

V&A/Icon Conservation and Collections Care Technicians Diploma

Information for Employers

1. What is the V&A / Icon Conservation and Collections Care Technicians Diploma?

The level 4 V&A / Icon Conservation and Collections Care Technicians Diploma covers the wide range of skills and knowledge required to work effectively as a technician with museum, library and archive collections, historic artefacts and art works (collectively referred to as “objects”) and to support professional conservators.

It aims to provide an entry level qualification that is recognised by employers and promoted by the UK professional body for the conservation of cultural heritage (Icon, the Institute of Conservation) and the V&A for individuals in the technician and conservation professions who wish to gain and demonstrate new and existing skills and competencies. It also promotes professional standards and practice in conservation and collections care.

2. Is the Diploma the right qualification for my employee? What will they get out of it?

The Diploma is aimed at technicians working with objects in the cultural, heritage, and creative industries who wish to broaden and deepen their existing skill set through undertaking a professional recognised qualification. On their successful completion of the Diploma your employee will have strong evidence of their professional skills, underwritten by well qualified, experienced professionals in the field.

As a result, your employee will have demonstrable skills in moving, installing, packing, and transporting objects; an increased ability to support conservators; and a solid foundation for a successful career in the cultural, heritage, and creative industries.

3. As an employer how will my organisation benefit from my employees undertaking this Diploma?

This Diploma offers you:

- A structure for training and development for new and existing staff.
- A way to judge the skills of potential employees.
- A way to mitigate risk surrounding practical object-based activities.
- A set of standards for the conservation technician or assistant role.
- A recognised standard for technician-level work that is shared by leading employers and endorsed by Icon.

4. How often are classes?

There are no classes. The Diploma is a work-based qualification where your employee will use their work experiences to produce the evidence required to meet the assessment criteria of each of their selected units within the Diploma. Time will need to be allowed for candidates to complete their work.

5. How many units must be undertaken to complete the Diploma?

The Diploma is flexible in structure and enables you to tailor the qualification to reflect your employee and their role in the workplace. Candidates must achieve a total of 65 credits by undertaking a combination of mandatory, core and optional units.

Mandatory Units

M1 Judgement and Ethics

M2 Contribute to the Care, Use and Understanding of Cultural Heritage

M3 Personal Professional Development

M4 Ensure Your Own Actions Reduce Risks to Health and Safety

M5 Maintaining Records

Core Units

C1 Provide Technical Support for the Accommodation of Items

C2 Transport of Items to New Locations

C3 Install Exhibitions and Projects

C4 Inspecting and Monitoring

C5 Handle and Care for Cultural Heritage during Conservation

C6 Protecting Heritage

C7 Provide Information and Advice

Optional Units

O1 Assess Items

O2 Implement Routine Interventive Conservation Procedures

O3 Advanced Object Packing and Transport (candidates must have achieved unit C2 as a prerequisite)

O4 Advanced Display (candidates must have achieved unit C3 as a prerequisite)

O5 Preventive Measures (candidates must have achieved unit C5 as a prerequisite)

O6 Setting up and Maintaining Equipment

O7 Making Replicas or Representations

O8 Demonstrating and Giving Explanations

O9 Instructing and Supervising

O10 Develop Competence with Workshop Machines and Equipment and Apply Skills in a Practical Situation

Units marked in **red** require assessment to be carried out by accredited conservators. Some of the optional units (O3, O4, O5) cannot be taken unless the respective core units (C2, C3, C4) have been achieved.

6. Can my employee undertake more than the required amount of units?

Yes, subject to your agreement, your employee may undertake more units than required. If you do agree to them undertaking further units, these will not be assessed.

7. How long will it take my employee to complete the Diploma?

No more than 2 years. They may complete it in much less time, it's up to your employee, their assessor and their mentor to decide.

Minimum guided learning hours for the Diploma are 490 hours, which includes assessment.

8. What is the assessment process?

Throughout the Diploma, and according to the unit being undertaken, your employee will be need to identify a mentor and a witness.

Their mentor will be an experienced colleague in the workplace who is practicing in the relevant field. They will provide support and guide them towards completion of units in the Diploma and help them to build an e-portfolio of evidence of the activities required in the units of the diploma.

Their witness will also be an experienced colleague in the workplace who is practicing in the relevant field. They will use their expertise to, as part of the evidence included in their e-portfolio, provide a statement to declare that your employee is competent in the areas covered in their selected units of the Diploma. In the case of the conservation units, the witness must be a qualified conservator.

The mentor and witness roles can be undertaken by the same person.

They will also be assigned assessors by the V&A. Assessors will assess each unit they undertake to ensure the quality of the work produced and evidenced in their e-portfolio meets the required standard. Assessors will be skilled professionals operating in the conservation and collections care field who have undertaken training to assess Diploma candidates. For conservation units of the qualification, assessors will also be Icon accredited conservators to help us maintain the high standards that the Diploma represents.

In addition, an internal verifier will carry out quality assurance on the work of all assessors for the Diploma to ensure consistency of standard and practice across the qualification. A periodic review from an external verifier, provided by the awarding body BIIAB, will also carry out further quality assurance to ensure the qualification continues to attain the required standards in the wider qualifications context. These quality control measures are in place to ensure the Diploma remains of a high standard and is consistently managed across the candidate pool and against other level 4 qualifications.

9. How transferable are the skills?

The skills your employee will obtain throughout the Diploma could be transferred to a number of professions within the cultural, heritage, and creative industries. The Diploma can also help your employee to develop other skills such as how to lead a team, how to write succinctly, and how to work with colleagues from different disciplines.

10. To what extent is the V&A involved?

The V&A will be responsible for the management and administration of the Diploma through the V&A Cultural Heritage Assessment Centre and Learning Academy. This will include the appointment and training of assessors and internal verifiers; liaison with external awarding body BIIAB; administration of the e-portfolios; and arranging induction and award days for candidates,

mentors and assessors. The V&A will also market the qualification and promote the professional development of technicians both nationally and globally.

11. To what extent is Icon involved?

Icon, in collaboration with the V&A, has written the units which make up the Diploma. The Diploma is an update and amalgamation of the first qualification for Technicians developed by the V&A in 2004 and the Icon Conservation Technician Qualification (CTQ) developed in 2007 as an entry level award designed to be the first step into the Conservation profession. This diploma combines the two to provide a more accessible qualification and the previous qualifications are no longer offered.

Diploma candidates are encouraged to join Icon. The benefits of the different membership types and their respective costs can be found at www.icon.org.uk.

Icon & the V&A together will form a steering group to support the ongoing development of this qualification.

12. How will this help my employee to support Conservators?

The conservation units of the qualification are aimed at those providing technical support to conservators. Therefore, through this Diploma, your employee will be able to demonstrate their skills in assisting professional conservators in their work.

Icon recognises the Diploma as a form of professional development for technicians in the cultural, heritage and creative industries and will communicate and champion the availability of the diploma.

13. What material is the Diploma focused on?

The Diploma is not aimed at any one material. The skills the Diploma will help your employee demonstrate can be applied to archaeological collections; fine, decorative and contemporary art collections; libraries and archives; and natural, social, and industrial history collections.

14. Will there be any follow up assessment after completion?

After successfully graduating, there will be no follow up assessment. However, graduates will be encouraged to form a network with their peers and the V&A to keep up to date with national standard developments. Membership of Icon is also recommended. In order to practice, it is the personal responsibility of the technician and the organisation to maintain and regularly refresh mandatory health and safety training to ensure legal compliance, both during and after the qualification has been achieved.

15. Does our organisation have to be based in the UK for our employees to undertake the Diploma?

No

16. Is my employee eligible to undertake the Diploma?

To undertake the Diploma your employee must (a) be working with objects in their current role and (b) have the necessary support and work experience opportunities required to undertake the activities within the units of the Diploma.

More specifically, they must be able to identify a suitable mentor and witness (the same person can perform both roles) to guide them through the units of the qualification. These are likely to be more experienced colleagues within the workplace.

If your employee cannot identify suitably qualified mentors and witnesses, or if they do not have access to the types of work which would enable them to complete the required units of the Diploma, they are not eligible to undertake the Diploma.

Otherwise, there is no national qualification prerequisite to undertaking the Diploma, such as GCSE's or A-levels.

17. Is further training available?

The V&A offers regular specialist training in the use of access and workshop equipment. Delivery is partly in a formal classroom environment as well as practical training in galleries and workshops. The focus is on specialist applications such as handling, packing and installation of artworks, needed to support the requirements of the qualification. Candidates may apply for places on these courses subject to availability and a separate fee.

18. How and when can my employee enroll? Is there a waiting list?

Your employee can express an interest in enrolling onto the Diploma by filling in the 'Expression of Interest' form and emailing it to assessmentcentre@vam.ac.uk. You will then be contacted to discuss your application in more detail.

19. How much will it cost to undertake the Diploma? Are there any bursaries, grants or scholarships available?

For details of costs please email assessmentcentre@vam.ac.uk for more information.