

Institute of Conservation
Professional Accreditation of Conservator-Restorers (PACR)

PACR Professional Standards

PACR is the professional practice assessment
for conservation professionals wishing to gain accredited status



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The professional conservation-restoration standards (the professional standards) including professional judgement and ethics (J&E)

Applying for accreditation means that you are confident that your experience and knowledge meet the professional conservation-restoration standards (the professional standards). You must demonstrate that you understand the professional standards in full and how you apply them to your work. You must be able to show that you have the depth of conservation expertise and knowledge required by the professional standards (as opposed to being able to rely on the judgement of others). You also need to show how your intentions and expertise translate effectively into practice.

You will be asked to demonstrate understanding of the professional standards as applied to dealing effectively with complex conservation problems.

Complex conservation problems are typically those which:

1. Require choices between options which lead to significantly different outcomes.
2. Present dilemmas and value-conflicts or require significant value-judgements.
3. Present substantial technical problems, for instance in relation to unstable or degraded materials or the level of risk associated with treatments or strategies.
4. Require a deep level of practical understanding to be applied to the situation.
5. Require the marshalling and management of a wide range of resources.

To be 'complex' a conservation problem need not contain all these factors, but it is likely to include more than one or have one present to a high degree.

The professional conservation-restoration standards and the professional Judgement and ethics have been designed to be applicable to all conservation roles regardless of an applicant's specialism(s).

Standard 1

Assessment of cultural heritage

Standard 1 (points a–e below) requires you to demonstrate the ability to assess cultural heritage that presents complex conservation problems. Your work context will dictate the method of assessment and type of cultural heritage you can choose, for instance your work might involve examining objects brought to a studio for treatment or advice, or it might call for you to provide the detailed assessment of a collection or structure, or a strategic assessment of a series of collections or defined area of cultural heritage.

Depending on the situation, you may be able to demonstrate more than one level of assessment for example, an initial, visual assessment followed by more detailed investigation and analysis or by ongoing monitoring and audit.

You must show that you:

- 1a. Understand the significance and context of the heritage to be assessed, along with any implications for potential conservation measures.

Consider, for example, how the heritage is used or displayed; the design and environmental context of the heritage; any personal, cultural, historic, spiritual, symbolic or financial significance; ownership of and responsibility for the heritage. You may need to undertake both visual/material and historic/archival research.

- 1b. Can assess the physical nature and condition of the heritage.

The methods used for assessment must not threaten the condition or integrity of the heritage to any significant extent. You must refer to other competent sources where analysis lies outside of your area of personal competence or requires specialist resources. You must demonstrate a good understanding of the material properties and typical degradation patterns of heritage in the area that you work.

- 1c. Can assess the impact of the environment and potential changes on the heritage.

This needs to be applied as appropriate to the context of your work, for example it may involve asking the owner of an object about its current and proposed environment and use, it could involve carrying out a detailed assessment of a collection or site, or assessing the impact of development proposals or other potential changes on a site or structure. You must refer to other competent sources where analysis lies outside of your area of personal competence or requires specialist resources.

- 1d. Can assess the implications of taking no further action.

This will include implications for the heritage under consideration and, as relevant to the situation, any risks to other objects or structures, the environment or surroundings, and to health and safety.

- 1e. Can record or report the findings of the assessment.

Depending on the context, findings may involve verbal, written, software-based and graphic representations. The coverage and detail of the report or records need to be appropriate to the context of the assessment.

Standard 2

Conservation options and strategies

Standard 2 (points a–c below) requires that you demonstrate the ability to evaluate options and negotiate actions in contexts that present complex conservation problems. The standard should be applied according to your work context, for instance it could apply to decisions discussed with a client about objects brought to a studio for treatment or advice, a strategy for the management of a collection or building, or a response to a specific threat or conservation issue.

You must show that you can:

2a. Identify and evaluate conservation options.

Options could include managing the use, display etc. of the heritage differently; physical conservation treatments and measures; preventive or protective measures; and maintaining the status quo. Options should be based on adequate assessment and research. You should be able to identify options that require novel or adapted measures, and know how you would develop and implement or commission these. Evaluation will include identifying the risks, resources and benefits associated with the different options, as well as their implications for future use, display etc..

2b. Develop advice, recommendations or policies relating to the different options available.

This will include considering the resource implications of the various options, any implications for project management or development, and where relevant identifying sources of resourcing or funding. You should be able to advise on any legislation, official guidance or organisational policy that affects your area of conservation. Your advice or decisions will need to communicate and promote good conservation practice.

2c. Develop or negotiate a considered course of action for implementation.

You should be able to negotiate with organisations and individuals as relevant to your area of practice. The agreed action should be recorded in a format and level of detail appropriate to the context.

Standard 3

Conservation measures

Standard 3 (points a–f below) requires that whatever your role, you are knowledgeable and proficient in all aspects of conservation. Meeting the conservation measures as outlined in points a–f will show that you can work effectively with situations and aspects of heritage that present complex conservation problems, and that you can deal effectively with any unanticipated problems or findings.

If you are involved in practical conservation treatments you can use work on cultural objects as evidence. If you are involved in generic collections care or you are a manager of conservation across a broad spectrum, or a teacher and trainer in conservation you will need to show that you have an in-depth knowledge of conservation and can apply it to produce professional results. Your evidence needs to show that you produce accomplished results in the type of work that you do.

If you mainly undertake conservation treatments, you must have a sufficient knowledge of preventive conservation to advise on the ongoing care of the heritage on which you work.

If you are mainly involved in preventive conservation, your knowledge of treatments must be sufficient to know what kind of treatments are available and when they are appropriate.

If you are primarily a manager, teacher, or trainer you must have an in-depth knowledge of conservation and be able to exercise relevant professional judgement independent of the advice of others (it is not sufficient to be an effective manager, teacher or trainer: you must show that you are a knowledgeable conservation professional).

The assessors will be looking to ensure that what they are shown accords with the specialism(s) and role stated by you on the application form. They will be assessing your proficiency (see p5 novice-to-expert range) against the professional standards and not your qualities as a teacher, manager, head of practice etc., (though of course you must also meet the requirements of Standards 4 and 5).

When completing the application form the evidence you provide for assessment demonstrating Standard 3 will depend on your specialism(s):

you would put forward physical evidence of conservation-restoration treatments, demonstrating your skills and knowledge as a treatment-based conservator to at least proficient level on the novice-to-expert range, **and** demonstrating a working knowledge of preventive conservation,

or

you would put forward physical evidence of preventive conservation, demonstrating your skills and knowledge as a preventive conservator to at least proficient level on the novice-to-expert range **and** demonstrating a working knowledge of conservation-restoration treatments,

or

you would put forward physical evidence of conservation management / teaching, demonstrating your skills and knowledge as a conservation manager or tutor to at least

proficient level on the novice-to-expert range **and** demonstrating a working knowledge of relevant conservation treatments and preventive conservation.

You may also choose to demonstrate the professional standards including J&E using a combination of all the above, in which case your evidence will have to reflect a proficient level in all the work you put forward.

You must show that you can:

3a. Communicate appropriate practice in the care, protection and treatment of cultural heritage.

Communication may be in the form of advice, policies, strategies, recommendations etc.. You will need to take into account any relevant national, local or organisational frameworks and policies. Care, protection and treatment may relate to ongoing or exceptional situations, anticipating or responding to disasters or emergencies, or responding to external proposals and changes. You should be able to communicate knowledgeably the conservation implications of any policy or plan for the heritage in your area of work. You should be able to advise on requirements for the ongoing protection of heritage that has left your care.

3b. Implement treatment-based, preventive or conservation management measures.

This includes being able to advise on the physical and chemical characteristics of materials and causes of decay, the measures and techniques to be used, and the use of relevant resources, skills and equipment. Measures may be for instance physical, chemical, environmental or statutory, or relate to managing or influencing the interaction of others with the heritage. You should be able to advise on new and developing techniques and their practical implications. The methods and techniques used should take into account relevant contextual and ethical factors as well as current research and guidance in the field concerned. You will need to understand the perspectives and roles of others who have an impact on the protection and care of the heritage, where necessary working with them to ensure that measures are effective.

3c. Ensure that measures meet recognised conservation standards.

This includes meeting any standards or codes of practice required by the relevant conservation body or specialist section. You will need to ensure that measures are implemented with a sufficiently high level of skill, judgement and ethical consideration regardless of whether you are carrying them out yourself, delegating or commissioning, or managing more broadly.

3d. Monitor and evaluate the effect of conservation measures.

This includes deciding on appropriate methodologies for gathering, interpreting and presenting data. It includes adjusting or renegotiating measures should findings suggest this is necessary.

3e. Maintain records of conservation measures.

Records should be of a form, level of detail and clarity appropriate to their intended use, and be sufficiently permanent.

3f. Recommend appropriate sources of further analysis, treatment or preventive care where these lie outside your remit or area of expertise.

This could relate, for instance, to remedial treatment, scientific analysis or specialist monitoring, or specialist preventive, preservation or legislative expertise.

Standard 4

Organisation and management

Standard 4 (points a–g below) should be applied according to you and your work not the context in which you are working. Where you are not fully responsible for a studio, workshop, practice etc., you will not be marked down for practices over which you have no control, provided that: you understand where there are problems or inadequacies, your own work represents good practice, and that you are not an accessory to unethical or illegal practice.

Standard 4 reflects a level of management that all conservation professionals should be able to meet, it is not specifically about being a manager. You can provide an overview that shows that you meet the relevant professional standards or act to promote them (e.g. you may not have objects in your care, but what do you do that promotes the care of objects by others?). This part of your evidence can also be a good opportunity to demonstrate much of the Judgement and ethics section.

You must show that you:

4a. Organise and manage work to ensure that it is completed appropriately.

This applies to your own work, as well as to any work that you lead or delegate. It includes agreeing and meeting timescales, resourcing requirements and where appropriate budgets, keeping stakeholders informed of progress and renegotiating where necessary. You could refer to project scheduling, the work-plan for a department or for a major development, timetabling and lesson-planning for a course, or how you manage consultancy or contract work (from the client or contractor/consultant perspective).

4b. Ensure that your work practices and any you promote comply with applicable legal and contractual requirements.

4c. Ensure that your work practices and the area for which you are responsible comply with relevant Health & Safety regulations and guidelines, minimising risk to yourself and others.

This includes the ability to carry out and act on risk assessments.

4d. Take responsibility for the care of cultural heritage within your influence.

This may include, for instance, ensuring the safety, security and correct storage of objects, and taking relevant measures to prevent damage during a project or preceding investigation.

4e. Adhere to good business or internal practice in dealing with clients, colleagues and other stakeholders.

This includes maintaining good working relationships and effective and open communication. Stakeholders can include internal clients (e.g. curators, archivists, architects, elected members etc.) and contractors, as appropriate. You could show that your advice, policies or instructions meet the relevant requirements.

4f. Ensure that adequate and accessible records are maintained.

Records include conservation records, statutory records, records required by your organisation or needed for running your business, and any records that you or your colleagues need to work effectively. Recording should use relevant methods and formats including, where relevant, the use of appropriate technology and software. Records must be physically accessible and intelligible to the people who need access to them. Records must be maintained for an adequate period for their purpose. Appropriate levels of security and confidentiality should be maintained.

4g. Communicate recommendations and advice effectively.

Standard 5

Continuing professional development (CPD)

Standard 5 (points a–e below) requires you to demonstrate through continuing professional development (CPD) active maintenance and improvement of your professional knowledge. This standard will be regularly reviewed after you have been awarded accreditation and is considered to be an essential element in demonstrating commitment as an accredited conservator. The CPD review and plan will form the basis for the mandatory CPD review recall which you will be asked to complete two years after the date on which you became an accredited conservator. Further recalls during your career will be made approximately every five years.

You must show that you:

5a. Keep yourself informed on changes in the profession as well as broader developments relevant to your work context.

5b. Ensure that your practice, knowledge, skills and techniques are up-to-date, both at a general level and in relation to individual projects and tasks that you undertake.

This includes maintaining familiarity and where appropriate contact with relevant bodies in the conservation field and beyond as relevant to your area of practice. Updating needs to be appropriate to role, e.g. if you carry out treatments you would be expected to understand and be able to use new techniques in your field; if you are a manager or advisor you would be expected to understand what is available and where they are appropriate, but not to be able to carry them out.

5c. Demonstrate the ability to reflect on and learn from your practice.

5d. Continue to acquire knowledge in your specialism(s) and area of work, and disseminate it through informal or formal means.

The specialism(s) and area of work could be a conservation specialism, or a particular area of practice, knowledge or research in, or related to, conservation.

5e. Promote conservation and the care of cultural heritage to lay and expert audiences, including other professionals involved in cultural heritage or the built environment.

This includes being able to provide training or instruction to others where necessary.

Professional judgement and ethics

Professional judgement and ethics (J&E) (points i–xiii below) are a core component of the professional standards. Your understanding and application of J&E in relation to professional standards 1 to 5, should be evident across your work.

You can demonstrate your professionalism by showing convincing evidence of the application of professional judgement and ethical standards based on your acquisition of a substantial foundation of knowledge and understanding of conservation principles through your training or professional experience. Knowing when and how to seek relevant information is an important aspect of showing professional judgement. You should be able to handle a wide range of situations professionally, and apply ethical principles in practice. It is not sufficient to demonstrate knowledge of your professional organisation's code of ethics or practice.

You must:

- i. Understand the principles of conservation and demonstrate an in-depth understanding of the specific area(s) of your practice.
- ii. Be conversant with national and international principles, philosophies and guidelines relevant to your practice.
- iii. Understand the wider contexts in which conservation is carried out, the implications of context for practice, and the implications of treatments and methods within the context.
- iv. Use an adequate level of critical thinking, analysis and synthesis in approaching conservation problems and developing appropriate solutions.
- v. Appreciate and be prepared to consider alternative, valid methods and approaches that are relevant to your practice.
- vi. Understand the ethical basis of the profession and the responsibilities of the conservation professional to cultural heritage and to wider society.
- vii. Understand and observe your professional body's code of ethics and practice.
- viii. Observe legal requirements and obligations, including those relating to health and safety, employment and contract law, and international agreements.
- ix. Take responsibility for the care of cultural heritage within your influence.
- x. Act responsibly and ethically in dealings with the public, employers, clients and colleagues.
- xi. Act with awareness of and respect for the cultural, historic and spiritual context of objects and structures.
- xii. Be able to handle value-conflicts and ethical dilemmas in a manner which maintains the interests of cultural heritage.
- xiii. Understand the limits of your own understanding and abilities, and practise within them.

Summary of the professional standards and professional judgement and ethics

Professional standards	Professional judgement and ethics (J&E)
<p>1. Assessment of cultural heritage assessing and reporting on condition, environment and threats, assessing risks, identifying any problems to be solved.</p> <p>2. Conservation options and strategies identifying and evaluating options; negotiating courses of action for conservation measures.</p> <p>3. Conservation measures advising on, developing policy for and implementing conservation measures; ensuring high standards are maintained; planning to minimise the effects of disasters and emergencies; maintaining conservation records; advising on aftercare.</p> <p>4. Organisation and management managing projects and workflow; client/internal and external relations; health and safety; security; records and reports; communication.</p> <p>5. Professional development maintaining up-to-date practice; extending and communicating knowledge; promoting conservation and the care of cultural heritage.</p>	<p>i. understanding principles and practice</p> <p>ii. conversance with guidelines</p> <p>iii. understanding the wider contexts of conservation</p> <p>iv. critical thinking, analysis and synthesis</p> <p>v. openness to alternative methods and approaches</p> <p>vi. understanding the ethical basis of the profession</p> <p>vii. observing code of ethics and practice</p> <p>viii. observing legal requirements</p> <p>ix. responsibility for the care of cultural heritage</p> <p>x. responsible and ethical dealings with others</p> <p>xi. respect for the cultural, historic and spiritual context of objects</p> <p>xii. handling value-conflicts and ethical dilemmas</p> <p>xiii. understanding and acting within the limits of own knowledge and competence</p>

Summary of the novice-to-expert range

	Knowledge	Standard of work	Autonomy	Coping with complexity	Perception of context
1. Novice	Minimal, or 'textbook' knowledge without connecting it to practice	Unlikely to be satisfactory unless closely supervised	Needs close supervision or instruction	Little or no conception of dealing with complexity	Tends to see actions in isolation
2. Beginner	Working knowledge of key aspects of practice	Straightforward tasks likely to be completed to an acceptable standard	Able to achieve some steps using own judgement, but supervision needed for overall task	Appreciates complex situations but only able to achieve partial resolution	Sees actions as a series of steps
3. Competent	Good working and background knowledge of area of practice	Fit for purpose, though may lack refinement	Able to achieve most tasks using own judgement	Copes with complex situations through deliberate analysis and planning	Sees actions at least partly in terms of longer-term goals
4. Proficient	Depth of understanding of discipline and area of practice	Fully acceptable standard achieved routinely	Able to take full responsibility for own work (and that of others where applicable)	Deals with complex situations holistically, decision-making more confident	Sees overall 'picture' and how individual actions fit within it
5. Expert	Authoritative knowledge of discipline and deep tacit understanding across area of practice	Excellence achieved with relative ease	Able to take responsibility for going beyond existing standards and creating own interpretations	Holistic grasp of complex situations, moves between intuitive and analytical approaches with ease	Sees overall 'picture' and alternative approaches; vision of what may be possible

Adapted from the Dreyfus model of skills acquisition: Dreyfus, S E (1981) and Dreyfus, H L & Dreyfus, S E (1984).