

c/o The Chester Beatty Library, Dublin Castle Dublin D02 AD92
Email: secretary@icriconservation.ie

Accreditation Guidelines for Candidates

Requirements

Every applicant applying for membership of the Institute as an Accredited Conservator-Restorer shall have achieved a qualification from a recognised conservation-restoration training institution in addition to documentary evidence of post-qualification professional development as a conservator-restorer for a minimum of five years or applicants without a formal qualification in the field of Conservation-Restoration should be able to provide documentation to show evidence of training and practice in the field of Conservation-Restoration for a minimum of ten years in addition to continued professional development as conservator-restorer.

ICRI Bye-Laws: Chapter 2.1(ii)

The Accreditation framework has three components:

- An assessment process for accrediting professional capability against explicit standards;
- A system for ensuring maintenance and enhancement of professional capability through Continuing Professional Development;
- A means of removing Accredited status from practitioners who fail to maintain a minimum standard of practice and ethics.

Registration of Intent

The first step towards accreditation is to register your intention to apply by completing and submitting the Registration Form by the **30th September** deadline. The form is available from the Company Secretary via email secretary@icriconservation.ie

You will also receive electronically:

- 1) The *Candidate's Guidelines*,
- 2) The Institute's *Constitution*, the *Bye-Laws* and the *Code of Conduct*.

These documents are also available for download on ICRI's website (www.icriconservation.ie).

Take some time to read through these before submitting your Registration form.

Complete and either post the registration form to ICRI, c/o The Chester Beatty Library, Dublin Castle, D02 AD92 **or** email to the Company Secretary. Payment of the non-refundable registration fee of **€100** should also be made at this time; details of how to pay are at the bottom of the form. Once the Accreditation Committee Secretary has received your completed form, you will be sent: **1)** An Application form and **2)** The names of three mentors to choose from.

Choosing a Mentor

You will be sent the names, a short biography and contact details of three accredited members of the Institute who have volunteered to act as mentors. **When you have selected one of these conservators to act as your mentor please notify the Accreditation Committee Secretary; it is then up to you to make contact with your mentor to arrange to meet.**

The mentor will:

- talk you through the accreditation procedure and tell you what to expect during assessment and site visits;
- be able to discuss a selection of projects you plan to submit in your application form and which standards they meet. **NB** the mentor **will not** be expected to help the candidate fill in their application form.
- check that you understand what is required on the day, including the studio/site visit, presentation of projects for assessment and supporting portfolio;
- answer any questions you may have and refer them to the Accreditation Committee, if necessary.

Make sure you keep in mind the application deadline so that you allow enough time to work with your mentor. Don't leave it too late to make contact with your mentor – aim to make contact within **four** weeks of receiving their details. We would recommend you contact your mentor to plan to meet/talk on **at least three** occasions before submitting your completed application form; one of these meetings should be at your place of work. The meetings should include detailed discussion of the projects you intend to submit for assessment. It is advised that you have your mentor review your application before submitting it.

It will be up to you to decide that you are ready to proceed with submitting the completed application form. Once the application form is submitted, the mentor's formal role in the process will be complete. However, if the candidate's portfolio is not completed by 31st March, you may contact your mentor for advice with finalising it, if required.

Application Form

Once you have registered your intent to apply, you will be expected to submit your completed application form by the **31st March deadline**. Keep this in mind when completing your form and arranging to meet your mentor.

It is important that you include as much detail as possible in the application form; this will inform the panel in advance of the assessment. The external assessor may contact you if they require additional information on any aspect of your application form.

Use pages 6–11 of the Application Form to describe significant projects and activities which you will be using for evidence and discussion for your assessment visit. Include a balance of activities to demonstrate your proficiency across the range of *Professional Standards and Competencies* (as listed below).

Projects / activities A–E should normally be based on conservation activities (you do not need to use all project pages A–E, but you will probably find this is about the right number to cover the professional standards adequately). If you need to, use page 11 to describe additional, 'short' activities that also meet the professional standards. You will have a final opportunity to discuss the completed application form with members of the Accreditation Committee and to ask any final questions in relation to the assessment day.

The Assessment Covers Professional Standards and Competencies

You will be assessed against the following criteria and will be expected to demonstrate through your application, best practice in the following areas¹:

1. Evaluating Conservation problems:

Involves examining, researching, identifying and recording key features of conservation problems in context of an object's provenance, history, significance and, where relevant, role in a collection; collaborating with other specialists as appropriate. Includes documentation of condition through reports or surveys and records of treatment carried out.

2. Developing Conservation strategies:

Involves evaluating needs and requirements in relation to objects or collections and developing appropriate strategies for their conservation. Includes evaluation of solutions, considering health and safety, resource implication, legislative constraints and consulting with other professionals.

3. Developing and implementing interventive treatment:

Involves developing active treatments to stabilise, support or restore the objects. Includes using the expertise of appropriate specialists, evaluation and recording the use of treatments developed using the practical and cognitive skills necessary to carry out the work, discussing the implications of interventions and disseminating the results.

4. Developing and implementing preventive and handling procedures:

Involves understanding and identifying the causes of degradation and damage to the object/s and developing non-interventive procedures to prevent or minimise it. Includes the provision and monitoring of suitable environmental conditions for storage, display and transportation, the promotion of good handling, packaging and transportation procedures, disaster preparedness and avoidance, providing relevant advice and guidelines.

5. Managing work, resources and projects:

Involves managing personal and physical resources and health and safety. Includes setting objectives, identifying and where appropriate communicating tasks, responsibilities and timescales, monitoring, reporting and feeding back on progress and ensuring the efficient use of resources, and maintaining health and safety.

6. Contributing to the interests of the profession:

Involves promoting public knowledge and awareness of the profession and practice of conservation/restoration and promoting the growth of knowledge and good practice in the professional field. Includes promoting the responsible care and use of objects, disseminating information in the field, developing working relationships with professionals in conservation-restoration and from the wider heritage field, developing one's own professional interests and promoting the profession inside the sector and to the wider public.

¹ All conservator-restorers applying for accreditation should start by referring to *Competences for Access to the Conservation-Restoration Profession* published by the European Confederation of Conservator-Restorers' Organisation (E.C.C.O.) in 2011 and available to download :

http://www.ecco-eu.org/fileadmin/assets/documents/publications/ECCO_Competences_EN.pdf

or from the ICRI Company Secretary on request. Competence is defined by E.C.C.O. 'as the combination of knowledge and skill together with experience that allows the professional Conservator-Restorer to deliver work consistently and responsibly.' ICRI conservator-restorer members are expected to have entry levels to the profession as set out in the *Conservator-Restorer's EQF level 7 knowledge and skills map* (p.15).

SUBMITTING YOUR APPLICATION FORM

Complete the Application Form and submit two copies, one by post and the other by email to the Company Secretary, by the **31st March deadline**. Applications which are incomplete or late will not be considered.

The Accreditation Committee meet in early April to review eligibility of all applications. The Committee will then arrange an informal meeting with you. This meeting will:

- 1) discuss any issues which may arise with the application form and
- 2) confirm a timeframe acceptable to you to proceed with the accreditation assessment.

If your portfolio has not already been completed by 31st March, you will be required to provide a completion date at this point. Once you have provided this information, you will then be notified as to when the assessment will take place. At this stage, you will be invoiced for the balance of the assessment fee (€300). If you are not in a position to proceed, you will be given additional preparation time. Ideally, the accreditation process should be completed within six months of submitting your application; this is dependant on the number of applications in a given year and the availability of external assessors.

On appointment of the Assessment Panel, you will be contacted in order to arrange a suitable date for the site visit and assessment. Once the dates have been confirmed, you will be required to provide in advance a schedule of the day, which will be sent to the Assessment Panel.

The Institute would hope to complete the entire process within the year from receipt of the accreditation application form, with assessments generally taking place between June and November.

Please note: On receipt of an application for accreditation, the Institute will not warrant, indemnify or make any representation regarding the applicant for accreditation. Whilst the applicant has furnished certain information and a portfolio to the Institute, the Institute can in no way be held responsible for the errors or omissions, damages or breaches of contract caused by any conservator-restorer regarding a third party which occur either before or after granting of the accreditation to the conservator-restorer by the Institute.

ICRI Bye-Laws: Chapter 2.6

Appointment of the Assessment Panel

Each assessment panel is made up of three assessors, one extern and two accredited members of ICRI. The extern will act as principle assessor and will be an expert in the same discipline as the candidate. To ensure parity across the different specialisms at least one assessor will represent the sector in which the applicant is employed (e.g. private/commercial or public/institutional.) The external assessors are currently taken from the Professional Accreditation of Conservator-Restorers (PACR) system administered by ICON in the UK. You will be provided with names and a very brief biography of the members of the Assessment Panel at time of appointment.

NB If the candidate identifies a perceived conflict of interest with a member of the proposed assessment panel, they must inform the Accreditation Committee immediately and the Committee will address the issue. Once the members of the assessment panel have been confirmed, no further changes to the panel can be made.

SELECTING PROJECTS FOR ASSESSMENT

Conservation-Restoration Skills

You should aim to present a portfolio of 5 projects, as described in the application form. It may be acceptable to present 4 projects providing they fully demonstrate the professional standards and competencies, as outlined, or you may need to achieve this by presenting as many as 6. **The suitability of projects should be discussed with your mentor.**

Where possible, you are encouraged to make arrangements for assessors to inspect works which have been included in the application form, but which may no longer be in the studio. This should be taken into account when selecting projects for the application form. The assessors may also look at examples of current projects or recent past projects². It is acceptable to select a project which is currently in progress for discussion on the day; however all projects included on your application form must be complete and cover a range of different complex problems. ICRI accepts that the most challenging project(s) may not always be available for inspection therefore portfolio presentation is acceptable in these cases. However for the purpose of accreditation, **it is essential that not all projects presented are portfolio-based.** If you intend to present a PowerPoint presentation at the assessment you must make one hard copy available for the assessors on the day. The PowerPoint presentation must show the full process while being concise.

All projects should meet the professional standards and competencies [page 3] and reflect the ICRI Code of Conduct. You will be expected to show clear evidence of how decisions are made and how strategies are being put into practice.

For each example of work presented, the following points are relevant:

1. the extent to which you have consulted the curator/librarian/archaeologist or client to set the artifact in its art historical/historical context;
2. where an artifact is composed of different materials, your ability to consult with other conservators in different disciplines;
3. the reason for conserving the artifact should be clearly outlined, as this will dictate the level of intervention required;
4. as complete an analysis of the artifact as it is feasible to undertake, including its method of construction. Your knowledge of analytical facilities, and whether or not you avail of them will be relevant;
5. identification of the causes of deterioration;
6. clear evidence that having found out as much as possible about the artifact, and evaluated the options available, you have decided on a course of treatment. Please give reasons.
7. the outcome of this treatment including proposals for its aftercare. For at least one of the artifacts being discussed, it will be quite acceptable to have decided on a purely preventive course of treatment if the reasons for doing so are valid.

² *If presenting a project that was completed some time ago, the candidate will be required to update and review the treatment undertaken and explain how procedures/materials etc may have changed, if applicable.*

Documentation

Conservation documentation can be defined as the textual and visual records collected during the care and treatment of an object. It can include records of the object's condition, any treatment carried out, any observations or conclusions made by the conservator as well as details on the object's past and present environment. Good documentation tells the complete story of an object thus far and should provide as much information as possible for the future researcher, curator, or conservator.

The rôle of documentation and the importance you attach to it will be evaluated.

The conservator is obligated to keep permanent documentation of all conservation procedures in order to protect the integrity of the object and must strive to ensure that the documentation stays with the object. The choice of methods in which your work is documented is up to you, but it should be made in a form that is archivally stable so that it will be accessible in the future and should be coherently organised and accessible.

Preventive Conservation

To some extent, the questions relating to preventive conservation will be predicated by your job description. You will be expected however to have an understanding of the theory of preventive conservation. If you are applying as a preventive conservator, greater emphasis will be placed on the steps you have taken to influence the allocation of funding needed to implement such a policy. Emphasis will be placed on your ability to survey collections and prioritize them in terms of their preservation requirements. Access to storage areas will be required. Documentation relating to environmental monitoring will be examined, and questions asked relating to the steps you have taken to provide stable environmental conditions, and lighting conforming to the specifications.

Health and Safety

You need to be aware of, and comply with, the current legislation regarding occupational health and safety; especially in regards to the use and safe storage of chemicals. A health and safety statement, fire safety manual, and a maintenance checklist should be available for inspection. You will be expected to demonstrate an understanding of risk assessment for all work carried out.

Environment

You will be expected to be familiar with the latest thinking on environmental conditions relating to temperature, relative humidity, pollutant gases and lighting.

Studio Organisation

The information sought by the assessors will relate to your job description and working environment. However, you will be assessed on the organisation of your studio in relation to the space available, the facilities in terms of equipment, health and safety issues, and storage of chemicals. The assessors will not necessarily be looking for the "perfect" studio, but will expect you to be aware of its limitations, and to know whether in certain circumstances, you make alternative arrangements with conservators in other studios, e.g. if your studio is too small to conserve a large object, or you do not have all of the facilities required for a task in hand.

Management

The manner in which you cope with your workload will be relevant. Conservators in the private sector will be asked about the arrangements they have with clients regarding insurance cover, estimates, licensing regulations. You will also be asked to provide documentary evidence of the aftercare instructions you give to clients.

SITE VISIT AND PRACTICAL ASSESSMENT

The accreditation assessment will take place either in your place of work and/or at the site of the major project(s) being presented. Where possible assessments will take place across one working day; however due to the location of the candidate/projects, the assessment may need to be divided over two consecutive days. The Assessment Panel will start the assessment by discussing your application form, training, work experience and the different projects you plan to present during the assessment.

The assessors will require access to a collection, site or group of objects relating to your application. They will look at examples of current and recent past projects and discuss the different aspects of your work with focus on demonstrating that you meet the professional standards and competencies, as outlined above, and that you comply with the ICRI *Code of Conduct*. You will need to show evidence of how decisions are made and how strategies are being put into practice.

The assessors will break for lunch, which will give them an opportunity to discuss your application and to agree on any areas which require further clarification. You will have an opportunity to gather your thoughts and to ensure that you have covered all areas during the morning. The assessment will conclude in the afternoon once you and the assessors are satisfied that all aspects of the assessment have been covered.

What happens after the assessment?

The three assessors will meet to discuss the assessment and each will write a detailed report. The ICRI assessors will have one week in which to send their reports to the External Assessor. The extern will collate all the feedback and submit a final composite report, with recommendation(s), to the Accreditation Committee within two weeks; this will be circulated in advance to Board members for consideration at the next meeting. As laid out in the *Bye-Laws*, admission to membership of the Institute as an Accredited Conservator-Restorer, shall be determined by a simple majority of those present and voting at any Board meeting at which an application is considered.

If the candidate is successful in their accreditation application, and this is endorsed by the Board, the Company Secretary will send a letter confirming their acceptance, with recommendations, if applicable. The candidate will receive the final summary of the assessment report and will also be sent a copy of the Institute's Constitution, as well as a copy of the CPD Review Procedure. The candidate is required to sign a written undertaking to abide at all times with the objectives of the Institute and to pay the annual subscription fee. The candidate will then be sent a Certificate of Accreditation.

If the candidate is unsuccessful in the Accreditation Process, the Company Secretary will send a letter setting out where the candidate has failed in relation to professional standards and competencies. They will also receive a copy of the assessors' report. The candidate will be offered the opportunity to discuss the report with the Accreditation Committee, at which the mentor will be present. However, the decision to refuse Accreditation status may be appealed according to the **Accreditation Appeals Procedure** as set out in **Appendix 1**.

The candidate may re-apply after a period of 1 year. Should the applicant re-apply for accreditation, a new application fee must be paid. Fees will be as determined by the Board. If the candidate should wish to reapply following an unsuccessful appeal, the candidate will be reassigned a new mentor.

Accredited Status and Continued Professional Development (CPD)

It is important to keep in mind that in order to maintain accredited conservator-restorer status, you will be required: 1) to pay the annual accredited membership fee to ICRI and 2) to demonstrate that you are continuing your professional development (CPD). Each year, 20% of the accredited members are randomly selected by the CPD Review Panel and asked to complete a CPD report for the previous three years. Keep in mind that ICRI offers bursaries each year to assist members to maintain their accredited status, for example, through attendance of training courses, workshops and conferences.

APPENDIX 1

Accreditation Appeal Procedure

When a candidate for accreditation has been refused accreditation the Board will set out in a letter the reasons for refusal of accreditation. The candidate will be provided with access to the report upon which the Board made its decision.

Stage 1

A candidate who has been refused accreditation may appeal the decision.

Intention to appeal the decision to refuse accreditation must be lodged in writing with the Secretary of the Institute within 60 days of the candidate receiving the decision of the Board. An extension to this 60 day time period will be considered at the discretion of the Board if there is delay due to special circumstances.

The Board will appoint a sub-committee (consisting of appointees with no conflict of interest and no involvement with the original Accreditation Assessment panel) to review the process, which will include discussion with the candidate, assessors and the Accreditation Committee. This sub-committee will prepare a report with a recommendation, which will be submitted to the Board and a copy will be sent to the candidate.

Stage 2

If the initial appeal is unsuccessful the candidate can appeal further within 60 days of receiving the Stage 1 decision of the Board. An extension to this 60 day time period will be considered at the discretion of the Board if there is delay due to special circumstances.

An administration fee which will be set by the Board will be incurred and payable by the candidate to the Institute in the event of a Stage 2 appeal. This will be returned in full to the candidate if the Stage 2 appeal is successful.

The Stage 2 appeal will require the appointment of an independent external conservator-restorer assessor in the particular field of the candidate (the "Independent Expert"). This Independent Expert will review all relevant reports and documentation and will have discussions with the Accreditation Committee, the Stage 1 appeal sub-committee and the candidate. The Independent Expert will then prepare a report with a recommendation, which will be submitted to both the Board and the candidate.

The Stage 2 appeal decision of the Board will be final.

ICRI Bye-Laws: Appendix 1