

- BSc Conservation of Objects in Museums and Archaeology
- MSc Professional Conservation
- Msc Conservation Practice
- MSc Care of Collections
- MPhil Conservation
- PhD Conservation

Department of Archaeology and Conservation

School of History, Archaeology and Religion, Cardiff University

Cardiff Conservation Degrees



Cardiff University and the School of History, Archaeology and Religion

Cardiff University is one of Britain's major teaching and research universities. Located in the centre of the capital city of Wales, it has an international reputation for the quality of its work that attracts staff and students from around the world.

Conservation is located in the Archaeology and Conservation Department within the School of History, Archaeology and Religion.



Cardiff School of History, Archaeology and Religion is home to four Departments: Ancient History, Archaeology & Conservation, History & Welsh History and Religious Studies & Theology. The School brings together 60 academic staff and around 800 undergraduates and 200 postgraduates in the Humanities Building, next to the Arts and Social Studies Library, and just a short walk from the heart of the capital.

The Cardiff Archaeological Conservation BSc was the first degree scheme of its kind in the UK. For 30 years conservation staff at Cardiff have helped develop and shape the conservation profession and its research output. Cardiff graduates now work in many national organisations and teach, conserve and manage in institutions internationally across the world. Details of graduate employment can be supplied on request. Students come from around the world to study conservation in Cardiff and have included citizens of Norway, Greece, Saudi Arabia, Ireland, Canada, Kenya, Australia, China, USA and Japan.

The School has invested extensively in analytical facilities to support the investigation and preservation of archaeological and historical materials.

Our modern laboratories are well equipped with a range of specialist research equipment including infra-red spectroscopy, X-radiography, X-ray diffraction, analytical scanning electron microscopy and an environmentally controlled chamber for the study of decay processes. Students have workstations equipped with stereomicroscopes and are encouraged to submit samples for analysis as part of their assessed work. A digital imaging studio allows students to learn about digital photo editing and use that to record their work to professional standards.

Here is what the papers say about us

'Cardiff seems to have it all: grand civic architecture in a breezy waterside location, super-smart city bars and venues just a short hop from lovely countryside. The university is as confident and forward-looking as the city it's located in, and has an excellent reputation for the quality of its teaching and research. Almost 60% of its research is ranked as world-leading and it is a member of the Russell group of leading research universities. There are approximately 27,000 students, including more than 3,000 from over 100 countries outside the UK, helping to create a vibrant, cosmopolitan community.'

The Guardian 8 June 2010

'An audit by the Quality Assurance Agency complimented the university on its 'powerful academic vision and well-developed and effectively articulated mission to achieve excellence in teaching and research'. Student support services, including counselling facilities and the help offered to dyslexics, were among the features singled out for praise. Cardiff has done well in the first four National Student Surveys. In 2008, students were particularly satisfied with the learning resources and academic support available to them.'

Times online May 31 2009

Contacts

Information on Cardiff and the university for prospective students can be found at www.cardiff.ac.uk/for/prospective/index.html

For more information on our degrees contact the Admissions Tutor for Conservation.

E-mail:
conservationugadmissions@cardiff.ac.uk

Tel: +44 (0)29 2087 4259

Which Degree is for Me?



BSc Conservation of Objects in Museums and Archaeology is ideal either for those starting out in a conservation career from school or making a career change. The three-year course begins at a basic level and combines science, practical skills, ethics and aesthetics into a balanced understanding of conservation practice. Students already possessing a relevant degree can opt to study the course in two years. Graduates from Cardiff have a reputation for being competent conservation practitioners.

MSc in Conservation Practice is a two year Masters programme offering graduates the opportunity to train as professional conservators equipped to operate in museum and heritage sectors. Teaching encompasses both theoretical and practical skills. Using heritage objects students learn how to conserve and care for material from museums, archaeological sites, historic houses, churches and other cultural heritage collections. The degree focus offers maximum flexibility

for students within the job market that exists in the heritage sector.

MSc Care of Collections is suited to students with a conservation background who wish to broaden their knowledge and those who wish to enter the heritage sector with a focus on collections. Students without a conservation background are routed through the degree via essential underpinning materials science. All students study planning and design for collections care within buildings, projects or systems.

MSc Professional Conservation is designed for those who already have a conservation degree. Many students come directly from their undergraduate degree, while others take time out to gain professional experience. The degree enhances student research skills and develops their professional practice in areas such as estimating conservation tasks and laboratory design. Although there is no hands-on conservation

element, there is the opportunity to gain practical experience with analytical equipment. Students are expected to be competent conservation practitioners before entering the course.

MPhil & PhD Conservation options are for students with research interest in conservation or conservation science. Any degree relevant to the research subject is acceptable provided it meets the quality required for research success. Students interested in these degrees should contact the admissions tutor for more information.

Field trips and placements

Students on the BSc and MSc conservation practice spend at least eight weeks on placement within professionally run laboratories. Staff help students to find a place and a small grant is available towards living costs. Recent placements included: English Heritage; Museum of London; Royal Armouries in Leeds; Newport Ship project; Imperial War Museum, Bristol Museum and The National Museum Wales.

Field trips are linked to several undergraduate and postgraduate modules. Students may find themselves exploring the ss Great Britain in Bristol or the Mary Rose in Portsmouth or clambering behind the scenes in the air conditioning plant of the National Museum Wales.

Postgraduates on the Care of Collections course spend time in museums with seminars and exercises in Swansea Museum, National Museum Wales and the

Cynon Valley Museum. Those studying conservation analysis modules may even find themselves trying their hands at blacksmithing in a real smithy.

Teaching and learning

At Cardiff we put a high value on students understanding the links between underpinning theoretical knowledge and practical outcomes for artefacts or projects. At undergraduate level students experience a mixture of formal lecturing, seminars and supervised laboratory work on artefacts from museums and excavations. Students produce coursework in a variety of different forms that include posters, leaflets for the public and analytical reports.

Students are encouraged to develop conservation treatments by bringing together research, knowledge from lectures, object examination and sharing expertise with their peers. Students are then encouraged to reflect on their own

practical outcomes and develop their professional critique with input from staff.

At postgraduate level students are expected to take an active role in the learning process. With support from staff, postgraduate students take independent action to develop their own ideas and communicate their thoughts and questions to staff and peers. Teaching and assessment are based on verbal communication, discussion groups, reports and essays, as well as an in-depth dissertation.

Cardiff's interactive approach to teaching demands that we limit the number of students admitted to the degree in any one year but this allows us to work intensively with small groups of students.

Bursaries and grants

For the latest information on scholarships and bursaries follow the links from our web page: www.cardiff.ac.uk/share/archaeology/study.html

Frequently Asked Questions

Views from current and past students

By choosing to study conservation in Cardiff you will have a range of questions, many of which can be answered by the information on the web pages.

To supplement this we offer the views of existing and past students by asking them to answer some of the most frequently asked questions.



How big a change is university from school?

Claire from Manchester writes...

When I started at Cardiff on the conservation degree I was concerned not only about the leap from A-levels to degree standard, but about my year break from studying and learning. I needn't have worried; the degree, though undoubtedly a step up from A-levels, involved learning how to think and communicate in a new, analytical way, making the work feel entirely different to what I had experienced before. The department staff, from lecturers to technicians, are supportive and encouraging. They take time to make sure any concerns or problems you have are listened to. The department is small, welcoming and friendly. There is always somebody around to help you out!

I really enjoyed my years at Cardiff and the course has certainly set me on my way in my chosen career. It continues to provide me with not only mentoring and support, but also good friends, even after graduating.

How easy is it to adjust as an overseas student

Hege from Norway writes...

Cardiff has a large international student population and is used to receiving students from abroad. Most practical things are relatively easily sorted; both the university and the Students Union provide a lot of help and advice if needed. There are also plenty of networks so it's easy to get in touch with people.

When I arrived in Cardiff I had already studied for a few years at university in Norway but the methods of teaching and examination in the UK are very different from what I was used to. The exams are short and intense where you're required to write an essay in an hour, which is tough if you're not very confident in the language. However, the marks in the first year of a bachelor degree do not count towards the final degree marks. So you basically have a year to get used to the

system and improve your language skills.

The course programme includes a lot of theory and lab work also takes up a lot of your time, so managing your time is challenging. What I found was the best thing about the Cardiff conservation course is its flexibility. There is some space for each student to focus on what he/she is most interested in.

I am in no doubt that going abroad to study conservation was one of the best decisions I've ever made. I gained immensely in terms of knowledge and positive experiences by learning and living in a new setting, and meeting people from all over the world.

What is it like being a direct entry student?

Erin from Canada writes...

I am glad that I took the direct entry option into this program. I think if I had done the program in three years, the first year would not have been challenging enough. The money I saved by doing the program in two years instead of three more than made up for the extra work and deadlines. The first few weeks of practical work was very scary. Taking it slow at the start and reading everything in sight seems to be the best way to proceed. I found that other students are the best resource around you because they've felt the same way in their first year and have much more experience with objects than I did. The first year laboratory classes are great because you can get away with asking stupid questions the second years aren't really supposed to ask. I also liked that I was familiar with people in all three years of the program, instead of just my year. The extra lecture courses are science related and I found them easy to keep up with, as that is my background. I found the trickiest time of the course was Christmas of the first year as there are deadlines from all angles. My advice to new direct entry students is to take advantage of every offer of help because you need to learn a lot in the first year. Fortunately, the tutors and instructors are patient and understand that you may need a boost now and then. I have no regrets about doing the direct entry and



would recommend it to graduates with an understanding of science or applied arts.

Will it help me find a job?

Nadia from Greece writes...

Following an BSc in Cardiff I completed Cardiff University's MSc in Conservation in 2004, and I thought it was an interesting and challenging course. It was exactly what I wanted: highly scientific approaches to conservation combined with strong conservation ethics. The greatest advantage of this degree was that within the syllabus the course work could be tailored to the individual student's interests, which I believe is essential for any post-graduate study. I also appreciated the efforts of the academic and technical staff, who helped me access the facilities of the department, and were willing to be readily available to all students.

It is an intense degree which involves a lot of effort to complete. However, it is certain that it will provide all the academic background and the scientific knowledge for a successful conservation career. It was not until I entered the conservation field that I understood I could successfully undertake any conservation project that I was presented with, take part in scientific research and at the same time gain the respect of my professional colleagues. It helped me acquire enough experience to be confident to apply for any job, and so far never be rejected. This degree definitely aided my acceptance as a graduate intern at the Antiquities Department of the Getty Museum in Los

Angeles, a well-respected and world famous institution.

How much access do I have to equipment?

James from Devon writes...

Being an undergraduate student at Cardiff University Archaeological Conservation gave me the opportunity not just to learn current conservation practices, but most importantly to develop further critical thinking. Having the chance to be part of a department, which engages with scientific analysis in conservation and archaeology with the support of approachable academics from a range of fields within history, archaeology and conservation, allowed me to explore my personal interests.

Analytical facilities in the School are used by all conservation students. This enabled me to gain experience in the use of facilities such as electron microscopy, infrared spectroscopy, ceramic analysis and microphotography as an undergraduate; experience which is invaluable when looking for a job, or when thinking of continuing further with research in conservation or archaeological science.

Thinking about the educational opportunities that are offered in conservation I dare to say that this is a unique course because the available facilities and the blend of academics allow the students to explore their personal interests and their widest potential in the field of conservation,

conservation science and archaeological science in museums and archaeology. Overall it convinced me to stay in Cardiff for my PhD.

How hard is the science for the MSc in Collections Care?

Luci from Somerset writes...

I came onto the course from an humanities background and was more than a little apprehensive about the amount of scientific understanding which would be expected of me. Five months on and it's been hard work but I'm thoroughly enjoying it. I'd be lying if I said that science wasn't a major component of the course but it has been approached in a way that even I find manageable.

The science is all explained in a step by step way with books listed on the bibliography from basic to advanced levels. You can be almost certain that there will be people on the course who have a better knowledge of science than you, but it's important to remember that you are not in competition.

My peers and tutors have certainly been very reassuring and supportive. As far as essays are concerned, you only need to include as much science as you understand and as long as you can support your argument there are plenty of opportunities to pick up good marks.

I would definitely recommend the course to you, but you must be prepared to work hard and seek out resources if you don't understand.



About the Staff



Ilan Freestone gained his PhD in Earth Sciences before moving to the British Museum, where he became Deputy Keeper of the Department of Conservation and Science.

Ilan joined Cardiff as a research professor in September 2004. A specialist in early materials and technologies, he was awarded the Pomerance Medal of the Archaeological Institute of America for scientific contributions to archaeology in 2004.

Ilan is a specialist in microscopy and analysis and has worked widely on early technology and production. Currently he is applying trace element and isotopic analyses to the origins of artefacts. He is also directing a major research project into the composition and deterioration of stained glass, focussing on the Great East Window of York Minster.

Ilan has published extensively on the technology and origins of early ceramics and glass, dating from the Neolithic period to the eighteenth century and from across the ancient world.



Jane Henderson is a professional tutor and has worked for the National Museum of Wales, the Council of Museums in Wales, HLF and as a consultant for clients such as the National Maritime Museum, English Heritage and MLA.

She is active in the profession and is an assessor for accreditation, a member of the executive of the Welsh Federation of Museums and Galleries and is an accredited member of ICON and an elected Fellow of IIC.

Jane is interested in all aspects of preventive conservation especially emergency planning, environmental control, communication and influence techniques.

Publications include recent papers on access to collections for sampling with Yiota Manti, for IIC, editor of the Conservation Matters in Wales series, and a pamphlet for the National Preservation Office on managing the environment. Jane has produced many surveys and assessment of collections in Wales, including acting as consultant researcher with Phil Parkes on the Spotlight on Museums report published by the Welsh Assembly Government.



Panagiota (or Yiota) Manti is a lecturer in Heritage Science. She trained as a conservator (BSc Cardiff University) and archaeological scientist (MSc University of Oxford) and has worked with materials from excavations in Greece and Egypt. Her PhD research investigates surface finishes and patination of bronzes, focusing on 6th c. BC Greek helmets using analysis methods such as scanning electron microscopy, x-ray, neutron and synchrotron diffraction methods.

Yiota is interested in scientific methodology in the study of cultural heritage materials, relationships between manufacturing technology and decay of archaeological objects, and non-destructive analyses and examination methods used in conservation and archaeological science. Yiota has recently published papers on: scientific methodologies and analyses of bronze helmets; the technological study of ancient faience from Egypt; and access for analysis with Jane Henderson.



Phil Parkes' initial training was in archaeological conservation, gaining a BSc from Cardiff University in 1992. Phil is a fully accredited conservator with ICON.

He has worked for the National Museum and Galleries of Wales and held an internship from the Conservation Unit of the Museums and Galleries Commission working jointly for Newport Museum and Art Gallery and the Council of Museums in Wales. After this internship Phil was employed by Cardiff University to work on archaeological material from Cadw excavations.

Phil specialises in providing services in conservation of objects, collections care advice, analysis of artefacts using SEM, microscopy and x-ray techniques and in-situ work with archaeological sites, historic churches, buildings and monuments.

Publications include reports on the nature of Archaeological Archives in Wales in *The Museum Archaeologist* with Jane Henderson.

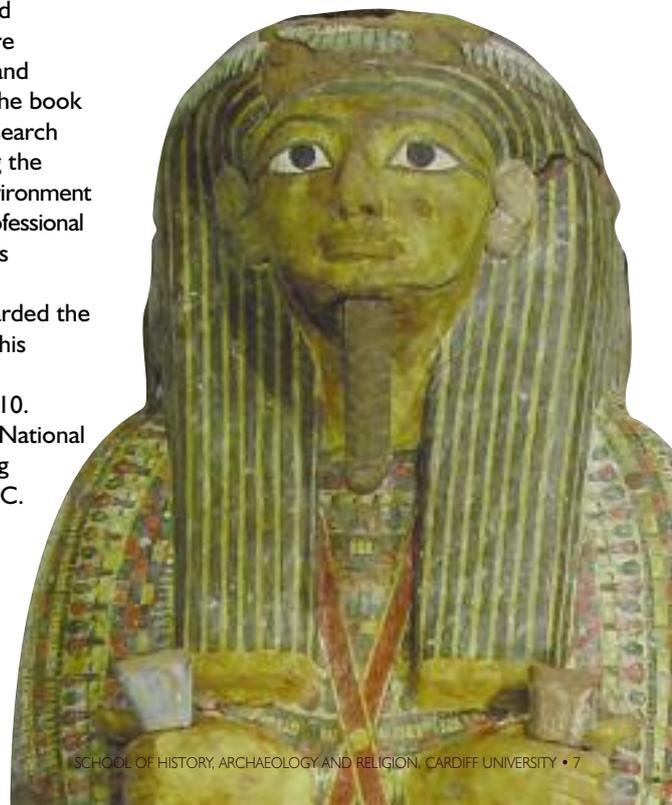
Phil has established a commercial conservation practice providing professional artefact conservation and collections care advice for clients throughout the UK and beyond.

<http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/share/commercialservices/index.html>



David Watkinson leads conservation in the department where he is a Reader in conservation. He is active in practical and academic teaching with research interests lying mainly in the corrosion and conservation of metals, principally iron. Recent research into iron corrosion and corrosion control has won national and international awards as part of the conservation design for Brunel's ss Great Britain. This was the first ocean going screw driven iron hulled steamship and is now preserved in nearby Bristol, within the dry dock from which it was launched in 1843.

Dave has published extensively within journals and conference proceedings and regularly speaks at conservation and corrosion science conferences. Publications topics include metal corrosion and conservation, glass corrosion, fibre mineralisation, collection survey and conservation training, as well as the book *First Aid for Finds* (1998). His research students focus mainly on studying the interaction of metals with their environment and their preservation. Former professional activities included chair of ICON's Archaeology Section and editing *Conservation News*. He was awarded the Plowden medal in recognition of his significant and innovative work in archaeological conservation in 2010. Currently he is a member of the National Heritage Science Strategy steering group and a council member of IIC.



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