



Employment Information Package

Head of Conservation

Job Title: Head of Conservation

Grade: Chester Beatty Assistant Keeper Grade I

Contract: Permanent, subject to probationary period, full-time

Reports to: Head of Collections

Location: Chester Beatty, Dublin Castle, Dublin, D02 AD92, Ireland,

Date: April, 2023

The Chester Beatty

Welcoming over 430,000 visitors each year, the Chester Beatty (CB) contains a world-famous collection of manuscripts, prints, miniature paintings, early printed books and objets d'art from countries across Asia, the Middle East, North Africa and Europe. The collection is principally focused on the written word and its associated painted and printed images.

One of Ireland's National Cultural Institutions, the CB is a public charitable trust established under the will of the late Sir Alfred Chester Beatty and is governed by a Board of Trustees.

Over 6,000 individual items, mainly manuscripts and single-page paintings and calligraphies, make up the Islamic Collections. This includes more than 260 complete and fragmentary Qur'ans, the earliest dating from the eighth and ninth centuries and including the work of the leading calligraphers of the Islamic world.

Treasures from the Western Collections include rare Biblical papyri, dating from the second to the fourth centuries – these are some of the earliest sources on papyrus for the bible; and Armenian and Western European manuscripts from medieval, Renaissance and modern times.

The East Asian Collections include albums and scrolls from China, the largest collection outside of China of jade books from the Imperial Court in the 18th century – as well as a large collection of textiles and decorative objects. The Japanese holdings contain many superb hand-painted scrolls from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and woodblock prints by Hiroshige and Hokusai, among others.

For more information on the CB, its holdings and a full schedule of events and activities please visit www.chesterbeatty.ie.

Summary Job Purpose

The position of Head of Conservation offers an exciting opportunity for an experienced conservation professional to lead the conservation team at the Chester Beatty.

Reporting to the Head of Collections, the Head of Conservation will be responsible for the development and operation of the conservation studio in accordance with international museum standards. They will manage the conservation studio and will also have an active role in the conservation of collection objects.

The Chester Beatty is a collaborative organisation and the global nature of the collections is reflected in our multicultural and intercultural programming. The successful candidate will be a highly skilled conservator, an energetic individual with a passion for the arts and excellent interpersonal skills, and the ability to project manage the workflow of objects through the Conservation Laboratory. They will form part of a small but dynamic team with the flexibility to adapt to the Chester Beatty's constantly developing environment. In the course of their work, they will liaise closely with the Curators, Registrar, Digital Team and Facilities & Security Manager.

The post holder is also part of the Management Team at the Chester Beatty and consequently has responsibilities regarding business planning and reporting.

Resources Managed

The Head of Conservation is part of the Collections Team of 12 permanent posts that includes curators, conservators, librarians/archivists, educators and the registrar.

The Head of Conservation has direct line management responsibilities for the Book and Paper Conservator, the Heritage Council Conservation Intern and supervises volunteers and others as required.

The budget responsibility with the post includes an annual current departmental budget, a capital budget and potentially project funding which must be managed within the Chester Beatty's financial procedures and procurement guidelines.

The post holder reports directly to the Head of Collections.

Key Areas of Responsibility:

The Chester Beatty is planning a major capital development to realise the full potential of the museum. The Head of Conservation will play an important role in this process as part of the wider project team. Their role will be key to the movement of collections; and the conservation of collections in preparation for the installation of new galleries.

The Head of Conservation will:

- Serve as a member of the Management Team contributing to business planning and reporting frameworks.
- Lead in the care of collections and conservation for the Chester Beatty including as part of the Capital Development Plan.
- Conserve objects for loans, temporary exhibitions and permanent display.
- Lead on the planning, co-ordinating and overseeing of projects and initiatives of the Conservation Department's activities and commitments, in alignment with the Chester Beatty's business priorities.
- Provide strategic leadership in conservation and care of collections, ensuring that the Chester Beatty remains as a centre of excellence for conservation.
- Drive and implement best conservation practice, developing and reviewing relevant collections care policies and procedures and ensuring they are implemented in line with the Strategic Plan and annual Implementation Plan.
- Manage the departmental budget and the procurement of specialised staff, equipment, supplies and services. Report on the Conservation budget to the Head of Collections who has overall responsibility.
- Manage the Conservation Laboratory to ensure optimum workflow efficiencies are attained without compromising the care needs of the collections, and ensuring there is a conservation presence available to the Chester Beatty at all times, including holiday periods.
- Manage the Conservation work areas ensuring they are fit for purpose, safe and efficiently run, liaising with colleagues across the Chester Beatty. Ensuring compliance with relevant legislation, and Health & Safety regulations.
- Keep abreast of current best practice and trends in conservation.
- Promote a collaborative approach to working with other Chester Beatty departments.
- Prepare condition assessments of items and collections.
- Survey and prioritise items for treatment in advance of digitisation, exhibition, loan, and access by scholars.
- Develop the Conservation staff to their full potential, planning, supporting and evaluating development activities, ensuring you provide advice and feedback to manage performance effectively.
- Manage administrative detail of the Conservation department including annual performance management appraisals of staff and leave arrangements.
- Manage the Heritage Council internship programme ensuring that all commitment to the Heritage Council are met.
- Support the integration of conservation records into the museum's Collections Management System.
- Identify, advise on, and oversee research projects and make a personal contribution to the Chester Beatty's research reputation.

- Maintain an active research profile for the Conservation Department via publications, social media and the Chester Beatty Conservation blog.
- Make recommendations regarding objects proposed for acquisition, exhibition and loan, including review of facilities reports from borrowing institutions.
- Play a key role on the Emergency Response Team to ensure maintenance of an effective disaster/emergency response and recovery plan to ensure the museum is well prepared to deal with a potential emergency situation.
- Participate in relevant annual audits and ensure the implementation of the Internal Audit recommendations relating to Collection Care.
- See opportunities for funding to support objectives and develop and submit project and research applications in accordance with the Chester Beatty's priorities, working closely with the Head of Collections, Head of Development and Director. Identify grant and other funding opportunities and working closely with the Head of Collections, Head of Development and Director in submitting successful bids.
- Train and provide guidance for staff in materials and object handling, preservation decision-making and physical care workflow.
- Co-ordinate preventive care, including collection storage initiatives and rehousing, Integrated Pest Management and environmental monitoring programmes.
- Contribute to the development of public engagement activities at the Chester Beatty, including volunteer training and the Friends programme.
- Develop and maintain collaborative relationships with local, national, and international contacts, groups and networks.
- Ensure the museum is compliant with its management of hazardous materials in the Conservation Laboratory.
- Represent the Chester Beatty, chairing, participating in meetings, disseminating outcomes and, where appropriate, building external relationships and partnerships.
- Perform other duties as assigned by the Head of Collections and/or Director.

Skills, Knowledge and Experience:

Essential Requirements:

- The minimum requirement for the post is the possession of a postgraduate university degree in conservation.
- A minimum of five years' experience in a conservation role at supervisory/management level with proven leadership and people management skills, particularly the ability to delegate, empower, motivate and support team members to achieve agreed goals and to create a culture of engagement and collegiality.
- Able to demonstrate extensive practical conservation experience in an area relevant to the Chester Beatty collections.
- A proven research profile in an area relevant to the Chester Beatty collections.

- Understanding of the ethical issues associated with collections care.
- Excellent verbal, written and interpersonal skills and an ability to act as an effective advocate for Conservation both within the Chester Beatty as well as with stakeholders nationally and internationally.
- Developed national and international professional network.
- Ability to demonstrate knowledge or understanding of new developments in conservation and new and emerging research trends and methodologies.
- Experience of successfully exploring and developing collaborations with the museum, library, archive and/or academic sectors.
- Excellent organisational skills and ability to manage day-to-day operational activities as well as project work.
- Experience of effectively overseeing the delivery of projects and managing complex workloads and to meet deadlines under pressure.
- Experience of budgetary or financial management and risk management.
- Expert knowledge of conservation history, ethics and methodology.
- Advanced knowledge of preservation issues in cultural institutions and international best practice.
- Knowledge of relevant professional standards, codes of ethics and practice, and relevant Health and Safety standards.
- Good computer skills and experience with Axiell or a comparable collection management system are necessary.
- Eligible to work in Ireland.

Desirable:

- Experience of emergency planning and disaster preparedness
- Knowledge of the Irish language

Salary

In line with Department of Public Expenditure and Reform regulations and guidelines on public service pay, the salary for this position will differ for new entrants from outside the Irish public/civil service and for existing Irish civil/public servants.

New Entrants outside the Irish public/civil service:

An incremental salary scale applies and all new entrants from outside the Irish public/civil service will be required to commence employment at the minimum point of the scale which is €70,504 per annum. They will also be required to join the Single Public Service Pension Scheme.

Existing Irish public/civil servants:

For existing Irish public/civil servants, the salary scale of €67,079 to €75,740 applies, subject to approval of the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform.

Annual Leave

The annual leave allowance will be 29 working days a year, subject to the usual conditions regarding the granting of annual leave, is on the basis of a five day week and is exclusive of the usual public holidays.

Conditions

- The post will be subject to satisfactory Garda clearance, a medical check and a probationary period of one year.
- This is a full-time position which will average 43.25 hours gross/35 hours net per week.

Application Instructions

To apply, interested candidates should submit a cover letter expressing interest in the position and outlining relevant experience, together with a complete curriculum vitae and the names and contact information (mail, e-mail and telephone numbers) of three professional references by email to Mary Corless, HR Manager at personnel@cbl.ie with “Head of Conservation” in the subject line.

Closing date for receipt of applications is 5pm on Wednesday 31 May, 2023

Canvassing will disqualify.

Referees will not be contacted until the search committee has informed the candidate of doing so.

The Chester Beatty is an equal opportunities employer.

We welcome applications from people with disabilities and can make arrangements to accommodate candidates with disabilities at interviews.

General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) came into force on the 25th May 2018, replacing the existing data protection framework under the EU Data Protection Directive. When you submit an application for a recruitment competition with Chester Beatty, we record your name and contact details. Information submitted with a job application is used in processing your application. Where the services of a third party are used in processing your application, it may be required to provide them with information, however all necessary precautions will be taken to ensure the security of your data. To make a request to access your personal data please submit your request by email to: dataprotection@cbl.ie ensuring that you describe the records you seek in the greatest possible detail to enable us to identify the relevant record(s). The Chester Beatty Privacy Policy can be found on the website at [The Chester Beatty Library – Privacy Policy | Chester Beatty](#)

Please note: All data received relating to the application will be held in line with the museum’s record retention and data protection policies.