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Accredited Conservator-Restorer

# PACR Accreditation

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## **What is PACR accreditation?**

Professional Accreditation of Conservator-Restorers (PACR) assesses a conservator's professional practice to become recognised as a professional conservator. PACR provides a recognised standard of professional expertise beyond qualifications gained from training courses. Accreditation is a significant achievement and the accredited conservator will have demonstrated a high degree of competence, sound judgement and an in-depth knowledge of the principles which underpin conservation practice.

The PACR accreditation framework applies a common standard across the profession, regardless of the development route taken to reach a professional level of capability, the conservation specialism, or the context in which the conservator may practice.

The accreditation framework has three components:

1. a process for accrediting professional capability against explicit standards that are owned by the profession (the assessment and accreditation process)
2. a system for ensuring maintenance and enhancement of professional capability through ongoing learning and development (continuing professional development – CPD )
3. a means of removing accredited status from practitioners who fail to maintain a minimum standard of practice and ethics (the disciplinary procedure).

## **How many PACR accredited conservators are there?**

There are currently 780 PACR accredited conservators (9<sup>th</sup> September 2015)

## **Do I need to be a member of Icon to be eligible for accreditation?**

Yes, you must be an Associate Member of the Institute of Conservation before you can apply for accreditation.

## **Do I need a mentor when I go through the application process?**

You do not have to have a mentor but you are strongly advised to seek one. Remember to allow sufficient time for you to work effectively with your mentor at least three months prior to submitting your application. A mentor does not have to be from the same discipline as you, indeed this separation may help you to bounce ideas off of each other and look at your projects more objectively.

If you do not know anyone who can act as your mentor the Icon Mentoring Scheme operates to put applicants in touch with a mentor. If you would like help finding a mentor please contact [pacr@icon.org.uk](mailto:pacr@icon.org.uk)

## **How much does it cost?**

There is a non-refundable fee which needs to be paid with your Register of Intention. An assessment fee is required when you submit your application form. If you do not proceed to assessment this will be refunded. Check the website for the latest rates.

### **When can I apply?**

There are two application rounds per year, January and June. You will need to submit a Register of Intention (RoI) prior to submitting a completed PACR application. The ROI is usually due in between 6 and 8 weeks before the main PACR Application

Check the website for the latest dates.

### **Can I defer my application?**

You may find, having registered your intention to apply, that you are unable to meet the application deadline or, having submitted your application form, it has been recommended by the Accreditation Committee that your application requires revision. If either of these happen you will be able to defer your application to the next round only.

### **Can I pay my assessment fee in advance?**

Yes, you can pay the full ROI and Assessment fee in one sum. NB the ROI element of the fee remains non-refundable in the event you do not submit the application.

Please email [pacr@icon.org.uk](mailto:pacr@icon.org.uk) in advance of this if you wish to pay the full fee in one payment.

### **Do I need to be employed to seek accreditation?**

No, but at assessment you will need to be able to show practical evidence of your work and demonstrate current thinking

### **Is PACR accreditation specifically for private or public sector practitioners?**

PACR is designed for, and operated by, a balance of practitioners from both the private and public sectors. It is open and applicable to both sectors. Assessors are also drawn from both sectors.

### **Is accreditation just for professional high fliers' ?**

No, you do not have to be in charge of a department or manage a large business. You can be part of a team, a sole trader or an independent consultant. Accreditation assesses the quality of your work and your professionalism, not your current job position.

### **How experienced are most people who apply?**

This can vary from individual to individual but most people apply about 5 years after completing their primary conservation training (e.g. a degree or MA), or 8 -10 years after working in conservation including practical training.

### **How do I know if I am eligible?**

You need to have a thorough understanding of the different aspects of conservation practice as specified in the professional standards (described in the PACR guide) and demonstrate that you are working at the ' proficient ' level. (See page 16 of the PACR guide to carry out a self-assessment.)

### **Does PACR cover all kinds of conservation-restoration?**

PACR is applicable to those who work as a conservation professional in the profession of conservation of cultural heritage\*. There is no restriction to the type of professional conservator who can be assessed. All conservators who apply are assessed using the same criteria whether working privately or for an institution, in remedial conservation, preventive conservation, in conservation management, in an advisory or consultancy capacity or in teaching or training.

\* Cultural heritage includes: objects and collections, the built environment, both moveable and immoveable structures, and natural heritage that includes building and archaeological conservation work.

### **Can I include older projects in my application form?**

Yes there is no age limit to the projects although you will need to demonstrate current thinking.

### **How will I be assessed?**

Two assessors will spend the day with you at your place of work. They will be looking and discussing with you the different aspects of your work using the projects presented in your application form and any other examples of current and past projects that are relevant. They will be checking to see that your professional practice meets the professional standards at the 'proficient' level. To ensure parity across the different specialisms, one assessor will be from your own field and the other from a different field. One of the assessors will also be familiar with your working situation; for example, if you are a private conservator one of your assessors will be as well. (Full details are on pages 26-31 of the PACR guide.)

### **How long does the application and assessment process take?**

The whole process - from the closing date for your submission to being told the result - takes from around 6 - 8 months.

### **Are the assessors trained?**

Yes, they are themselves accredited and have been trained to provide a fair and consistent approach.

### **What do I have to present on the day?**

Preferably a good proportion of the projects described in your application form. If, unavoidably, objects have to be returned before the date of the assessment, then your documentation, supported by a witness form, may provide some of the evidence which assessors can discuss with you. You may also show other work - not described on the form - completed or in progress, which assessors can discuss with you.

### **What happens after the assessment?**

The assessors will record their findings, and you will receive a summary report approximately two weeks after the assessment. The Accreditation Committee (AC) will make the final decision on your accredited status, on the basis of the information provided by you and your assessors.

### **What if I fail to be accredited?**

You will receive feedback from the Accreditation Committee and you may be encouraged to have a partial re-assessment. Otherwise you are free to re-apply after a year. If you feel that the decision is wrong, you are able to appeal.

### **Is there any other possible outcome?**

Yes, you may be asked to present some further evidence, either before the Accreditation Committee meets or as part of a reassessment but usually within a year.

### **How can I afford the time?**

You are only likely to have to do this once in your career. Ideally you should complete the application in working time. Many employers encourage and support this. If you are self-employed, you will need to balance the investment of a relatively small amount of time against the advantages of being seen as professionally qualified. Whatever your circumstances it is worth considering this as an investment in your professional career, whether it is to gain professional recognition within your organisation or have a qualification that marks you out as fully qualified to clients and other professionals.

### **Why should I go through this?**

The profession realises that for the benefit of heritage objects and collections and for the public and owners, it is essential to be able to distinguish experienced, competent practitioners. Whatever your initial training, the only way of demonstrating your competence is by presenting evidence of your recent work to your peers. As the numbers of accredited conservator-restorers grow, so accreditation is gaining credibility and respect from employers and from clients. As a member of an increasingly accredited profession, your status and your rewards should gradually grow over the years. If you work in the commercial sector and your practice is on the Conservation Register, your continued inclusion will depend on being accredited. Icon continues to bring widespread recognition of accreditation. Various bodies, such as the National Trust and NTS, English Heritage, Historic Scotland, the Church Buildings Council and the Heritage Lottery Fund are seeking PACR accredited conservators. Directors and Heads of Conservation in national and other museums, libraries, galleries and archives are being made aware of the importance of accreditation and being encouraged to support their staff becoming accredited.

### **How can I promote my accredited status?**

You can add the designation ACR after your name and use the official PACR logo on your correspondence and promotional literature.

Accredited status will inform employers and clients that you are an experienced and reliable conservator who is able to work unsupervised. Your status will be raised to a level, comparable with other professions you may work alongside, such as architects, accredited / registered curators and archivists, and you will have the added satisfaction that your peers acknowledge your qualities as a conservator-restorer.

### **Once accredited, is there anything else I have to do?**

Yes you are required to carry out regular reviews of your ongoing learning and development (continuing professional development - CPD) and identify areas for further development. Your professional body will call in your review periodically; this is to ensure that you are maintaining your CPD and not to make judgements on its content.

### **When will I be recalled for my CPD review?**

Newly accredited conservators will be recalled two years post accreditation, i.e. accredited in February or July 2016 the first recall will be in 2018. In addition a random selection is made annually to recall approximately 10% of ACRs

### **How will I know I have been recalled?**

The CPD recall letter is posted at the end of February each year with the deadline for submission at the end of May.

### **How often will I have to do a CPD review?**

Approximately every 5 years. After submitting a satisfactory CPD review it will be no sooner than 3 years between each recall. Please remember that your CPD record and plan is a personal development tool to track your professional development. Therefore it is something you should maintain on a regular basis.

### **How do I find out more about accreditation?**

The PACR guide provides full details of the PACR application and assessment process.

### **What projects should I include?**

You don't have to choose big projects, indeed some of the smaller more everyday tasks may actually be more appropriate. What you are looking to demonstrate throughout is strong evidence of your own professional judgement and ethics across your work. Projects should be complex, but they don't all have to show complexity in every aspect. The bigger task is going to be to narrow down the best ones. If you have a mentor they may be able to help you select the projects to share.

### **What if I get rejected?**

Please don't lose heart. The Assessment Committee reviews all evidence presented to them very thoroughly and will provide detailed feedback to the candidate which can help you in re-applying again in the future.

### **How do I prepare for the assessment day?**

First and foremost review your application and then the Professional Standards in depth. Your assessors will contact you in advance to pull together an agenda for the day – they may ask to see specific aspects of projects or may be more general in their approach. The key thing to remember they can only assess you based on the evidence you are able to share with them on the day.

However please do not worry about the assessors, they're not there to reject the information you're sharing with them. Indeed they're ACRs themselves and will be interested and keen to understand the work you're doing. If presentations aren't your strong point then take some time to prepare – ask others to sit in whilst you rehearse. They don't need to be long but do need to cover all of the points you need to get across.

### **Can I choose my assessors?**

The Assessment Committee will make select assessors based on their specialism and experience. Please do remember that you have the final say on who is your assessor, so if you are unhappy with the selection please do let us know.