



The Institute of Conservation

INTRODUCTION TO ICON

Work, Ethos, & Strategy



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1.

WHO IS ICON?

2.

WHY CONSERVATION?

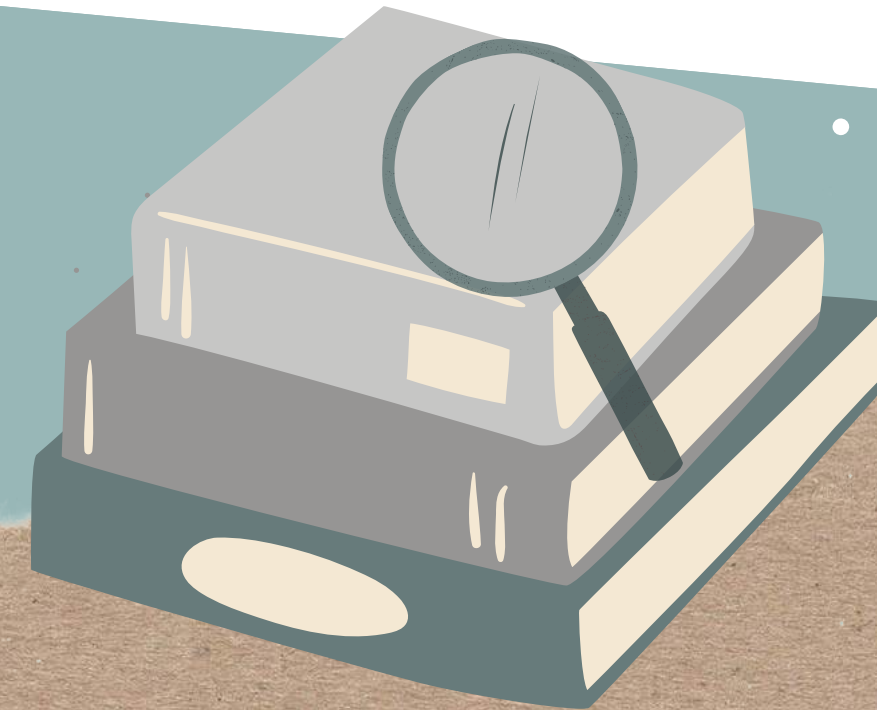
3.

WHAT DO WE DO?

4.

WHAT'S OUR STRATEGY?

IN THIS DOCUMENT



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ABOUT ICON

The Institute of Conservation (Icon) is the professional body supporting the practice and profession of conservation. Our mission is to promote meticulous conservation and uphold high standards in professional practice; we are the authoritative source of information on conservation practice, policy, and the profession.

From precious objects to historic sites to treasured family heirlooms - we aim to preserve the items that matter most to people, and to advance public understanding of conservation.

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WHY DOES CONSERVATION MATTER?

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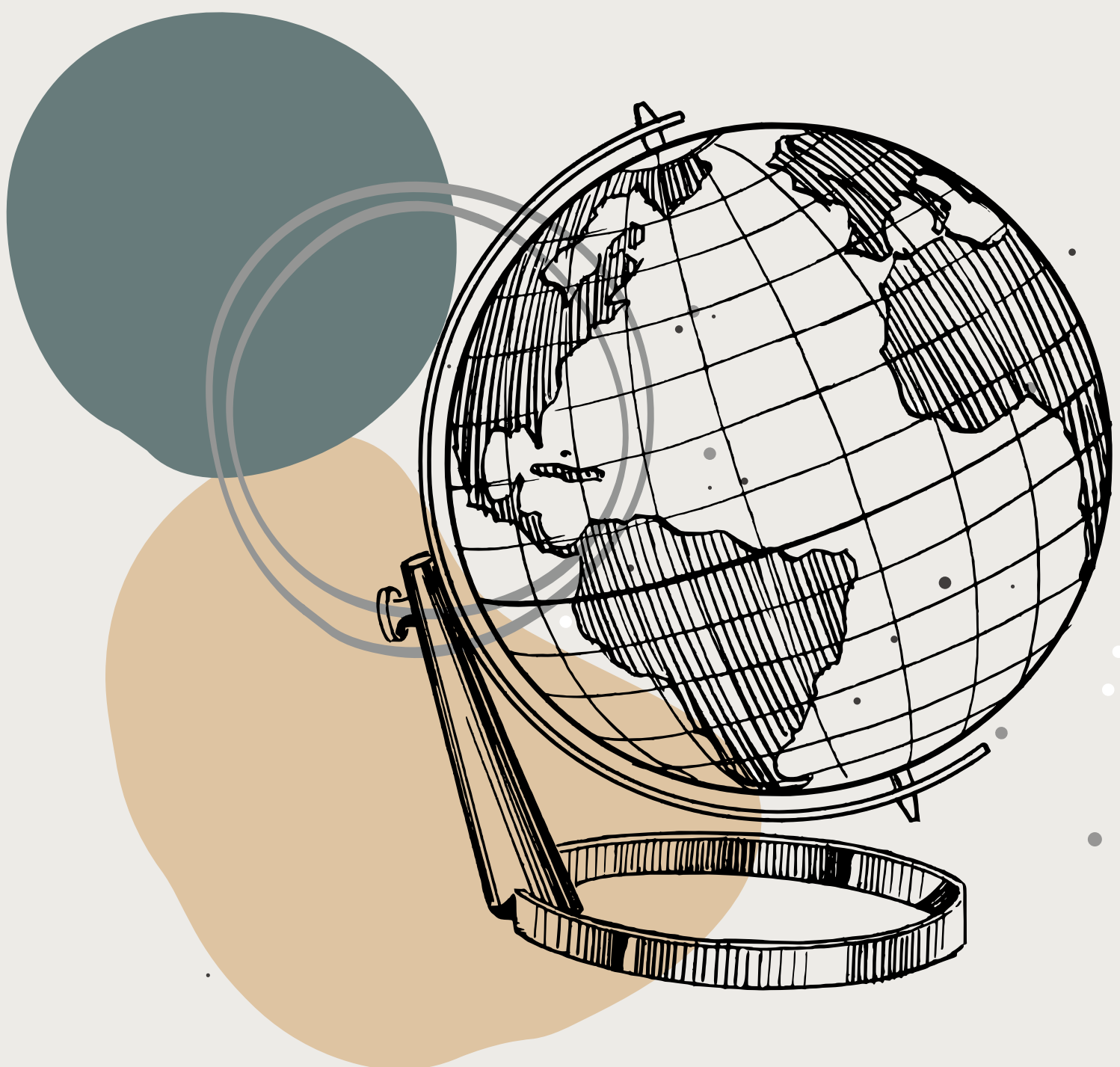
SKILLS, LEARNING, & INNOVATION

Conservation is a multifaceted practice at the crossroads of arts, humanities, science, and technology. Preserving the full breadth of heritage – artworks, architecture, archaeology – requires a diverse set of skills and specialisms, and conservation hones a myriad of skills (such as in math and technical education) while preserving the source material for our future artists and cultural professionals.



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SUSTAINABILITY

Conservation supports communities dealing with climate change. Heritage science, which deals with the properties of materials, can help us recognise evidence of change and make predictions, while conservator-restorers can give advice on responses to climate emergency. Additionally, the artefacts of material culture that conservators protect speak more powerfully than words—they are the most potent tool in communicating climate change and inspiring more sustainable lifestyles.



ECONOMIC VALUE

Conservation is a source of economic prosperity. The cultural heritage sector contributes significantly to national GVA (2% as of 2018); it is also a major employer, with heritage directly providing 196,000 jobs. Within this sector there are a range of business sizes, offering varied and dispersed employment; conservation, therefore, is both a robust and a diverse facet of the economy.

Historic England, 2018. Heritage and the Economy 2018. Available online [here](#).





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CULTURAL HERITAGE & SOFT POWER

Conservation protects the physical objects that define a country's culture. As they work, conservators also conduct intensive research into the materials, history, and social values of their object which is disseminated to lay and expert audiences. Conservation is also linked to soft power: the UK's expertise in conservation science is routinely sought after internationally, and its heritage sector is second to none.

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WHAT DO WE DO?

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ADVISING THE PUBLIC

The owners of historic objects and collections care deeply about their assets — but don't always know how to best look after them. We help ensure these treasured items are treated with care and respect.

Our [downloadable guides](#) cover the conservation of everything from artworks, books and costumes to zoological specimens. We can help you choose a conservator, and offer a reliable way to find a suitable professional through our online directory of Icon Accredited conservators: the Conservation Register. We also provide advice on events and filming in historic sites.



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CONSERVATION REGISTER

Icon's Conservation Register is a publicly accessible directory of all Icon-Accredited conservators. These are knowledgeable conservation professionals working across a broad range of specialisms. Being part of the Register means they can be trusted to adhere to Icon's Professional Standards and Code of Conduct.

The Conservation Register allows you to search by object, specialism, or material type, and provides information on conservators' backgrounds and expertise—many profiles also offer detailed case studies of past work. Using this tool, you can get a clear indication of their skills and find the right professional for your particular project needs.



GUIDING PROFESSIONALS

Icon works extensively with conservation professionals. Our comprehensive Professional Standards provide a five-point framework to guide the practice of conservators; it has been repeatedly reviewed, most recently in 2020, to ensure fitness for purpose. Our Ethical Guidance, adopted in 2020, lays out the key principles which define an ethical approach to heritage items. Finally, our Glossary of Terms ensures consistent terminology across all our documents.

Our members are supported in their careers by our strong commitment to continuing professional development (CPD). A large part of this training and skills programme is delivered through our volunteer-led Groups and Networks.

ACCREDITATION

Accreditation is the best way for a conservator to demonstrate their professional skills and judgement and to raise their profile. For the past 20 years, we have offered a rigorously assessed and peer-reviewed accreditation framework in line with Icon's Professional Standards.

The Icon 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 ACR status from practitioners who fail to maintain a minimum standard of practice and ethics demonstrated through regular CPD returns.

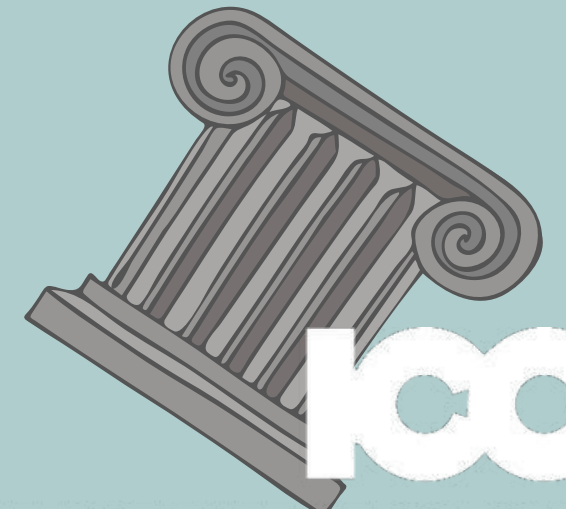
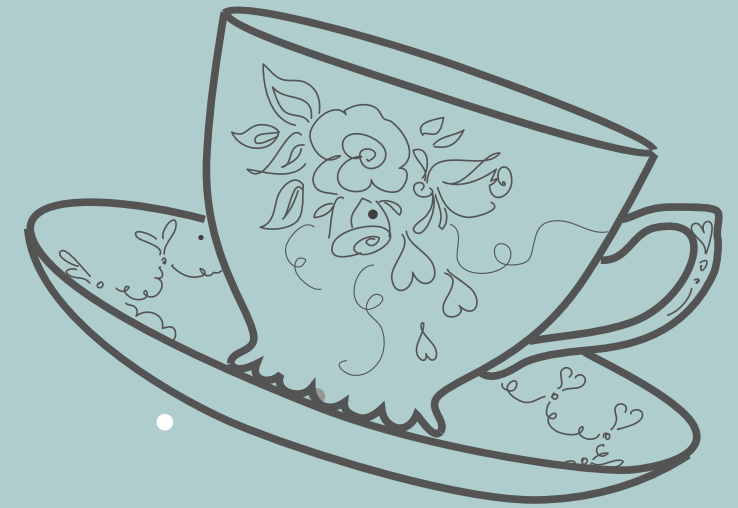
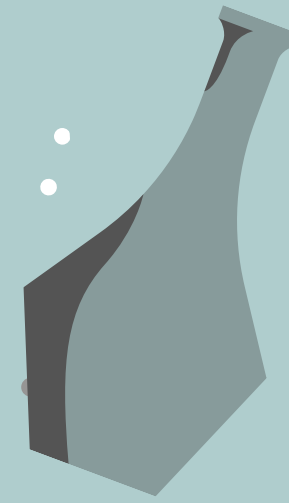


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ACCREDITATION

Accreditation provides a system of self-regulation to govern the conservation profession. Becoming an Accredited Conservator-Restorer (ACR) means that the person has demonstrated a proficient level of understanding and competence which is monitored through regular reviews. This ensures that high professional standards and up-to-date knowledge are maintained over time. In turn, the rigour of accreditation benefits members of the public: commissioners hiring ACRs can be assured that they are committed and skilled. Should anything go wrong, they also know that there is recourse through Icon's Code of Conduct and complaints procedure.



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ADVOCACY & CAMPAIGNING

Icon represents the interests of conservation to decision makers on issues that affect cultural heritage. We want everyone to see how cultural heritage helps understand our past, present and future.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, our policy work included the publication of a Statement on the Value of Care of Collections Professions. In 2020, we launched the Values of Conservation project to investigate and articulate the values of cultural heritage conservation to society. Currently, we're calling for Conservation in Action stories to showcase the importance of the work of conservators and increase the visibility of the profession.



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WHAT IS OUR STRATEGY?

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Icon's campaigns and activities are informed by our strategy as set by our Board of Trustees. Each year we report on our achievements, measuring our success against the strategic priorities in our annual Impact Reports.

ICON'S PLAN





JOIN US!

GET INVOLVED IN ICON'S WORK
TODAY

We are always open to new members: we welcome everyone with a passion for cultural heritage, from supporters to professional members. Be connected, be inspired, and support our mission to promote high standards in conservation: [Join us!](#)

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