

## Conservation of Furniture and Related Objects

### Graduate Diploma Programme

Programme Summary	
Awarding body	University of Sussex
Teaching institution	West Dean College
Programme title	Conservation of Furniture and Related Materials
Final award / FHEQ level	Graduate Diploma / level 6
Mode of study	Full-time, 36 weeks
Programme Leader	David Dorning
Programme Tutor	Norbert Gutowski
External reference points/benchmarks	<p>The UK Quality Code for Higher Education Chapter A1 Qualification Descriptor Level 6 Subject Benchmarks Statements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Archaeology</li> <li>• Art and design</li> <li>• History of art, architecture and design</li> </ul> <p>The Institute for Conservation Professional Standards</p>
Criteria for admission to the programme	<p>Degree or qualification at equivalent level to a second year of undergraduate study, e.g. HND, DipHE, and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experience and ability in woodworking skills</li> <li>• A demonstrable knowledge of and interest in Furniture</li> <li>• English language: CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages) Level B2 or IELTS 6.5.</li> </ul>

## Programme Aims

The aims of the programme are to provide:

### Practical

1. A context for the analysis, assessment and treatment of historic furniture and related objects
2. The opportunity to develop high level applied craft and conservation skills
3. A research environment for the development of innovative approaches to the conservation of furniture and related objects

### Theoretical

1. An introduction to the historic development of furniture in relation to cultural and contextual contexts
2. An introduction to the methods of research and analysis used within the discipline
3. A context for individual inquiry and informed debate across conservation specialisms

### Professional

1. A context for the development of a range of verbal, writing and visual skills appropriate for the documentation and communication of relevant conservation information
2. An introduction to the personal and professional standards of conservation practice and the ethical treatment of objects congruent with national and international policy and practice.
3. Opportunities to plan and implement real projects for a range of clients and contexts

## Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of the programme students have:

### Practical

- The ability to handle, assess and propose treatments for a range of typical conservation problems found in furniture and related objects
- Knowledge of and ability to apply a comprehensive range of materials, techniques and skills, informed by historic and contemporary practice, to furniture conservation problems
- Knowledge of current research and technical developments to underpin a repertoire of approaches to the conservation of furniture

### Theoretical

- The ability to identify and understand furniture and related objects within historic, cultural and contextual contexts
- The ability to test and inform practice through theory and vice versa
- Demonstrated an understanding of areas of science and technology appropriate for application to the analysis, interpretation and treatment of furniture and related objects

### Professional

- The ability to generate documentation consistent with professional practice relating to their work
- Developed an understanding of ethics, standards and continuous professional development in relation to the practice of conservation
- Begun to develop a professionally-informed and independent decision making framework relating to the conservation of historic objects

## Alignment to External Reference Points

The programme is aligned with QAA and FHEQ frameworks and models of good practice. It is also aligned to the standards of Icon, the lead body for UK conservation professionals. The programme design and student work is overseen by Programme Advisors and professionals drawn from the conservation profession. Students are exposed to a range of professional influences and models of good practice in both public and private sectors.

## Programme Structure

Graduate Diploma – Programme Diagram

Semester 1 (18 weeks)				Semester 2 (18 weeks)			
Term 1	Formative Review/ Christmas Vacation	Term 2	Stage Assessment	Term 2	Formative Review/ Easter Vacation	Term 3	Final Assessment
Study Block 1		Study Block 2		Study Block 3		Study Block 4	
Unit FU G1A– Induction - 30 credits		Unit FU G2A– Development 1 – 15 credits		Unit FU G3A – Development 2 – 15 credits		Unit FU G4A – Consolidation and Reflection – 30 credits	
Unit G1B – Science Induction – 10 credits				Unit G3B – Science Development – 10 credits			
Unit G1C – Contextual and Professional Studies 1 – 5 credits				Unit G3C – Contextual and Professional Studies 2 – 5 credits			

## Distinctive Programme Features

- Students learn through working on real objects of historic significance
- Students are exposed to a range of objects 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 furniture conservation experience from institutional to commercial heritage contexts

### 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. The College is also committed to continuous improvement of teaching and learning to nurture a deep engagement with practice and its integration with historical, theoretical, cultural and contextual frameworks. The College seeks to ensure that teaching and learning activities and associated resources provide every student with an equal and effective opportunity to achieve intended learning outcomes. Our overriding intention is that, 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 challenging and historically significant objects.
- 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, and discussion and liaison with staff and clients.
- Enhance and further develop a range of specialist learning resources.
- Support staff development by encouraging opportunities to engage in consultancy and research projects.

At Graduate Diploma level students are supported by intensive tuition, constructive supervision of practical work, focussed lectures, technical demonstrations and visits.

In Furniture, students develop their knowledge and experience of historic woodworking techniques and surface treatments through exercises and making projects alongside developing their skills in a range of conservation treatments on existing objects.

Subject specific resources include a dedicated workshop where each student has an individual workspace. The workshop is equipped with a full range of power and hand tools. Additionally, there is a specialist machine tool work shop and finishing room. There is a materials store with specialist materials,

an extensive timber collection and wide range of decorative finishes.

## Practical Experience

Students:

- Initially, undertake a range of bespoke practical exercises to further develop skills in historic woodworking techniques and decorative finishes
- Build a portfolio of work in the form of a range of furniture conservation projects working with real objects and liaising with clients as appropriate
- Have the opportunity to contribute to research and consultancy projects. Current projects include furniture from the Wallace Collection

## Assessment – methods and strategy

Work is assessed on a continuous basis by tutorial staff, and comments are fed to students informally on an on-going basis through discussion. At assessment and review points the process of continuous assessment is consolidated and two staff members, normally the programme leader and an associate tutor, who independently assess and agree on student grades for units of study.

Assessors refer to the published units of study, which are available to students, to ensure a consistent range of the elements of work required is assessed.

Some aspects of student development are assessed through submitted assignments, presentations, or examinations; as detailed in the units of study.

All assessment is formalised in the form of grades, as set out in the assessment definitions.

Assessment is reviewed and moderated by the external examiner.