

Job Description

Job title:	Researcher (Skills at Risk)
Salary:	£30,000 pro-rata
Contract:	Fixed term, until 30 November 2027
Hours:	Part-time, 21 hours across the week (0.6 FTE)
Location:	Hybrid or Remote working considered

About Icon

Icon, the Institute of Conservation, is a charity and professional membership body dedicated to safeguarding cultural heritage and promoting the value of conservation. Its vision is to protect, preserve, and promote cultural heritage by cultivating skilled professionals, encouraging collaboration, and delivering public benefit through engagement and advocacy.

Icon's mission is to represent and support the conservation profession by promoting its public value and upholding high standards and ethics in practice.

With nearly 2,300 members - including conservators, scientists, educators, and others - Icon connects professionals across all disciplines. Its 28 specialist groups run active programmes of lectures, training, and events, ensuring access to expert knowledge and passionate practitioners dedicated to preserving the physical remains of our past.

Skills at Risk Project

There is growing concern that vital heritage skills are at risk, threatening our ability to protect and preserve cultural heritage. Many skills already exist on a knife edge, with so few practitioners that even small losses could have major impacts. Without a clear understanding of which skills are most at risk, we risk losing them unnoticed.

Icon has led a partnership of heritage bodies to develop a methodology for a comprehensive skills audit, identifying where the greatest risks lie. With support from the Pilgrim Trust, Icon is now applying this methodology to the conservation workforce through an 18-month research project to map and understand the full range of skills across the sector. This data will be vital to underpin the development of training programmes and support our advocacy efforts for the conservation sector.

About the role

The Researcher will play a key role in delivering and disseminating Icon's Conservation Skills at Risk research project. Working closely with Icon staff and partners, the postholder will gather, analyse, and interpret data to build a detailed picture of skills across the conservation workforce.

The role will contribute directly to shaping future training initiatives and sector advocacy by providing evidence-based insights into where skills are most vulnerable and where support is most needed.

The post-holder will have responsibility for the operational delivery of the research and will report to the Policy and Programmes Director.

Specific duties include:

- Implement the established research methodology to collect quantitative and qualitative data on conservation skills across the UK.
- Coordinate and carry out surveys and support the development of practice-specific steering groups to inform and validate the research.
- Monitor response rates and undertake targeted follow-up to ensure representative participation across disciplines and regions.
- Maintain accurate and well-organised research records, ensuring data integrity and compliance with data protection requirements.
- Analyse data to identify patterns, trends, and gaps in the distribution of skills within the conservation workforce.
- Synthesise findings to produce clear, evidence-based insights on areas of greatest risk or need.
- Work collaboratively with colleagues to interpret results in the context of wider sector developments and workforce trends.
- Work closely with Icon members and special interest groups, to build relationships and engagement in the project.
- Draft high-quality written outputs, including interim and final reports, executive summaries, and case studies.
- Contribute to public communications such as blog posts, articles, and presentations for sector events or stakeholder briefings
- Support dissemination of the research findings.
- Work closely with the Policy and Programmes Director to ensure project milestones are achieved on time and within scope.

Person Specification

Training, experience and qualifications	
Essential: • Experience of research or evaluation using qualitative and quantitative methods.	Desirable: • Experience of working in the heritage sector.
Knowledge and skills	
Essential: • Strong analytical skills, comfortable working with data and writing up findings. • Excellent written and verbal communication skills; ability to summarise complex information clearly for non-specialist audiences.	Desirable: • Understanding of the conservation sector training and skills landscape.

• Understanding of Microsoft Office applications applied to data analysis and interpretation. • Organisation and project management skills; ability to prioritise and work to deadlines.	
Other	
Essential: • Demonstrates diplomacy, discretion, and professionalism in all interactions. • Able to work collaboratively and build positive relationships with a wide range of colleagues, including volunteers. • Works effectively and constructively as part of a small team, adapting to changing priorities and organisational needs. • Flexible and open to learning, with a willingness to develop new skills and approaches.	Desirable: • Passion for the heritage sector

To apply: Please visit Icon's website to download the application form for this role. If there are any reasonable adjustments that we can make to support your application for this post, please email recruitment@icon.org.uk.

Application Deadline: 5 December 2025, 10am.

Interview Date: 16 December 2025.

Professional Development: As an organisation committed to championing conservation and supporting the careers of our conservator and heritage professional members, we are equally committed to supporting Icon staff with continuing professional development through both access to Icon training opportunities and external development opportunities.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: Being inclusive is one of our core values. As an organisation Icon values diversity and recognises that the broad range of backgrounds, experiences, views, beliefs and cultures represented within our staff, trustees and membership greatly enhances our organisation. Icon is therefore committed to supporting, developing and promoting equality, diversity and inclusion in all its activities. We aim to ensure that opportunities are open to all those who are passionate about caring for heritage.