WEST DEAN COLLEGE

Conservation of Metalwork

Postgraduate Diploma Programme

Programme Summary	
Awarding body	University of Sussex
Teaching institution	West Dean College
Programme title	Conservation of Metalwork
Final award / FHEQ level	Postgraduate Diploma / level 7
Mode of study	Full-time, 36 weeks
Programme Leader	Matthew Read
Programme Tutor	Jon Privett
External reference points/benchmarks	The UK Quality Code for Higher Education Chapter A1 Qualification Descriptor for Level 7 Subject Benchmarks Statements: • Archaeology • Art and design • History of art, architecture and design Institute of Conservation PACR Standards
Entry Criteria	Successful completion of West Dean's Graduate Diploma in Conservation of Metalwork, or appropriate relevant experience, or a good first degree in a relevant subject. English language: CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages) Level B2 or IELTS 6.5.

Programme Aims

The aims of the programme are to provide:

Practical

1. A context for the analysis, assessment and treatment of museum-class metalwork objects
2. The opportunity to develop sophisticated specialist craft and conservation skills
3. A research environment for the development and public dissemination of innovative approaches to the conservation of historic metalwork objects

Theoretical

1. The opportunity to contribute to the development of historical, cultural and technical understanding of metalwork objects through primary research and investigation
2. The opportunity to evaluate methodologies, develop critiques and propose new hypotheses
3. A context for individual inquiry and group debate across the conservation specialisms
4.

Professional

1. A context for the development of a range of verbal, written and visual skills appropriate for the communication and documentation of conservation projects and research
2. A context for the development of, and critical reflection upon, personal and professional codes of practice
3. Opportunities to plan and implement a range of projects that are either increasingly technically more complex, or have issues that are of a compounded or more complex nature

Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of the programme students have

Practical

- The ability to independently handle, assess and make reasoned proposals for the treatment of complex historic metalwork objects
- A sophisticated and fluent competence in a range of materials, techniques and skills for the conservation of metalwork objects
- The ability to contribute to current research and technical innovation in the conservation of metalwork

Theoretical

- The ability to investigate and interpret metalwork objects within historic, cultural and technical contexts using an advanced understanding of underlying concepts and competence in primary research
- The ability to critically evaluate theories, apply ethical reasoning and propose new hypotheses
- An advanced understanding of materials science and chemistry as applied to the analysis and treatment of metalwork objects

Professional

- The ability to independently generate comprehensive research and project documentation to a professional standard
- Developed informed professional attitudes including awareness of currently accepted codes of practice and the relevance of continued professional development
- Developed the ability for informed and reasoned decision making in relation to complex, conflicting or high risk professional situations

Alignment to External Reference Points

The programme is aligned with QAA and FHEQ frameworks and professional models of good practice as set out by ICON. Programme Advisors drawn from industry input into programme design and comment on the quality of work and employability. Through live project work students are exposed to a range of professionals, institutions and models of good practice within the arena of conservation.

Programme Structure

Postgraduate Diploma – Programme Diagram

Semester 1(18 weeks)				Semester 2 (18 weeks)			
Study Block 1	Formative Review/ Christmas Vacation	Study Block 2	Stage Assessment	Study Block 3	Formative Review/ Easter Vacation	Study Block4	Final Assessment
Unit ME PG1A – Extending Practice - 45 credits				Unit ME PG2A – Professional Practice - 45 credits			
Unit PG1A – Science Analysis – 10 credits				Unit PG2B – Professional Perspectives – 15 credits			
Unit PG1C –Research Methods for Conservation– 5 credits							

Programme Units

- ME-PG1A: Extending Practice
- PG1B: Science Analysis
- PG1C: Research Methods for Conservation
- ME-PG2A: Professional Practice
- PG2B: Professional Perspectives

Distinctive Programme Features

- Students learn through working on real objects of historic significance
- Students are exposed to a range of metalworking and allied experiences through lectures, live projects, visiting practitioners and study tours
- Immersive environment encourages joint learning and interdisciplinary practice
- Students are given opportunities to build professional contacts and networks
- Workshops are open seven days a week, 07.00 to 22.00, giving extended opportunities for practical work
- The programme has a low student to staff ratio
- Staff have a broad range of professional metalsmithing experience from commercial to museum and heritage contexts
- The historic collection within West Dean house provides an ideal environment for students to engage in collections care activity
- The broadly creative mission of the College overall provides an additionally inspiring element of the learning environment.

Learning and Teaching – methods and strategy

West Dean is committed to providing a distinctive, high quality teaching and learning environment for practice-led study and research. A rigorous teaching and learning environment is in place to nurture a deep engagement with practice and its integration with historical, theoretical, cultural and contextual frameworks. Teaching and learning activities and associated resources aim to provide every student with an equal and effective opportunity to achieve intended learning outcomes. On successful completion of their programme of study, West Dean students become practically accomplished, theoretically aware and professionally autonomous practitioners.

Our continuing priorities are to:

- Provide students with opportunities to learn and develop their skills through working on a range of very high quality, often museum-class objects.

- Further develop practice-led study and research within a stimulating and creative cultural environment.
- Promote the integration of theory and practice where each is tested and informed by the other.
- Increase opportunities for students to engage in professional practice through engagement with live projects involving liaison with clients.
- Enhance and further develop a range of specialist learning resources.
- Support staff development by encouraging opportunities to engage in high-profile consultancy and research projects.

At Postgraduate Diploma level students are expected to work more independently; to assume a certain level of autonomy; and to engage in personal research.

In Metalwork, emphasis is placed on developing skills through a wide range of conservation projects. As well as ensuring students have the opportunity to develop their technical ability across a range of metals this provides the opportunity to develop project management skills.

Subject specific resources include a main workshop with individual bench space, a forge and foundry equipped for soldering, brazing and welding, and a tool room. There is a laboratory designed for the safe use and storage of chemicals and a machine shop with lathe, drills, saws and grinders.

Practical Experience & Work Placement

Students:

- Initially, undertake a range of bespoke practical exercises to further develop bench craft and machine tool skills
- Continue to build a portfolio of work in the form of a range of treatment to historic clocks
- May negotiate a work placement of up to six weeks duration (not mandatory). Previous work placements have included the British Museum and Victoria and Albert Museum.
- Have the opportunity to contribute to research and consultancy projects
- May undertake a 6-week (optional) work placement in a professional public or private commercial conservation workshop. Supervisors are experienced professionals, almost all whom are accredited conservators

Assessment – methods and strategy

The course is assessed continually as the practical based education allows for a constant feedback loop to be established and flourish. Aside from the practical work students will be expected to record their work in a variety of formats which are the accepted norm in contemporary conservation practice. Essays and research are an important part of the programme and are submitted for assessment at the end of each block of study. The overall strategy of assessment is to enable the students to synthesise a multi-

stranded, structured and professional attitude to their work which combines all three practical, theoretical and professional domains.

- Work is assessed on a continuous basis independently by at least two members of staff (normally the programme and associate tutors). This assessment is fed to students informally on an on-going basis through discussion and formally at assessment and review points (mid-term and final assessments)
- Assessors use a pro-forma prompt sheet to ensure amongst the range and elements of work required is assessed consistently
- Essay work is assessed independently and graded according to the assessment definitions
- All assessment is formalised in grades as set out in the assessment definitions
- Assessment is reviewed and moderated by the external examiner