Skills, Learning and Innovation

Conservation is a highly skilled and cross-disciplinary practice that links the arts, humanities, social science, science and technology. It delivers fundamental skills and learning, contributing to education, the advancement of knowledge and innovation across sectors.

The Message	The Evidence
▪ An education in conservation contributes to a future-proof workforce through a high level of professional training and the delivery of creative and crafts skills.	78% of professional conservators hold at least one degree, with 46% holding postgraduate qualifications. 1 The least automatable occupations require professional training, with a high portion of creative jobs being resistant to automation. 2
▪ Conservation delivers skills in maths and technical education, helping to address the national shortage of STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths) skills.	A portion of conservation higher education is delivered through BSc and MSc courses, while entry requirements for conservation apprenticeships emphasise science subjects. 3 The government's Industrial Strategy outlines the need to tackle shortages of STEM skills for a range of industries from manufacturing to the arts. 4
▪ Conservation preserves the source material of our future artists and cultural professionals, driving innovation across the arts and creative industries.	The Heritage Alliance's Inspiring Creativity, Heritage & The Creative Industries report illustrates the ways in which heritage underpins the success of the creative industries. 5
▪ The sector's predominantly female workforce stands as an example for women in the sciences, encouraging greater gender parity within the field.	65% of professional conservators are women, compared to the 22% in core STEM occupations nationally. 6

THE INSTITUTE OF CONSERVATION

The Objective

We will

- Showcase the multidisciplinary nature of conservation and advocate its benefits to learning and skills delivery.
- Promote the broad range of exciting careers within the cultural heritage sector.
- Research and investigate the skills of the conservation workforce.
- Diversify those participating in conservation practice and the profession.
- Advocate for higher salaries and more realistic job adverts that reflect the skills and training of conservators.

We urge decision makers to

- Protect the infrastructure of conservation education through support for alternative entry routes and vocal backing for higher education conservation courses.
- Support a sustainable workforce by funding projects that build sector capacity, develop skills and deliver diversity.
- Establish parity between STEM and creative subjects in national curricula.

The Evidence

1. Aitchison, 2013. Universities UK, 2018.
2. Solving Future Skills Challenges. Available online at: https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/policy-and-analysis/reports/Documents/2018/solving-future-skills-challenges.pdf ;Nesta, 2013. The Future of Skills Employment in 2030 Available online at: https://media.nesta.org.uk/documents/the_future_of_skills_employment_in_2030_0.pdf
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6. Aitchison, 2013.; Wise Campaign, 2018. 2018 Workforce Statistics. Available online at: https://www.wisecampaign.org.uk/statistics/2018-workforce-statistics/