with the committee to meet for an oral follow-up (1½ hours in length) in the week after the exam. The meeting offers a chance for the student and the committee to discuss the exam responses. If the student passes all parts of the exam, the meeting concludes with a look ahead to the preparation for the dissertation prospectus.

Students must pass all four parts of the test to be advanced to candidacy. They may re-sit up to two parts.

Suggested Timeline for Preparing for a January Exam (for students)

By the end of the winter semester (~1 year before):

- Meet with DGS to review the graduate handbook and learn about the process
- Decide preliminary examination committee
- Begin to formulate “nodes” for exam, monuments, and possible readings
- Consult with primary advisor to review the process and discuss nodes, etc.
- Create a detailed plan for study leading up to January exam

During the summer before:

- By the beginning of May: Finalize nodes, monuments, and preliminary reading lists
- Gather reading materials in electronic or print form
- Begin reading & reviewing monuments

Fall semester before:

- Enroll in HistArt 990
- Confirm written exam date, complete necessary forms
- Schedule oral exam (within 2 weeks of written exam)
- Continue reading & reviewing monuments
- Finalize questions for each node and (suggested) practice writing responses to each
- Meet regularly with advisor
- By the beginning of October: Convene a meeting of the full prelim committee to discuss progress and plans for the semester

January of winter semester:

- Take written exam (usually first Thursday and Friday after classes begin)
- Take oral exam (within 2 weeks of written exam)
- (if pass) confirm prospectus committee members and schedule prospectus defense date

APPENDIX B: GUIDELINES AND STEPS FOR CHANGING ADVISORS IN HISTORY OF ART

OVERVIEW & REASONS FOR CHANGING ADVISORS

The relationship between graduate students and their advisors is one of the most significant factors in the successful completion of a PhD degree. Thus, the decision to change advisors should be made only after serious consideration and consultation with the Director of Graduate Studies and other relevant faculty members.

In extreme cases, a decision to change advisors might result from abuse, harassment, continual neglect, or extreme intellectual and/or personal incompatibilities. The [Equity, Civil Rights & Title IX Office](#) and the [Office of the Ombuds](#) offer valuable definitions, consultation, and other support regarding these matters.

However, there are other reasons students might need to change primary advisors, e.g., if their original advisor takes a leave of more than one year or departs UM for some other reason (retirement, new job, etc.). Faculty who are on leave for two or fewer semesters are still expected to carry out all their responsibilities to the primary advisees, including regular consulting, reading drafts, and writing letters of recommendation. However, since faculty on medical leave are not expected to advise students, an interim advisor may be appointed in that case.

If a student's dissertation project shifts significantly after they enter the program, they may have a compelling intellectual reason to change advisors. This change can be negotiated in consultation with the DGS and the original and prospective faculty advisors.

Minor issues and personality clashes between advisors and advisees should be resolved one-on-one or in consultation with other mentors and the DGS. [Rackham's mentoring resources](#) also provide helpful support. The department encourages all advisors and advisees to participate in a [MORE workshop](#) each time a new graduate student matriculates. [Counseling and Psychological Services \(CAPS\)](#) may also be helpful at various stages in a student's career.

Soon after a primary advisor retires, they can still serve as a dissertation advisor, if they are willing. In certain cases, it is possible for them to be the sole chair as a special member of a dissertation committee (see [Rackham website](#)). However, the usual practice is for emeriti to serve as a co-chair with a currently active professor in the department. Students should consult the DGS and graduate coordinator in this situation.

STEPS FOR CHANGING AN ADVISOR

1. Regular communication between graduate students and their primary advisor is a cornerstone of a successful graduate career. At the beginning of each academic year, advisors and advisees should meet to discuss mentoring expectations and goals, reviewing them in January. In these meetings, students are encouraged to raise concerns and/or communicate their advising needs to their advisor. If, however, these meetings consistently fail to foster a positive and collaborative professional relationship, then the advisor and advisee should hold a special meeting to discuss their concerns.
2. If the issue cannot be resolved with the advisor alone, the student should then consult with the DGS, who will either try to help resolve the issue with the original advisor or proceed with possibly changing advisors. If the latter, then the department will take the following steps.
3. The DGS or the student will inform the original advisor that the student is planning to change advisors.
4. The DGS will discuss with the student possible alternative advisors.
5. The DGS will consult with the faculty member(s) who might serve as advisor(s) to assess whether or not they are willing and able to take on a new advisee. Special care will be given when the possible advisor is an Assistant Professor.
6. The potential advisor(s) and advisee will meet to discuss the possibility of working together. The faculty member has the option to refuse to take on the student; the student may also decline to become the faculty member's advisee at this stage. In the latter case, the student and DGS should discuss other options and return to step #4.
7. If a faculty member is willing to take on the student as a new advisee, the DGS will then meet with the original advisor to discuss the situation.
 - a. Once the decision has been made, the student, Rackham, the departmental Graduate Committee, the original advisor, and the Graduate Coordinator will be informed of the change.
 - b. In some cases, the student and new advisor may decide that a co-advisor is necessary. The DGS and Rackham rules should be consulted when this person is identified.
8. If the student and DGS cannot identify a potential new advisor, then the DGS will consult with the departmental Executive Committee and discuss options with the student.
 - a. The department is not contractually obligated to find an advisor for a student, but the leadership will make every reasonable effort to find a good match.
 - b. If a student refuses to work with an assigned advisor for intellectual or other reasons yet cannot identify a new advisor, they may be advised to withdraw from the program.
 - c. In some cases, there will be no one who is academically qualified to serve as a PhD student's advisor. In that case, the student may be advised to withdraw from the program.
 - d. Students and the department should attempt to find a new advisor for a student within two months. If they cannot find an advisor within that time, the student will be placed on academic probation until the issue is resolved. Students cannot continue for more than one semester without an advisor.

ADDITIONAL NOTES

- Please refer to [Rackham Graduate School's Academic Policies](#) regarding Coursework, Grading, and Academic Standing.
- Throughout this process, the DGS will keep the student, original advisor, Chair, and other relevant faculty members informed of developments.
- Since many graduate student milestones rely on the support of a primary advisor, the department will make every effort to determine a new advisor as soon as possible. Assessments of the student will take into account delays resulting from this process.
- Until a new advisor is appointed, the original advisor should continue to perform basic advising duties, including writing letters of recommendation, reviewing funding requests, etc. If the original advisor is unavailable or the relationship with the original advisee is untenable, the DGS or another interim advisor may temporarily assume these responsibilities.
- As long as the student remains in good academic standing (determined by the original advisor or the Graduate Committee, as appropriate), their regular funding will not be affected by this process. See the department's graduate handbook for details.
- In changing graduate advisors, the department will protect students, faculty, and staff from undue burdens beyond what is normally asked of them.

APPENDIX C: HISTORY OF ART POLICY REGARDING LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION & SUPPORT

INTRODUCTION

Letters of recommendation and support for fellowships, grants, postdoctoral fellowships, jobs, etc. can consume substantial faculty time and may become a source of stress for students. To alleviate such issues, History of Art has established this basic policy. This document articulates academic norms that generally hold true beyond the department and the University of Michigan.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

- Students should not assume that any faculty member will write a letter of support for them. They must request them specifically and well in advance, preferably in writing.
- Requests for letters must come *at least three weeks before* the deadline.
 - Requests should be accompanied by full drafts of all relevant application materials (cover letters, writing samples, essays, budgets, etc.).
 - Requests made *within* two weeks will only be honored if the faculty member agrees in that specific case. However, such exceptions should be exceedingly rare.
 - If a faculty member is on leave or modified duties, students should request letters from them at least *one month or more* in advance.
- It is the student's responsibility to remind the faculty member of deadlines in whatever way the professor prefers.
- If the student expects to request a large number (more than three in a semester) of letters of recommendation, they must discuss it in advance with their letter writers and provide a tabulated and continually updated list of institutions, due dates, and submission methods.
- Generally, students seeking letters of recommendation are expected to waive their rights to read a letter of recommendation. If they choose to retain that right, they should alert the faculty member in advance.

FACULTY RESPONSIBILITIES

- Faculty members are not obligated to write a letter of support, but they are expected to reply to student requests within one week.
- If a primary advisor is not willing to write for their advisee, the DGS should be informed and the issue should be resolved as soon as possible.
- If a faculty member agrees to write a letter of support, they will submit it on time.
- If a potential letter writer does not feel comfortable offering a generally positive assessment of the student, they should disclose that before agreeing to write for the student.
- When agreeing to write a letter of support, faculty members should explain to students how they prefer to be reminded of deadlines.
- Before going on leave or modified duties, advisors and other potential letter writers should discuss expectations regarding letters of support during that time. Even on leave, primary advisors are still expected to write letters of recommendation for advisees in good standing, but they may refuse to write for a student if they will be unavailable for an extended period. In that case, they should give the student at least one month's written notice and help them find alternative letter writers.

This policy may be modified, but only after the advisor and advisee discuss and agree on it. Any changes should be noted on the [mentoring template form](#).