Conservation of Metalwork

Graduate Diploma Programme

Programme Summary	
Awarding body	University of Sussex
Teaching institution	West Dean College
Programme title	Conservation of Metalwork
Final award / FHEQ level	Graduate Diploma / level 6
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 Subject Benchmarks Statements: • Archaeology • Art and design • History of art, architecture and design Institute of Conservation PACR Standards
Criteria for admission to the programme	Degree or qualification at equivalent level to a second year of undergraduate study, e.g. HND, DipHE, and significant interest in historic metalwork. 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 real historic objects
2. The opportunity to develop high level applied craft and conservation skills in metalwork
3. A research environment for the development of innovative approaches to the conservation and restoration of historic metalwork objects

Theoretical

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

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
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/contexts

Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of the programme students have

Practical

- The ability to handle, assess and make proposals for the treatment of a range of historic metalwork objects
- Knowledge of and ability to apply a comprehensive range of materials, techniques and skills related to historic trade practices to metalwork objects
- Knowledge of current research and technical developments that inform contemporary approaches to the conservation of metalwork objects

Theoretical

- The ability to identify and understand metalwork objects within historic, cultural and technical contexts
- The ability to test and inform practice through theory and vice versa
- Demonstrated an understanding of materials science and chemistry as applied to the analysis

and interpretation of metalwork objects

Professional

- The ability to generate supporting documentation relating to their work consistent with professional practice
- Developed an understanding of ethics, standards and self-development in relation to the professional practice of conservation
- Begun to develop a professional 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 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

Graduate 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 G1A – Induction - 30 credits		Unit ME G2A – Development 1 – 15 credits		Unit ME G3A – Development 2 – 15 credits		Unit ME 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 historic metalwork objects and allied experiences through lectures, live projects, visiting practitioners, site work 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

Learning and Teaching – methods and strategy

The majority of teaching and learning is based in the Metalwork conservation studio. Students are encouraged to develop their skills at their own pace by utilising the generous workshop opening hours. Alongside the traditional methods of lectures and seminars students are encouraged to develop their reflective practice in learning portfolios and daybooks. Feedback is an essential part of the process and aside from weekly one to one tutorials the essentially practical nature of the studio based work provides good opportunity for demonstrations and skills sessions. The immediacy of haptic feedback and practical based learning allows for students to fluently acquire, practice and apply new skills in order to develop solutions for old problems. 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 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 Graduate Diploma level, students are supported by intensive tuition; careful supervision of practical work; focussed lectures; technical demonstrations; and outside visits.

In Metalwork, emphasis is placed on developing making skills across a range of key metalwork traditions including iron, pewter, copper alloys and silver. Projects are balanced between producing new artefacts and working on existing objects.

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

- The Course content allows for 75% of the scheduled working week to be spent in the studio. Graduate Diploma students work through a series of practical assignments and exercises designed to challenge and inform all levels of experience and prior knowledge.
- A week spent on working on site with peers offers an often unbeatable insight into the professional processes that a contracting conservator would undertake as part of employment in the marketplace.
- Have the opportunity to contribute to research and consultancy projects. Current projects include the Pyke Clock metalwork fittings from Temple Newsome and two bronze cannon from HMS Victory

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 tutor and Associate Tutor).
Assessors use a pro-forma prompt sheet to ensure a consistent range of elements of work required is assessed,
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.