

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION: POSTGRADUATE DIPLOMA IN THE CONSERVATION OF EASEL PAINTINGS

Awarding Body:	Courtauld Institute of Art
Teaching Institution:	Courtauld Institute of Art
Name of Final Award:	Postgraduate Diploma in the Conservation of Easel Paintings
Programme Title:	Postgraduate Diploma in the Conservation of Easel Paintings

Other reference points used to inform

Programme outcomes:	Self-assessment document for TQA 1997 Strategic Plan 2005-9 Framework for Higher Education Qualifications 'Professional Guidelines' of the European Confederation of Conservator-Restorers Organisation (ECCO) and 'Clarification of Conservation-Restoration Education Statement' of the European Network for Conservation-Restoration Education (ENCoRE)
----------------------------	---

AIMS OF THE PROGRAMME

All programmes of study offered by the Courtauld Institute of Art aim to give students access to the best available research-led teaching, and world-class resources. The Postgraduate Diploma in the Conservation of Easel Paintings is specifically designed to:

- equip students with the specialist skills and knowledge for a professional career in the conservation of easel paintings
- offer a diversity of practical experience including remedial conservation, restoration and environmental control
- prepare and enable students to carry out research at an advanced level and to provide a foundation for further academic study
- create an environment in which individual development can flourish

PROGRAMME OUTCOMES

Knowledge and understanding

A successful student of the Diploma will be able to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of major developments and issues in the conservation of easel paintings. They will be aware of current debates in the field and how to position their own practice and contribution to the field. This will involve an understanding of:

- Theoretical basis of the conservation of easel paintings
- Current practice in the conservation of easel paintings
- Fundamental scientific concepts underpinning practice
- History and identification of painters' materials and techniques

- Broad professional context of conservation

Key Skills: Intellectual, cognitive and professional/practical

The programme is designed to equip students with a range of field-specific, and transferable skills.

These include the ability to:

- Apply theoretical knowledge to conservation practice
- Identify, analyse and solve problems
- Exercise sensitive visual judgement
- Synthesise information from a wide range of sources
- Evaluate research information and visual evidence critically
- Apply skills needed to plan and undertake research
- Take a holistic approach to conservation applying professional judgement, balancing risks, utilising resources and taking into consideration aesthetics, ethics, and the diversity of stakeholders
- Communicate orally and in writing with a wide range of individuals

They also encompass the capacity to:

- Undertake skilled, safe, reflective and evaluative conservation treatment of easel paintings
- Communicate effectively with all stakeholders involved in ownership and decision-making
- Make safe use of appropriate workshop and laboratory equipment
- Manage time and resources efficiently
- Work independently, and constructively as a team member
- Establish patterns of learning for the purpose of continuing professional development
- Evaluate own academic and professional performance
- Use a range of computer, photographic and digital imaging resources
- Manage time and scarce resources efficiently

TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES

Teaching and Learning

The foundation of the student experience is the supervision of conservation practical work in the studios and occasionally on site. Students assume individual responsibility supported by staff for the treatment of paintings and work together as a team to study display environments.

The Department is the conservation facility for the Courtauld Gallery with its renowned collections and a professional conservator is active within the teaching studio environment. Lead lectures, student and tutor-led seminars, tutorials and self-directed learning provide the framework of knowledge and develop understanding.

The application of theoretical knowledge to conservation practice is established through the resolution of actual conservation problems.

Small group teaching allows for flexibility in responding to students' individual interests and enabling staff to bring current research and debates to the fore. Personal and Academic tutors review students work and progress individually.

An attitude of independent and open-minded enquiry is at the heart of our teaching and the final year research project provides the opportunity for the student to develop their research skills to the highest level and to acquire specialist knowledge and understanding. The Department offers an environment in which there is the opportunity for students to explore contemporary research and approaches to conservation practice.

The annual postgraduate conservation conference provides an opportunity to develop professional spoken and written presentation skills.

The broad professional context of conservation is explored through programmes of guided visits to laboratories and studios in the public and private sector and two study trips abroad to centres of excellence. A distinctive feature of the course is the close contact with national museums and organisations.

Students are strongly encouraged to use the resources of art-historical libraries and lecture programmes, access to academic staff and events at the Courtauld and more widely in London and beyond.

Assessment

Formal assessment

The course is formally examined at the end of each of the three years. The award of the Diploma is made on the basis of the assessment of the Research Project and the final year assessment of conservation practical work completed over the three years of the course.

There are three examinations at the end of the First Year: Conservation General (an open examination), and Science or Art History examination (a three-hour examination) which tests the framework of knowledge and assessment of the quality and standard of practical work including written and photographic documentation, a discussion between student and examiners assesses cognitive skill and understanding. Students must pass the examinations in order to progress to the Second Year. The Second Year examination is based on an assessment of the practical work and documentation.

There is no continuous assessment and examinations are graded Pass/Fail only

Informal evaluation and development

Informal evaluation of the students' work and progress is provided verbally and in writing throughout. This applies both to the standards and quality of practical conservation work and to intellectual/cognitive skills such as analysis, evaluation, synthesis and research skills.

Immediate informal **verbal** evaluation is provided on a regular weekly basis during structured studio 'rounds' by the staff when progress is monitored and problems identified and discussed. Termly 'work in progress' meetings during which students present their conservation practical work to all members of the Department are followed up by **written** reports discussed with the Tutor individually. Written reports are provided on submitted written work such as seminar papers and written and photographic documentation.

The Research Project is supported by weekly tutorial discussion and supervision of drafts of the project.

PROGRAMME STRUCTURE AND FEATURES

The Postgraduate Diploma in the Conservation of Easel Paintings is a three-year course. Each academic year comprises three ten-week terms. Full-time and daily attendance is required during term time. Over the three years approximately 60% of the student's time will be directed specifically towards practical conservation work of different types. Annual student intake is limited to five or six students to ensure safe use of the available spaces and to match the needs of the profession.

Distinctive features of the course are the fact that the teaching takes place within a Department that is also responsible for the conservation of the Courtauld Gallery paintings collections and this together with the very close links that exist between the Department and the national museums and organisations greatly enhances the professional context of learning. Two study trips to centres of excellence and a rich programme of guided visits in the UK provide a broad basis for understanding the individual's place within the profession.

Students will begin to undertake individual conservation treatments of paintings from the first term of the course and during the three years over sixty percent of the time is focussed on practical conservation work in the studio or elsewhere. Practical skills are developed within a busy and lively learning context. At any time there are between thirty and forty paintings undergoing treatment in the studios and students have an exceptional opportunity to experience a very wide range of paintings from different contexts presenting diverse problems. The opportunity to specialise in the conservation of paintings for three years and the level of responsibility that students accept by the end of the course is a notable strength.

The course places considerable emphasis on the development of independent study and research skills both in the studio and in written and theoretical aspects of the programme. The Research Project (October – January in the final year 10,000 words) is the most highly developed expression of this it prepares students for further research if chosen but also provides an opportunity to develop distinctive specialist skills and interests. Throughout the course students are encouraged to research the problems posed by the painting they are working on.

The First Year of the course aims to provide the framework of knowledge and core skills on which the following years will build. Small group teaching encourages active participation and engagement and the studios offer an environment for safe and reflective practice under continuous supervision and with access to staff at all times. Initially studio teaching is directive but there are increasing opportunities to work critically, independently as the course progresses. The second year focuses on development and a programme of specialist lectures, seminars and visits deals with topics introduced during the First Year in greater depth. Topics that are covered currently include analysis of artists' materials, environmental monitoring and the conservation of contemporary art. Growing confidence in applying theoretical knowledge to practical problems is the key to the Second Year. The final year of the course provides the opportunity for the practical and intellectual exploration of conservation at an advanced level.

By the end of the Third Year students should achieve a professional standard in their work. The Research Projects are presented publicly at the Gerry Hedley Student Conference which is now in its twenty-fourth year. In the practical work emphasis is on assuming individual responsibility for problem solving and planning. Throughout the course a broad understanding of the professional context of conservation is fostered through guided visits to studios and laboratories, two study trips to centres of excellence abroad, contact with the national museums and engagement with the Senior Paintings Conservator for the Courtauld Collections who works within the third year studio.

Practical skills are developed within a busy and lively learning context. There are between thirty and forty paintings undergoing treatment at any time in the Department and students have an exceptional opportunity to experience a wide variety of paintings from different contexts presenting diverse problems. The opportunity to specialise in the conservation of paintings for three years and the level of responsibility students accept by the end of the course is a notable strength.

The character of the syllabus allows for considerable flexibility, freedom of choice and response to individual interests giving scope for students to develop specialisms appropriate to a variety of career paths in conservation.

Through wide-ranging national and international professional relationships, the Department has access to art historical, scientific and conservation facilities and expertise that relate to every aspect of research and practice.

ADMISSIONS CRITERIA

A first degree in art history, fine art or one of the sciences. (Normally a 2.1 or equivalent)

An understanding of what is involved in professional conservation.

Evidence, usually in the form of a portfolio of painting or drawing, of an engagement with painting. Evidence, either in the form of reading or study, of an engagement with technical and/or scientific subject matter.

Good motor skills and dexterity

Good colour vision

AWARD

Students are working towards a Postgraduate Diploma in the Conservation of Easel Paintings. The programme does not include interim stopping off points.

This Programme Specification was drafted on 25th August 2003.