

THE INSTITUTE OF CONSERVATION'S PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS AND JUDGEMENT & ETHICS

These professional standards are embedded within all of Icon's professional development functions and should be read in conjunction with the Institute of Conservation's Code of Conduct. This version of the Professional Standards was approved by Icon's Board of Trustees 24th June 2020.

Standard 1: Assessment of cultural heritage

A conservator has the ability to assess cultural heritage that presents complex conservation problems. A conservator must:

- a. Understand the significance and context of the heritage to be assessed, along with any implications for potential conservation measures.
- b. Assess the physical nature and condition of the heritage.
- c. Assess the impact of the environment and potential changes on the heritage.
- d. Assess the implications of taking no further action.
- e. Report on the findings of the assessment.

Standard 2: Conservation options and strategies

A conservator is able to evaluate options and negotiate actions in contexts that present complex conservation problems. A conservator must:

- a. Identify and evaluate conservation options.
- b. Develop advice, recommendations or policies relating to the different options available.
- c. Develop or negotiate a considered course of action for implementation.

Standard 3: Conservation measures

A conservator, regardless of role, can work effectively with situations and aspects of heritage that present complex conservation problems, and can deal effectively with any unanticipated problems or findings. A conservator must:

- a. Communicate appropriate practice in the care, protection and treatment of cultural heritage.
- b. Implement conservation measures.
- c. Ensure that measures and advice follow recognised conservation standards.
- d. Monitor and evaluate the effect of conservation measures.

- e. Document conservation measures.
- f. Recommend appropriate sources of further analysis, treatment or preventive care where these lie outside your remit or area of expertise.

Standard 4: Organisation and management

A conservator, regardless of position, can manage conservation work that presents complex conservation problems. A conservator must:

- a. Organise and manage work to ensure that it is completed appropriately.
- b. Ensure that your work practices and any you promote comply with applicable legal and contractual requirements.
- c. 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.
- d. Adhere to good business or internal practice in dealing with clients, colleagues and other stakeholders.
- e. Ensure that adequate and accessible records are maintained.

Standard 5: Continuing professional development

A conservator can demonstrate through continuing professional development (CPD) active maintenance and improvement of professional knowledge and skills. A conservator must:

- a. Keep yourself informed on changes in the profession as well as broader developments relevant to your work context.
- b. 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.
- c. Reflect on and learn from your practice.
- d. Promote conservation and the care of cultural heritage to expert and general audiences.

Professional Judgement and Ethics

Professional judgement and ethics are a core component of the professional standards. A conservator 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 ethical basis of the profession and the responsibilities of the conservation professional to cultural heritage and to wider society.
- iv. Understand and observe the Icon Code of Conduct.
- v. Use an adequate level of critical thinking, analysis and synthesis in approaching conservation problems and developing appropriate solutions.
- vi. Appreciate and be prepared to consider alternative, valid methods and approaches that are relevant to your practice.
- vii. Observe legal requirements and obligations, including those relating to health and safety, the environment, employment and contract law, and international agreements.
- viii. Take responsibility for the care of cultural heritage within your influence.
- ix. Act with responsibility towards the environment, promoting environmental sustainability in conservation practice and minimising adverse environmental impact.
- 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. Understand how the context in which conservation is carried out influences the practices and measures that are appropriate and acceptable.
- xiii. Handle value-conflicts and ethical dilemmas in a manner which maintains the interests of cultural heritage.
- xiv. Understand the limits of your own knowledge and abilities, and practise within them.

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