

Championing workplace training in conservation | Grace Barrand, 2022

*...As on
the works themselves
we must chiefly and
ultimately depend*

THIS PAGE HAS BEEN INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

Table of Contents

1	Abbreviations / Acronyms / Definitions	29	Personal, professional and sectoral Impact
2	Acknowledgments	30	Recommendations and Considerations
4	Executive Summary	34	References
6	Fellowship Background	37	Appendix 1
11	Fellowship Learnings		

THIS PAGE HAS BEEN INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

Acknowledgments

The Awarding Bodies

The Fellow sincerely thanks The George Alexander Foundation for providing funding support for the ISS Institute and for this Fellowship.

The ISS Institute plays a pivotal role in creating value and opportunity, encouraging new thinking and early adoption of ideas and practice by investing in individuals. The overarching aim of the ISS Institute is to support the development of a 'Better Skilled Australia'. The Institute does this via the provision of Fellowships that allow Australians to undertake international skills development and applied research that will positively impact Australian industry and the broader community.

The ISS Institute was founded 1991 by a small group of innovators, including Sir James Gobbo AC, CVO, QC, and former Governor of Victoria, who had a vision of building a community of industry specialists who would lead the up-skilling of the Australian workforce.

The Fellowship program builds shared learning, leadership, and innovation across the broad range of industry sectors worked with. Fellows are supported to disseminate learning and ideas, facilitate change and advocate for best practices by sharing their Fellowship learnings with peers, colleagues, government, industry, and community. Since its establishment, ISS Institute has supported over 560 Fellows to undertake skill and knowledge enhancement across a wide range of sectors which has led to positive change, the adoption of best practice approaches and new ways of working in Australia.

The Fellowship programs are led by our partners and designed to achieve the needs and goals desired by the partners. ISS Institute works closely to develop a Fellowship program that meets key industry priorities, thus ensuring that the investment will have a lasting impact.

For further information on ISS Institute Fellows, refer to www.issinstitute.org.au

Governance and Management

Patron in Chief: Lady Primrose Potter AC

Patrons: Mr Tony Schiavello AO and Mr James MacKenzie

Founder: Sir James Gobbo AC, CVO

Board Chair: Professor Amalia Di Iorio AM

Board Deputy Chair: Mark Kerr

Board Treasurer: Adrian Capogreco

Board Secretary: Alisia Romanin

Board Members: Jeremy Gobbo KC

Chief Executive Officer: Dr Katrina Jojkity

Sponsor – The George Alexander Foundation

In 1972, George Alexander AM set up an independent philanthropic foundation as a way of sharing his wealth and giving back to the community. The focus of The George Alexander Foundation is supporting access to education for promising young people, particularly those from rural and remote areas. The George Alexander Foundation's aim is to help overcome barriers and make it possible for talented students to achieve their potential and go on to contribute to the Australian community.

The George Alexander Foundation (GAF) Scholarship Programs form the core of the foundation's work, operating in partnership with major tertiary institutions, while our Fellowships and other Education grants provide other enriching and challenging educational experiences.

George Alexander believed in the notion of 'planting seeds and hoping they grow into pretty big trees'. The programs supported by the Foundation endeavour to support this ideal and as GAF Fellowship recipients go on to contribute to the community, George's legacy and spirit lives on through their achievements.

The Fellow would like to acknowledge all of the organisations and individuals who generously offered their time, reflections and insights in support of this research. In particular:

- Marcelle Scott (Research Fellow, University of Melbourne) whose mentorship has deeply informed the basis of this research
- Frank Trujillo (Drue Heinz Book Conservator, Morgan Library & Museum)
- Michele Marincola (Sherman Fairchild Distinguished Professor of Conservation and Chair of the Conservation Center of the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University)
- Marcie Kemp (Senior Managing Educator, Academic & Professional Programs, The Metropolitan Museum of Art) and Margot Murray (Sherman Fairchild Foundation Conservation Fellow, The Metropolitan Museum of Art)
- Patrick White (Head of Skills, The Institute of Conservation)
- Sonja Schwoll (Head of Conservation and Treatment Development, The National Archives, UK)
- Adam Hickey (Founder and Managing Director, Pinnacle Conservation)
- Lynda Skipper (Senior Lecturer and Programme Leader, Lincoln School of Humanities and Heritage, College of Arts, The University of Lincoln)
- Wyman Meers (Program Administrator, Samuel H. Kress Foundation)

Executive Summary

As conservation industry requires graduates with specialised competencies to undertake work on specific collections, and if the sector agrees that there are a range of specialist conservation areas with skills gaps in Australia (AICCM 2000), then what is required is a forward-looking learning model that actively targets skills deficient areas and facilitates industry-based training opportunities for conservation graduates.

This Fellowship sought to further the evidence-base of international models of workplace training in conservation, with a view to establishing longer-forms of paid, industry embedded learning positions for conservation graduates in Australia to address this need. The Fellowship focused on two key international approaches; the Conservation Trailblazer Apprenticeship in England, and the Fellowship model in the United States. These were selected due to their innovative leadership in the role of industry in the training process, and for their comparative potential for the Australian context.

Grace Barrand is a cultural materials conservator based in Melbourne, Australia. Grace has expertise in frames conservation, gained through a pre-graduate training position at the Art Gallery of New South Wales (AGNSW), and has also worked as an exhibitions conservator at the AGNSW and the Biennale of Sydney. Grace is currently employed by the University of Melbourne Faculty of Arts as the Research Development Coordinator, and is also Vice President of the Australian Institute for the Conservation of Cultural Materials (AICCM).

The Fellowship methodology utilised numerous qualitative research techniques to further interrogate the motivations, structures, outcomes, benefits and challenges of international models of conservation workplace training. This included a pre-departure literature review to understand the local Australian context (current models, potential needs), and in-person interviews with leading international experts – both educators and employers - in the geographical focus areas; namely England and the United States.

The learnings support a positive argument for longer-form workplace training opportunities in Australia that are designed to build on core university knowledge and dive deep into employer-specific specialisation requirements. The Fellowship recommends that a consortium of employers be established to collectively, strategically and efficiently develop a program of post-graduate Fellowships to address these needs.

By furthering the evidence-base around international models of workplace training in conservation, and their applicability to the Australian context, this Fellowship has the potential to influence through formalisation and coordination the role of industry in the training process of conservation graduates. The impact of this is in the ability for the sector to build capacity and leverage greater funding in support of these initiatives, in turn providing a more rigorous framework to demonstrate industry

leadership beyond deficit rhetoric. Finally, the Fellowship has and will continue to provide the Fellow with greater knowledge and confidence in spearheading future approaches in collaboration with industry networks – both in Australia and abroad.

Fellowship Background

The Australian Context

Conservation industry requires employees with breadth of knowledge to perform in the contemporary workforce (Conley et al 2017, p. 165). Public and private conservation facilities alike require agile conservators with skills in project management, written and verbal communication, risk management, effective collaboration, and structured decision making, as well as an interdisciplinary knowledge base drawing from organic and inorganic chemistry, art history, anthropology, environmental science and social science to name a few. However, depth of specialised technical and material knowledge is also required to undertake interventive and often complex treatments on cultural collections (Hassard 2006, p. 62; Ashley-Smith 2018). This dichotomy of breadth and depth is not an unusual phenomenon in most professions.

In 2000 the AICCM undertook an audit of specialist conservation skills to identify where skills are required and potential shortfalls in their availability (AICCM 2000, p. 4). The results of the audit identified skills gaps across a range of specialist areas, with the literature highlighting the following as possible components of a targeted training approach (AICCM 2000, p. 59):

- Learning advanced skills through practical, interventive mentorships (Ashley-Smith 2016, p. 130).
- Assessing in-house training (AICCM 2000, p. 13)
- Major cultural institutions should be considered as centres of excellence in delivering skill enhancement programs (AICCM 2000, p. 17).
- Targeted funding for specialised skills development, potentially for projects (AICCM 2000, p. 59).

Like many other industries (NCVER 2019, p. 34), conservation employers rely – and always have relied - on post-study, unaccredited, higher-level training in the workplace alongside broad, formal education to develop graduates technically. In conservation, this is partly because what constitutes advanced competency is deeply contextual and/or specialisation specific, and it is therefore the employer who is best positioned to both identify and sustainably address these needs through training and employment outcomes. As Michele Marincola states:

“The burden cannot rest with the graduate programs to complete a conservator. We’re in the business of teaching students the skills to enable them to continue learning... We’re really here to set up critical thinking—to teach students how to ask the right questions and where to go to get answers to them” (Marincola 2003)

If it is accepted that workplace training is a critical part of conservation education, then as one respondent from Scott & Richardson’s study on practice-based learning said, it is “the

responsibility of every publicly funded cultural collecting institution to contribute to that learning” (Scott & Richardson 2011, p. 77). And indeed, the extensive provision of internship experiences by conservation industry represents a clear desire to be involved in the process (p. 78).

6

Hosts do however require support in developing and facilitating these placements (Holmes 2006, p. 251). Developing, introducing and evaluating structured long-form workplace learning opportunities present opportunities for conservation to address acknowledged skills shortages across Australia (Scott & Richardson 2011, p. 74). There are successful models from which to build (see Barrand 2019 and Barrand and Scott 2022), and this Fellowship seeks to investigate what those models are in an international context.

Conservation education in Australia

To understand why long-form workplace learning opportunities are the focus of this Fellowship it is important to have a holistic understanding of the education sector in Australia, and the development of conservation education within this context. It is the intention of this Fellowship to take a strength-based approach rather than a deficit-based approach, building on current models rather than criticising or competing.

Post-secondary education in Australia is divided into two sectors: higher education and vocational education and training (VET). Higher education qualifications are delivered by universities. The focus is on the learning outcomes required for disciplines, professions and occupations, with a strong emphasis on underpinning knowledge and independent and critical thinking. It is a proficiency-based system, one in which research and innovation play key roles. It is primarily funded by the federal government.

In comparison, VET qualifications are delivered by Technical and Further Education (TAFE) providers. VET qualifications – such as apprenticeships - are competency-based, meaning the focus is on the acquisition and demonstration of contextually specific technical skills and behaviours required for the workplace (Bartlett et al 2019, p. 5). VET funding is shared between the federal and state and territory governments, each of whom are responsible for determining and managing their own funding policies and priorities (Joyce 2019, p. 67; Moodie and Wheelahan 2009, p. 2). As in England, the apprenticeship system in Australia has recently undergone reform to place employers at the heart of the process (see the Joyce Review 2019).

Before any formal conservation training was developed in Australia, the Art Gallery of New South Wales (AGNSW) offered a three-year cadetship program in restoration (Byrne 2008, p. 76). In 1954, AGNSW Trustees advised that ‘some form of apprenticeship or cadet–traineeship in conservation

should be developed so that young people might be trained in workshop requirements and thus be available not only to our own Gallery, but also to other important National Institutions charged with the responsibility of conserving works of art' (Lloyd 1981, p. 5). Although the program had ceased by the mid-1970s, it left an institutional legacy that championed on-the-job training.

The first formal conservation education pathway in Australia was established in response to the Pigott Report (1975) (Byrne 2008, p. 77). This report aimed to develop measures for improving national collection and conservation facilities, and recommended that a conservation degree as opposed to an apprenticeship qualification be established to allow students to obtain the required scientific and academic rigour desired by the profession (p. 67). The result was the development of the Masters of Applied Science at the University of Canberra in 1980, which included a 12-month internship and established the field from the outset as a professional field rather than a vocation (Hook 2008, p. 134).

Following the discontinuation of the Canberra course, in 2004 The University of Melbourne established the Masters in Cultural Materials Conservation. This two-year program is undertaken through an intensive subject model and has always incorporated a compulsory credit bearing 3-week internship subject typically hosted by a state or international collecting institution. Students must also complete a minor thesis which can be practice based (Scott & Richardson 2011, p. 73).

Years later, the University of Canberra reintroduced a Bachelor of Arts (Culture and Heritage) program, which teaches the principles and ethics of cultural heritage and conservation as well as applying technical conservation skills and knowledge. The University also established the Master of Arts in Creative and Cultural Futures, which features a Conservation Focus stream. Work-integrated learning is a prominent feature in both of these courses, and Masters students may similarly choose to conduct their final project as a traditional research thesis or creative project in a professional practice context.

Within this history of educational progress, there remains a need for a more coordinated approach to industry involvement in the skills development of conservators after graduation.

Fellowship aims and methodology

This Fellowship was awarded in 2020. However, due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the international travel component was not undertaken until July 2022. This was challenging, as the context in which the Fellowship was originally conceived had evolved over the passage of time. However, this also presented the Fellow with an extended period of time for pre-travel research, allowing ideas to mature and the scope of the research to be refined.

The overarching aim of this Fellowship is to further the evidence-base of international models of

workplace training in conservation, with a view to establishing longer-forms of industry embedded learning opportunities for conservation graduates in Australia that address industry-identified skills shortages. Numerous objectives were identified in pursuit of this aim. The original objective of this Fellowship was to advance knowledge about a novel approach to conservation education being undertaken in England; namely, the conservation Trailblazer apprenticeship. This was of particular interest as England and Australia had both undergone significant reform regarding the increased role of employers in vocational education (see the Richards Review 2012, and the Joyce Report 2019). The result in England was the introduction of a Masters level conservation apprenticeship.

However, after conducting an initial literature review, the challenges of spanning the vocational education and higher education systems in Australia quickly became apparent. The optimism of the applicability of the Trailblazer in Australia replaced by healthy scepticism, and as such the Fellow included a second objective - to investigate the conservation Fellowship model of the United States (U.S.). This model is entirely led and administered by employers, and is not bound by formal education frameworks. It was anticipated that this would provide a stark comparison with the Trailblazer model, and help the Fellow to locate the Australian context within a broader spectrum of examples.

The key research questions that the Fellow sought to answer across these international contexts, and from both the employer and educator perspective, were:

- How are these learning models structured and funded?
- What are the motivations?
- What are the perceived learning outcomes?
- What are the wider benefits to the conservation profession?
- What are the challenges?

This Fellowship was conducted through a combination of in-person interviews, meetings, laboratory tours and virtual conversations (Zoom and email). Beginning in New York City, the Fellow met with conservation and education representatives from large collecting institutions with well-established Fellowship programs, including the Morgan Library and Museum and the Metropolitan Museum. These visits both involved a tour of the conservation facilities and a semi-structured interview with participants. This enabled the core research questions to be addressed, while also allowing the conversation to be led by the insights and opinions of the interviewee. The Fellow also met with Michele Marincola from New York University in Central Park.

From New York City, the Fellow travelled to England to meet with members of the conservation Trailblazer group. This included meetings with Patrick White from ICON (Brighton), Sonja Schwoil

at the National Archives (Kew), Adam Hickey from Pinnacle Conservation (York) and Lynda Skipper from the University of Lincoln (Lincoln). The Fellow also had plans to meet with Deborah Cane from the Tate, however due to last minute changes to the Fellow's return flight schedule this meeting was cancelled. Interview data for all interviews was collected via notes and thematically analysed against the key research questions.

The Fellow would like to acknowledge the limitations of the scope of this research. This is particularly recognised with regards to the U.S. aspect, whereby only the insights of New York City based practitioners were obtained, and on the singular focus of western / colonial education models. The benefit that a wider variety of perspectives and models would have on the generalisability of this research is acknowledged.

9

Fellow biography

Grace Barrand (she/her) is a settler Australian woman living on unceded Wathaurong Country. She has expertise in frames conservation, gained through a pre-graduate WIL position at AGNSW, and has also worked as an exhibitions conservator at the AGNSW and the Biennale of Sydney. Grace is currently the Research Development Coordinator for the Faculty of Arts at the University of Melbourne, Vice President of the Australian Institute for the Conservation of Cultural Materials and a current Fellow of the International Specialised Skills Institute, an independent organisation that works with Australian governments, industry and education sectors to up-skill individuals in areas such as conservation and traditional trades through global best-practice learning.

Fellowship Learnings

This section will provide an overview of the learnings obtained by the Fellow.

Structure

Formalised conservation education in the United States

There are three steps involved in the mainstream conservation education pathway in the USA¹.

10

Pre-program experience

A highly encouraged developmental stage where individuals become acquainted with the profession and complete the various prerequisites required for admission into conservation graduate programs. A significant aspect of this step is work experience, where individuals will work as interns, volunteers or paid technicians in conservation facilities. The Winterthur and UCLA programs for example require – or at least used to require - up to 400 hours of documented, supervised practical experience in conservation for admission. New York University (NYU) has never required this.

Graduate degree

A Masters degree in conservation is required to be recognised as a professional conservator. These programs are typically 2-4 years in length, and are highly competitive. NYU for example admits roughly 8 out of 60+ applicants per year. Most of the programs also require a final year-long internship, typically completed at a collecting institution. The following table represents some of the available programs:

Institution	Location	Degree	Length	Internship component
Buffalo State College	Buffalo, NY	M.A. in Art Conservation with a certificate of advanced study in art conservation	3 years	12-month internship included
Columbia University	New York, NY	M.S. in Historic Preservation with a conservation concentration	2 years	Encouraged to complete an internship between first and second year
New York University (NYU)	New York, NY	M.S. in the Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works and M.A. in the History of Art and Archaeology	4 years	9-month internship included.
Queen's University	Kingston, Ontario, Canada	M.A. in Art Conservation	2 years	2 x 3-month internships; one general, one more specialised

¹This information has been adapted from the American Institute for Conservation website under the heading “Become a Conservator” (AIC 2020), and from the education provider websites.

Institution	Location	Degree	Length	Internship component
UCLA/Getty	Los Angeles, CA	M.A. in Conservation of Archaeological and Ethnographic Materials Graduate Program in Conservation of Cultural Heritage (Master of Arts)	3 years	11-month internship included
University of Pennsylvania	Philadelphia, PA	M.S. in Historic Preservation and Advanced Certificate in Architectural Conservation	2.5 years	N/A
Winterthur / University of Delaware	Winterthur, DE	M.S. in Art Conservation Ph.D. in Conservation Research & Historic Preservation	3 / 4+ years	12-month internship included

11

In addition to rigorous coursework, students are expected to pursue supplemental experiences during breaks in the academic year, often completing winter workshops and summer internships that offer treatment experience within a wide range of collection types and work settings. NYU fundraise to support these activities, and university staff work closely with students to organise these placements.

Post-graduate fellowship

Graduates of conservation degree programs are considered conservators; however, additional training and experience may be desired. Many permanent positions require candidates to possess numerous years of experience after graduate school to be considered competitive, and Fellowships are an established means for providing that experience.

Fellowships are paid term positions that have an educational component. Importantly, Fellowships are not related or credit-bearing components of the formal education pathway – they are run independently by the host institution and hosts do not formally collaborate with universities in delivery. They generally last 1–3 years and are designed specifically for recent graduates of a conservation Masters program. Fellows are likely to actively participate in the operations of the conservation department, learn from more experienced colleagues, undertake research and complete advanced conservation treatments.

Alternatively, conservation departments may receive funding to complete a specific project, creating a term position. These positions are project-based, focused on completing a particular initiative, and may or may not provide opportunities for mentorship or research.

Case Study at the Metropolitan Museum of Art (MET), New York

In July 2022 the Fellow met with Marcie Kemp (Senior Managing Educator, Academic & Professional Programs) and Margot Murray (Fellow, Objects Conservation), a then-current Fellow in ceramics conservation at the MET.

The MET is one of the largest conservation Fellowship providers in the U.S., hosting between 50 and 60 Fellows at any one time across the conservation and curatorial departments. MET Fellowships are paid positions appointed through an application process, in which Fellows are invited to propose a research project to complete during the 12-month term of the position. Conservation projects typically take the form of a complex treatment and are hosted in one of the conservation areas – frames, ceramics, stained glass, paintings etc.

Amongst other criteria, projects are selected based on their alignment with the MET collection and the availability of a primary mentor in the proposed area. The mentor is responsible for supervision over the project and the provision of skills development, although the level of hands-on mentorship varies. The Fellowship learning does not follow a set institutional structure but is based on the interests of the learner and is guided by the department. Marcie did, however, note that the MET is looking to develop a form of Fellowship checklist to ensure a degree of standardisation over the learning outcomes. In addition to completing the conservation project, Fellows are invited to participate in broader activities that sit within the Fellowship program as managed by the Academic & Professional Programs Department, such as peer networking or public speaking opportunities.



12

Case Study at the Thaw Conservation Centre at the Morgan Library and Museum, New York

In July 2022 the Fellow met with Frank Trujillo and Fellow Sara Bone at the Morgan.

The Morgan Library and Museum supports two postgraduate Fellowship schemes in conservation for university graduates; the Pine Tree Foundation Fellowship in Book Conservation (one available every two years) and the Sherman Fairchild Fellowship in Book and Paper Conservation (one available every two years). Fellowships are paid positions over two years (initial 1 year offer, renewable for a second year). Fellows are co-supervised by members of conservation staff and collaborate with other Fellows on research projects and museum activities, with the Fellow in the second year often taking on a leadership role for incoming first year Fellows.

The structure is not standardised but is specifically designed for further learning. As one advert stated:

“The purpose of the Fellowship is to introduce junior [book] conservators to projects of increasing complexity tailored to build upon previous experience”.

The development of practical hand skills relating to specialist remedial treatment is considered a core element of the learning, as well as the completion of a research project. Importantly, the content and focus of the Fellowship is purposefully responsive to and led by the individual interests of the incumbent, so long as the learning is actively engaged with the collection. Frank further noted that the department makes a concerted effort to embed the Fellow in the broader activities of the institution, such as environmental monitoring, coordinating preparation for a major exhibition and couriering works for outward loan. Collaboration across departments is an integral element of the Fellow’s experience, with the intention of preparing Fellows for work in a realistic institutional environment.



Trailblazer Apprenticeships in England

In 2012, the English Government commissioned Doug Richard to consider what the future of apprenticeships in England should look like, and how apprenticeships can meet the needs of a changing economy. The resulting report, the Richards Review (2012), argued for an overhaul of the system in favour of placing employers at the heart of the training process:

14

“We must turn the system on its head and set a few clear standards: preferably one per occupation, which delineates at a high-level that is meaningful to employers what it, means to be fully competent in that occupation, whilst unleashing our educators to reach that goal however they may” (p. 6)

In response, Apprenticeship Standards – or “Trailblazer Apprenticeships’ - were launched in England in September 2015. Trailblazer apprenticeships are designed to be employer-led through the coordination of representative employer groups from within the relevant sector (i.e. “Trailblazers”). Trailblazers are responsible for developing training standards, end-point-assessments (EPAs), specifying quality assurance, supply costings for funding band allocation, working inclusively and collaboratively, and committing to being early adopters of the program (Bunch 2017, p. 4). Trailblazer apprenticeships are offered from GCSE to Masters level (Level 7).

Conservation Trailblazer

In July 2022, the Fellow met with Patrick White from Icon to discuss the recently established conservation Trailblazer apprenticeship. Under the leadership of Icon, the conservation Trailblazer group was formed in early 2017 to spearhead the development of a conservation apprenticeship², representing employers from across the sector including national institutions, private practice and education providers (ICON 2018, p.1):

British Library	Museum of London	Fitzwilliam Museum	University of Lincoln
Cliveden Conservation	Tate	Hall Conservation	University of Manchester
English Heritage	The National Archives	Historic England	Museums
Victoria & Albert Museum	University College London	Historic Royal Palaces	West Dean College
		Holy Well Glass	

After years of work, two conservation apprenticeships have been designed and approved for delivery – the focus of this research has largely been on the Conservator Level 7:

- Conservation Technician (Level 4, 18 months), covering roles in collections, conservation science, specialists (such as architecture, digital preservation, preventive, stone, time-based media).

2 Of note, conservation is just one of many cultural professions and heritage trades that have established Degree Apprenticeships, including archaeology, archivist and records management, library and IT services, curatorial, registrar, stained glass craftsperson, bespoke tailor, bespoke saddle maker, blacksmith, bookbinder, clock maker, leather craft, thatcher and watchmaker. Many of these are being led by Historic England.

- Conservator (Level 7, 5 years), covering general and specialist conservator, and which includes a full Masters degree. An undergraduate degree or equivalent professional experience is required for admission.

The involvement of higher education providers was consistent throughout the process. The conservator apprenticeship has been designed to maintain the academic rigor of the profession, to complement rather than compete with existing university pathways, and to ensure that apprentices come out with an equal Level 7 qualification to maintain their competitiveness in the labour market. It was the experience of the conservation Trailblazer group that including training providers early in the process was crucial for success, representing a more collaborative than strictly employer-led approach to designing the standard.

Structure and process

Like an Australian apprenticeship, the conservation Trailblazer apprenticeship is a form of paid employment where students undertake both on-the-job learning (80%) and paid off-the-job training (20%). Delivery depends on the agreement between the employer, student and higher education provider, however off-the-job training commitments are expected to be undertaken 6-hours per week (although this can be averaged out to accommodate block teaching weeks, for example). There is no legal obligation to employ the apprentice after the training, however employment can be included in the initial apprenticeship agreement if desired (Long 2017, p 4). A Bachelors degree is, in practice, a pre-requisite.

The training is characterised by developing competency in certain knowledge, skills and behaviours (KSBs). The apprenticeship is evaluated at its conclusion by an End Point Assessor (EPA); an independent organisation who has not been involved in the training or employment of the apprentice. ICON is registered as the EPA for both conservation standards, and the assessments have been designed to align with ICON's professional accreditation standards. This is a considered approach that helps to define a standard competency pathway from graduation to professional accreditation. Further, given that the training is delivered at a Masters level, the KSBs are more aligned to university as opposed to vocational learning structures. KSBs do not focus on specialised practical skills but rather on core professional knowledge and skills, such as decision-making and problem solving. This allows the apprenticeship to remain flexible across different employers, who can then tailor the practical learning according to their specialisation strengths and needs, while maintaining consistent learning outcomes with other Masters level students.

There are two main assessments for the conservation Trailblazer apprenticeship:

- Assessment 1: professional discussion with two independent assessors, underpinned by a portfolio that demonstrates the achievement of KSBs. The assessors generate questions

relating to undertaken work, problem solving and wider questioning to test underlying knowledge, and the candidates are expected to refer to the portfolio in response. The portfolio should contain product evidence, object or assessment reports, colleague testimonies, clients and/or managers, evidence of communications and case studies.

16

- **Assessment 2: project and Q&A.** A detailed and reflective 5,000-word report of a practical project (object or collection) that has incorporated significant conservation decision making. This would include identification of an object or collection, assessment, a conservation plan, implementation (e.g. treatment), proposed aftercare and evaluation. The project discussion is followed by a 3-minute Q&A.

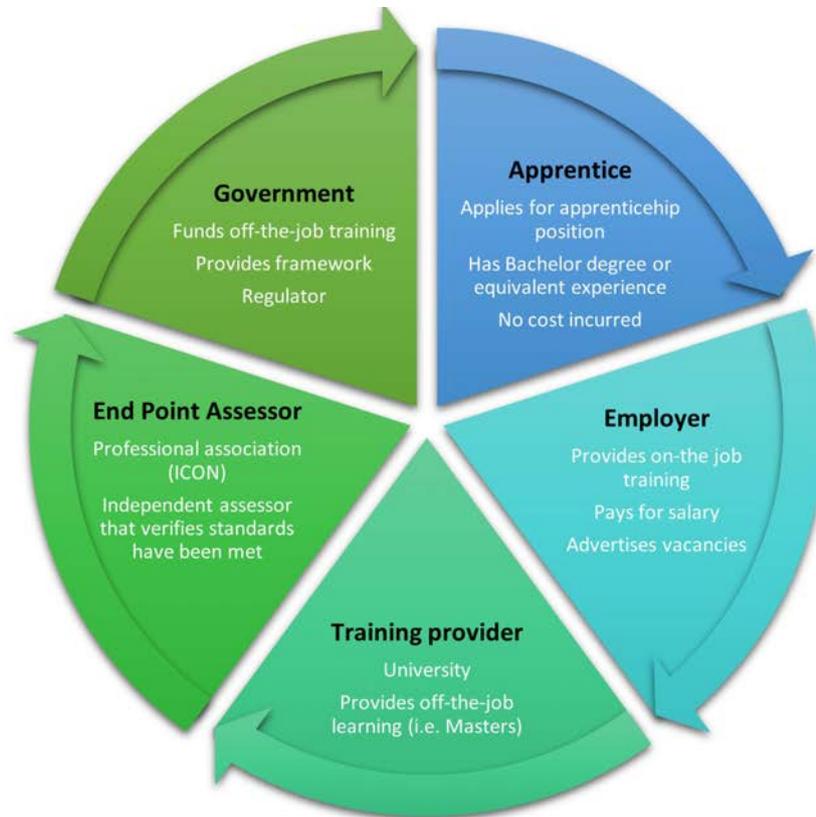
Assessment can only be undertaken once the employer is satisfied that the student is working at the appropriate level, and has completed the MA component of the apprenticeship. The assessment itself is undertaken by an accredited conservator as arranged by ICON, who is responsible for independently verifying that the apprentice has met the required KSB's as defined in the standard.

The Apprenticeship Levy – funding³

Each apprenticeship is assigned a funding band, which determines the highest amount of government funding available for training costs (i.e. payment to the University for the provision of the degree). The Conservation Technician Standard is in the £9,000 funding band, and the Conservation Standard in the £27,000 funding band. How much funding is ultimately paid depends on the size of the employer as defined by their total salary bill (ICON 2018, p. 5). Small employers with a pay bill under £3 million are provided 90% of training costs by government, while large employers with a pay bill over £3 million use the Apprenticeship Levy system, which is put into a separate pot which can only be used to pay for training. The pot of funding for the Apprenticeship Levy is worked out at 0.5% of the total pay bill less a 'levy allowance' of £15,000 over the year. The Government then tops up the pot by 10%.

This funding structure incentivises apprenticeships as many larger employers must pay the Levy regardless of whether they have an apprentice on staff - a "use it or lose it" model. The Levy amount goes towards training costs – making the Masters degree itself free to the apprentice - and the employer is responsible for paying salary. Up to 20% of the Levy costs can go to the EPA to facilitate the assessment process, although 10% has been sufficient to support ICON.

3 Adapted directly from ICON 2018, p. 6



17

Uptake

There are currently only two training providers registered to deliver the conservation standards -the University of West London (Conservation Technician) and the University of Lincoln (Conservator).

Employers can either advertise vacant apprenticeship positions via a centralised Find an Apprenticeships Government service, or must have already agreed to host an apprenticeship before an application is submitted. Only a handful of small employers had established apprenticeship positions at the time of the Fellowship, with just three conservation apprentices completing the Level 7. Lynda Skipper from the University of Lincoln noted that they expect this number to increase to five apprentices per year, with two annual intakes.

Interestingly, smaller employers have been the early adopters. Those interviewed speculate that this is due to the increased agility of smaller employers when compared with larger institutions who must navigate internal bureaucracy. Further, initial intakes have shown a general trend towards employers upskilling existing employees, rather than hiring new recruits. This may be because salary for existing staff is already in the employer business plan, rather than needing to justify an entirely new position. Loyalty also plays a role, whereby employers have a natural desire to support the development of existing staff.

Case Study at The University of Lincoln

In July 2022, the Fellow met with Dr Lynda Skipper, Senior Lecturer, Lincoln School of Humanities and Heritage, University of Lincoln to discuss the existing conservation course and the Trailblazer.

In addition to a PhD program, the University currently runs three conservation courses:

- Bachelor of Arts; three years, roughly 20 students per year
- Graduate Diploma; one year, between 15-20 students per year
- Masters by Coursework; one year, between 12-15 students per year
- Masters by Research; one year, <1 student per year
- Masters Heritage Conservation (Level 7 Cultural Heritage Conservator Apprenticeship); as below

The conservation apprenticeship is a five-year pathway. As a Bachelors degree is a pre-requisite to apprenticeship admission, apprentices begin their formal education at the Graduate Diploma level. Representing the 20% off-the-job learning allocation of the apprenticeship, apprentices complete some modules which are cross listed with the Graduate Diploma in years 1 and 2, followed by some modules which are cross listed with the taught Masters in years 3 and 4. Apprentices then complete a 6-month research project before preparing and completing the EPAs in the final year. Although Lincoln is not involved in the apprenticeship assessment, they are responsible for completing regular progress reviews of the apprentice to ensure that they are working towards the relevant KSBs. At the conclusion and acceptance of the assessment, the apprentice is formally awarded the Masters and the apprenticeship is complete.

Lynda noted that there are some non-apprenticeship Masters students who are already employed in conservation and complete the program through a blended learning approach. In such a situation, credit-bearing practical modules can be completed in the workplace (as in the apprenticeship) where students would otherwise work on objects in the university laboratory setting. Lynda noted that the more formalised stakeholder relationships established through the Trailblazer was a more successful approach due to the increased level of employer buy-in and government incentive. Outside of the apprenticeship framework, it is difficult for practitioners to dedicate time to train and mentor.

Motivations, objectives, benefits and challenges

In this section, the Fellow will explore the motivations, objectives and benefits of each stakeholder involved in the training process, as well as identified challenges. The theme of increasing diversity and inclusion in the profession was a strong and common thread across each of the interviews conducted and is relevant to all stakeholder groups, so will be addressed separately at the end of this section.

19

Employer perspective

Consistent across all institutional employers in both England and the U.S. was the desire to give back to the profession by supporting the learning and employment of conservation students. Sonja Schwoil, Head of Conservation and Treatment Development at the National Archives (UK) was particularly emphatic around this, noting her belief in the role of cultural institutions in supporting the education of the next generation of conservators. Frank from the Morgan was similarly impassioned on the importance of supporting the career trajectories of conservation students.

Sonja noted that learning and development is an institutional priority of the National Archives, who are highly conscious about providing professional development opportunities to staff. The Trailblazer therefore presents an opportunity for the Archive to demonstrate this commitment. The approach at the Archives is not to train an apprentice with the intention of filling a skills gap in the institution, but to contribute to training more altruistically and to support the interests of apprentices themselves. In other words, this is not a means of succession planning on a specific skill set, but rather an opportunity to contribute to the profession by providing an alternative education pathway for next generation conservators.

Comparative comments around institutional motivations were made by representatives from the MET and the Morgan. Conservation Fellowships at these two institutions were embedded within a broader program of Fellowships, most notably in curatorial studies and within broader programs of internships. The institutional precedent for industry involvement in education is therefore established, making the case for further engagement more compelling.

Case Study on the National Archives, UK

In July 2022, the Fellow met with Sonja Schwoell, Head of Conservation and Treatment Development at the National Archives, UK. The purpose of this meeting was to gain an understanding of Sonja's perspective on the Trailblazer apprenticeship, and how this pathway is aligned to the mission and objectives of the Archives.

The conservation department at the National Archives employs around 32-35 staff, and is broadly divided into five teams: (1) digitisation and large-scale project team, (2) single item treatment, (3) preservation, (4) scientific analysis and (5) engagement, loans and exhibitions.

The conservation department plans to hire their first Trailblazer apprentice by the end of 2022. This will be used as an opportunity to establish a Senior Conservation Technician role focusing on a broad range of skills that are in-demand across the department, including instrument analysis and mounting works on paper. The apprentice would therefore service and be trained by all of the conservation teams, with the specialised skillset being defined not by material type but rather by a specific level of activities. The intention is to hire someone at Level 4 and bring them up to Level 7 through the apprenticeship.

Sonja agreed that it is ultimately up to employers to identify specific specialised skills required in their workplace (photographic materials conservation was offered as an example), and invest in the maintenance of those skilled areas through intergenerational training.



Adam Hickey, Managing Director at Pinnacle Conservation, identified two primary albeit interdependent motivations for engaging in the conservation Trailblazer apprenticeship; (1) supporting the professional development of an existing member of staff and (2) developing the business model of the company by addressing a knowledge gap.

Case Study on Pinnacle Conservation

In July 2022, the Fellow met with Adam Hickey, General Manager of Pinnacle Conservation. Pinnacle Conservation is a heritage building and sites restoration and conservation company based in York in the north of England. Going against the grain of an industry model that focuses on subcontracting, Pinnacle is unique in its preference of employing skilled trades directly. Pinnacle employ a range of highly experienced tradespeople – bricklayers, joiners, roofers, stonemasons, plasterers – and keenly promote an intergenerational model of learning, whereby younger staff work alongside the retiring generation.

Adam has worked with Valerio (Val) for over ten years. Val is a highly experienced Italian conservator specialising in terrazzo, marble, mosaic, plaster and decorative surfaces, and is directly employed by Pinnacle. Val has, however, always felt that he lacked formal conservation qualification in England. This was exacerbated while going through the ICON Accreditation process. In 2021, on Val's suggestion, Pinnacle prepared a business case to put Val through the conservation Trailblazer apprenticeship which he began in 2022.

Embedded within this business case is a desire to promote the advancement of master craft skills, and the professional promotion of people with master craft skills, outside of the standard route into supervision. It is Adam's belief that standard career models are skewed to encourage highly experienced professionals to 'advance' into management roles. Adam perceives this model as detrimental to the industry as opportunities for skill mastery and intergenerational skills transfer are hindered, in addition to the fact that management roles are not always the best fit for the individual or the business.

With a background in the construction industry, Adam commented that Pinnacle is already familiar with the apprenticeship framework, making the process easier to implement. In comparison, the established structures and networks increased the 'buy-in' at the institutional level, partly logistically but also partly due to the 'fear of missing out'. The Trailblazer is rich with opportunity for cultural institutions to position themselves at the forefront of teaching and learning, and therefore the risk of not engaging may be equally as compelling as the case to commit. In terms of associated challenges, Sonja noted the difficulty of coordinating multiple parties (the university, employer and apprentices). The term 'clunky' was used by numerous people interviewed.

Most representatives from collecting institutions agreed that hosting university students and graduates is a mutually beneficial way of enabling in-depth research on the collection. Further, conservation employers were found to believe that young learners bring new ideas and fresh perspectives that are of benefit to the employing department, a sentiment that was also found to be true in an Australian case-study (Barrand 2019).

22

University perspective

As the university is not typically involved in the Fellowship structure in the U.S., this section will focus mostly on the English context. Michele Marincola (NYU) did, however, make a number of pertinent comments. These comments included the integral role of workplace training in applying theory to practice, and the increasing role that Fellowships and other workplace training opportunities will have in increasing access to the profession. Michele noted the constant need to attract external funding to support the Fellowships and other industry embedded learning as a major challenge, with competition for private funding increasing

Lynda noted the primary motivation for the University of Lincoln to become the first conservation apprenticeship training provider was that they care about the profession and want to build a future that is stronger and more diverse. The benefits are therefore also reputational - positioning themselves at the forefront of the Trailblazer represents the university as a leading and agile institution committed to innovation, employability and diversity and inclusion. The opportunity to obtain a fully subsidised degree and continue to undertake paid full-time work while studying is perceived to present a more accessible pathway into the profession for people whose socio-economic status may have otherwise been prohibitive. The structure of the learning itself may also suit a student cohort traditionally more inclined towards applied study pathways, and whom thus may not have previously considered obtaining a degree (Long 2017 p. 21).

The apprenticeship system has, and will continue to, increase strategic engagement between universities and employers in research, training and meeting skills needs (Universities UK 2017, p. 20). The broadening of university offerings also, in turn, provides new income streams for universities, although as Lynda commented the associated administrative work involved in delivering a government regulated framework makes the cost-benefit analysis less convincing.

Lynda also noted the importance of setting clear expectations with regards to mentorship. Reflecting on the variety of student experiences, Lynda elaborated that placements in which students have been left to simply 'get on with things' are far less effective than situations in which strong and deliberate mentorship has been provided. Sonja agreed, commenting that further work is required to clarify roles and expectations of each party particularly with regards to the provision of mentorship.

Learner perspective

A Fellow at the Morgan – Sara Bone - noted that one of the primary benefits of the Fellowship was the opportunity to put theory into practice. This is well known and clearly established benefit of workplace learning models (Cooper et al 2010, p. 23), and was echoed by Michele who noted the fundamental importance of work-based learning in the overall cycle of training a conservator.

Sonja commented that besides the financial benefit of obtaining a cost-free degree, one of the biggest benefits to the apprentice of the Trailblazer is the opportunity to understand the breadth of conservation and have a taste of various forms of practice, rather than diving deep into material specialisation. Similarly, while the Morgan does mentor the learner through complex book and paper treatments, they also make a concerted effort to integrate Fellows into the daily life of the museum and hone their research capabilities to develop their employability through breadth of skill. The extent to which Fellowships contribute to the employability of conservation graduates in the U.S. was untested, although supporting the career growth of emerging conservators and contributing to employability was considered a primary benefit of the Fellowship model across all stakeholders.

23

The MET utilises the Fellowship period as an opportunity for the Fellow to dive deep into complex, specialised treatment and object-based research. This is considered a rare opportunity in the career of a conservator, and the Fellowship year/s are therefore purposefully protected for this purpose. The primary benefit to the Fellow is therefore the development of practical, specialised remedial treatment skills, as opposed to an integration of broader cross-departmental skills as seen through the Morgan model. These differences are partly due to the differences in size and resourcing across the institution, but also speak to the different motivations and perceived benefits of the Fellowship period.

For those already employed in the field, upskilling was also found to be a significant benefit. Val, for example, a conservator with extensive practical experience is using the apprenticeship as an opportunity to gain academic knowledge and greater confidence of formal qualifications. The focus here is therefore on obtaining the core knowledge competencies afforded by university learning, as opposed to honing specialist skills development in the workplace.

Social mobility

Common across most employer and university representatives interviewed was the desire to increase diversity and inclusion within the sector. Patrick from ICON believed that 'social mobility' rather than 'diversity and inclusion' is a more appropriate term due to the scope of the barriers addressed in the Trailblazer model, most of which are financial and not intersectional. Social mobility is enabled by both the elimination of university fees – which is paid for by

the Government - and the ability to work while studying. The efficacy of the Trailblazer in achieving greater mobility into the sector is, however, yet to be measured. Many interviewees acknowledged that the Trailblazer alone will not realise the systemic change required to achieve equity of opportunity into and within the profession. Mobility is limited to those who are already within the university pipeline, and uptake thus far shows that mobility is limited again to those who are already employed in the sector as opposed to new recruits. Sonja noted that to increase diversity the focus needs to be on catching school leavers.

In the U.S., the motivation to providing equal opportunity for marginalised groups was pronounced. Just last month, Winterthur announced numerous changes to their admission requirements that are anticipated to “result in a pool of applicants, and therefore graduate students, that is more intellectually, economically, racially and geographically diverse. In turn, this change will bring new perspectives to the understanding and care of cultural heritage” (Wickens et al, n.d.).

Employers are now offering more paid pre-graduate internships. Frank noted the importance of providing paid internship to the identity of the Morgan and in the realisation of its education mission, and also pointed to a relatively new curatorial Fellowship targeting historically underrepresented communities. Marcie from the MET also commented on the increase of paid pre-program internships targeting underrepresented cohorts.

Morgan Library & Museum Belle da Costa Greene Curatorial Fellowships

In 2020, the Morgan announced the creation of two new two-year paid curatorial fellowships for promising scholars from communities historically underrepresented in the curatorial and special collections field. Named for the Morgan’s first director, one of the most prominent American librarians and cultural leaders of the first half of the twentieth century and a woman of colour, this program seeks to equip Fellows with a strong working knowledge of museum and special collections library operations and provide Fellows with resources and mentorship to support them in their professional careers.

Fellows are provided with experience in core activities as well as the opportunity to curate their own installation from the collection. Collaboration with conservation is encouraged and structured into the activities. A graduate degree in a relevant field or equivalent professional experience is required for admission. Support for the Belle da Costa Greene Curatorial Fellowships is provided in part by a grant from the Carnegie Corporation, with additional support of private donors (Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence R. Ricciardi). See <https://historyprogram.commons.gc.cuny.edu/belle-da-costa-greene-curatorial-fellowships/>

The Fellow would also like to highlight the following initiative being led by UCLA and the Getty, which might provide a useful model for a future pilot in Australia.

Andrew W. Mellon Opportunity for Diversity in Conservation

The UCLA/Getty Interdepartmental Program in the Conservation of Cultural Heritage received funding from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to address underrepresentation in conservation. This program has confirmed that underrepresentation in conservation is the result of both a lack of familiarity with the field among many whose skills and interests could qualify them and the lengthy and expensive process of earning a place in graduate programs.

Promotion of the opportunity was held over two years across twelve universities, targeting undergraduate students and recent graduates from underrepresented cohorts studying studio art, art history, archaeology, anthropology and physical sciences. Interested students are invited to apply and must demonstrate a serious interest in conservation, a strong academic background and passion for cultural heritage (no previous conservation experience is required).

The program itself consists of an introductory weeklong workshop (between 15-20 students who are financial supported to attend) at the Getty labs, in which each participant brings an item of personal significance to be focused on in practical and theoretical sessions. All participants are eligible to apply for the second phase of the program, which consists of a financially supported 400-hour internship at a matched conservation facility, after which it is anticipated that the applicant will take their next steps in applying for a conservation graduate program. See www.iiconservation.org/content/supporting-next-more-diverse-conservation-community-andrew-w-mellon-opportunity-diversity

Funder perspective

There are two primary stakeholders committing funds to the Trailblazer apprenticeship program; the employer who pays for salary of the learner, and the government who pays for the university learning. As the motivation and benefits of the employer have already been addressed, and as the Fellow did not meet with a member of government during the Fellowship period, this section will briefly discuss the government perspective as outlined in the Terms of Reference for the Richards Review (2012):

“The government wishes to commission an independent review of Apprenticeships in England, to ensure that in the future the programme is meeting the needs of the changing economy, consistently delivers the professionally recognised qualifications and skills which

employers and learners need, and is maximising the impact of government investment.” – p. 45

26

In contrast, philanthropic foundations and private donors are the primary financial supporters of Fellowships in the U.S. The majority of Fellowships at the MET across both conservation and curatorial, for example, are funded by gifts in perpetuity; that is, a requisite amount of capital is invested in a trust and the interest accrued is used to support the costs of the Fellowship. Fellowships may also be supported by a fixed term expendable gift, whereby a certain amount of funding is gifted to an institution that is then expended, for example, over five years. The Fellow contacted a major funding body in New York – the Kress Foundation - to gain a better understanding of their motivations to support conservation Fellowships. This provided valuable insights on the role of the professional membership association.

The Kress Foundation

The Kress Foundation has been supporting various iterations of conservation Fellowships since the 1980s. Predominantly, these have been 12-month Fellowship positions at conservation facilities and/or museums following completion of a Masters. The Kress Foundation currently awards six Fellowships per year, which are administered by the Foundation for Advancement in Conservation (FAIC).

The Foundation responds to the pedagogical needs of the field as they are articulated by the organisations with which they partner. Long-standing relationships of trust with individuals within those organisations are therefore integral, and enable the Foundation to respond to emerging needs with agility and efficacy.

The Kress Foundation is involved in the selection process of conservation Fellows. FAIC accept applications and identifies a shortlist that is then sent to the Kress to sign off on each project. It is uncommon for the Foundation to have any sort of objection, given their reliance on FAIC's expertise to determine which projects are most compelling and/or address needs in the field, however this process helps to facilitate an open and partnered conversation. All grants have a reporting structure, typically consisting of progress reports, a final report and financial acquittal. In the case of conservation Fellowships, recipients each produce a final report that the FAIC then compiles into a final report for the Kress Foundation each year.

When asked what they look for in a partner, the Kress Foundation noted that in cases where they utilise expertise to help administer grant funding, there is usually an obvious choice. FAIC, for example, is a membership organisation whose primary purpose is serving the conservation field, and is therefore considered an efficient partner in reaching the people working in the field to which the support of the Foundation is targeted.

ICON has, in the past, taken on a similar facilitative function in the administration of grant funding to support internships.

ICON Internship Program

Originally supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund – and now funded by host organisations directly - the ICON Internship Program is a structured internship placement offering graduates the opportunity to develop practical knowledge by learning from highly experienced conservation professionals. The original concept of the program was to focus on niche, specialised areas of conservation where skills gaps existed, and in the development of practical treatment skills. As one representative from the National Trust commented:

“Conservators coming straight out of training courses did not have enough practical experience to work without supervision straight away, and so you need a period of time in which those skills develop. That is exactly what the internships are designed to provide”

The program is effectively a management package that enables the host to focus on providing high-quality workplace learning experiences, while ICON manages the administration of the delivery platform. This includes advertising for available opportunities, managing applications and recruitment, paying the interns through a tax-free bursary (thereby avoiding any HR implications on behalf of the host), managing reporting and the provision of a dedicated Intern Advisor who works alongside the host supervisor to support the practicalities of the program. Since its inception, nearly 200 people have taken part in the program.

The focus and structure of these opportunities depends on the capacity and interest of the host, however typically take the form of a 12-month postgraduate placement. This longer period allows hosts to plan a more in-depth project, and enriches the mentor/learner experience through deeper relationships. Whatever the material focus, the internship should provide a strong understanding of the practical application of ICON's Professional Standards. For more information and case-studies please see <https://www.icon.org.uk/careers/icon-internship-programme.html>

Personal, professional and sectoral Impact

Personal and Professional impact

The Fellowship provided an invaluable opportunity to meet international leading experts in conservation. This was a rewarding and valuable opportunity to have a conversation and ask questions in a personable and intimate format, and develop interpersonal relationships. This will provide a sustainable network of experts from whom the Fellow can reach out to again in the future.

28

The Fellowship was also a welcome shot in the arm of energy, enthusiasm and inspiration after two years of living with the COVID pandemic. After years of isolation, Zoom meetings and general uncertainty, having the opportunity to travel and meet with international colleagues in person provided a boost in attitude and energy that the Fellow had lost during the pandemic. This impacted positively on both my personal and professional life.

The knowledge that was gained through this Fellowship will support the Fellow in becoming a leading expert in the area. This knowledge will provide the Fellow with greater confidence and conviction of their understanding, having an evidence-base of internationally leading models and opinions from which to draw, which will lead to more robust recommendations and leadership. The impact of this confidence has already been demonstrated through the Fellow's publication of their first peer-reviewed journal article on the area, co-authored with leading expert Dr Marcelle Scott.

Sector impact

It is envisioned that the learnings acquired through this Fellowship will assist the conservation community in developing workplace training initiatives that target specialist skill development. In the short to mid-term, this will have impact on conservation employers (as hosts) who action the recommendations, and conservation graduates (as learners) who are the beneficiaries of greater learning opportunities. In the long-term, the learnings from the Fellowship will impact on the wider professional community and educators through pedagogical development, and, ultimately, the Australian public whose cultural collections will be better cared for. This relates both to the public collections, the institutional custodians of which are envisioned to be the earliest adopters of the recommendations, and private collections as graduates go on to employment in existing firms or establish freelance businesses.

The Fellow's involvement with AICCM will provide an impact pathway for these developments. This will enable the Fellow to directly influence AICCM initiatives, and establish new initiatives – potentially a pilot - with the support of the organisation. In the mid-term, sector impact will be enabled through the presentation of a paper or lightning talk at the 2023 AICCM National Conference to be held in Canberra. The Fellow has set some funds aside from the Fellowship to attend this conference.

Recommendations and Considerations

Initiating a new apprenticeship-style pathway into conservation is not a realistic short or mid-term goal for conservation in Australia. The success of the Trailblazer in England relies heavily on an established and incentivised government framework delivered across a relatively constituted national education system. In comparison, the divide between the VET and HE sector in Australia is deeply set and complicated by various levels of government involvement. There have only recently been attempts to bridge this divide through the introduction of degree apprenticeships in in-demand and government prioritised areas, such as systems engineering, however a significant amount of ground work needs to be done by the government, industry and the university sector before any such modelling could be considered by small professions such as conservation. The Fellow suggests as a long-term recommendation that conservation in Australia continue to keep a pulse on the development of degree apprenticeships.

29

This Fellowship demonstrated that employers engage in workplace training for a variety of reasons – to meet the future skills needs of specific teams or collections, to enhance the business model, to contribute to social mobility into the profession, to introduce learners to breadth of practice, to allow learners to dive deep into specialization, to increase the employability of graduates, to enhance their own business model, to provide graduates with the opportunity to undertake complex treatment and research. Together, these motivations paint a rich picture of the desire for employers to be involved in the training process and contribute to the development of early career conservators.

While intermingled, this Fellowship focuses on the motivation to host workplace training opportunities as a means of addressing specific skills gaps. Acknowledging that the role of university learning is to develop underlying disciplinary and core knowledge competencies, establishing a sound and critical framework for life-long learning, the Fellow posits that employers are best placed to build on university learning and lead the training of specialised, contextually specific skills that are required for the conservation of their collections. The dedication of employers in hosting university interns represents a clear desire to be involved in the training process, and the Fellow believes that many employers make a concerted effort to employ conservation graduates where possible. Further modelling is, however, required to establish a targeted, structured and sustainable approach if the profession identifies this as a critical need, and there are local examples from which to build.

- The University of Canberra used to manage a postgraduate internship program with funding from the Getty Grant Program (AICCM 2000, p. 31). The funds were provided to institutions on a matching grant basis and lasted for 5 years, interestingly, with only a handful of institutions joining the scheme (AICCM 2000, p. 31), and even fewer continuing paid internships once the Getty Grant Program ceased (M Scott, email, Oct 7 2019).

- The Art Gallery of New South Wales has excelled in providing paid learning opportunities in specialist conservation areas. With funding from conservation benefactors, AGNSW has invested in paid, intergenerational learning positions in the areas of reproduction frame making, frame conservation and, it could be argued, time-based media conservation. These areas were identified by the AGNSW as critical to the ongoing care of the collection, but for which limited local experience existed to continue meeting these needs (i.e. possessing a skills gap). The Fellow has undertaken further research into the AGNSW model in frame conservation training (see Barrand 2019 and Barrand and Scott 2022), and found that strong mentorship is critical in the success of the model, and is indeed the defining characteristic that differentiates this type of position from typical entry-level roles. Further, the learning outcomes were tracked against ICON's Professional Standards, providing a useful model of the practical integration of core underlying competencies in the application and assessment of specialist skill development.
- The Arts Centre Melbourne currently hosts the Barbara van Enst Conservation Internship (with support from Professor Emeritus Barbara van Ernst AM). The internship awards \$15,000 AUD to a promising conservation graduate from the past two years, aiming to "facilitate the transfer of textile and costume conservation skills in the absence of specialist textile conservation in Australia". The incumbent will develop experience and expertise in textile conservation under the guidance of an experienced textile and costume conservator, focusing on the treatment of a specific costume identified as in need of conservation by the institution.

There are undoubtedly further examples of Australian conservation employers providing paid training opportunities to graduates, grounded in mentorship, in order to meet their future skills needs. The Fellow therefore suggests that conservation employers in Australia who have identified skills gaps in specialist areas that are critical to the ongoing care of their collections, or to their business model, form a consortium to collaboratively address these needs through long-form, post-graduate training Fellowships. The focus of the Fellowship would be on the targeted development of specialised skills as prioritised by the host employer, who provide a senior expert to guide the learning. Critically, these positions must be founded on strong mentorship and nurtured learning as opposed to graduates being left to 'get on with it'.

Learning could be tracked against an agreed upon set of high-level skills, knowledge and competencies that are devoid of specialised nuances. This would assist the host in structuring the learning while also maintaining flexibility with regard to the needs of particular knowledge areas, enable the learning outcomes to be tracked and/or articulated, and also pedagogically support industry to articulate which skills are considered core and which are contextually specific. ICON provide excellent leadership on this through the Trailblazer KSBs. These learning outcomes have been purposefully designed in alignment with ICON's Professional Standards in order to create a clear line of sight from graduation to professional accreditation, which generally takes about

five years of practice. Demonstrating proof-of-concept could then, potentially, be leveraged in collaboration with AICCM to further develop the Professional Membership position in line with these competencies, and with formal educators to integrate current pathways.

The benefits of approaching this as a consortium of employers as opposed to employers continuing to work in isolation are numerous:

- A more coordinated and ambitious approach to attract major funding that leverages the strength of a sector-wide consortium, rather than individual employers undertaking discrete projects.
- Building a community of practice will enable the natural sharing of ideas through an established feedback loop. This will help to inform a coordinated approach that builds on the expertise of industry professionals and their previous and/or ongoing experience in the delivery of workplace training initiatives to avoid reinventing the wheel. This collaboration will also encourage problem solving around shared challenges and celebration of shared and individual successes.
- Collective thinking around modelling and learning outcomes, and the associated degree of flexibility, will support a shared understanding and determination of success on the micro and macro levels.
- Creating a community of Fellows for peer-support, peer-learning and standardised reflection of the initiative through the perspective of the learner.
- Compounding of impact.
- Collaboration between employers will establish healthy competition in pursuit of innovation and excellence, encouraging employers to not only continuing to offer Fellowships (FOMO effect) but also continuing to refine their approach.
- Forming a consortium will help to maintain momentum over time and build relationships on an institutional, rather than personal level. This will help to ensure the sustainability of the initiative despite changes in personnel, and assist in institutional level buy-in.
- Build an evidence base to support proof-of-concept that can then be leveraged to influence pedagogy in university settings, and development of the profession through collaboration with AICCM.

Philanthropy in Australia has and continues to play an increasingly significant role in supporting innovative, capacity building enterprises that support the creative and cultural sector (see Australian Council for the Arts 2015). The prolific presence of philanthropic funding in support of conservation Fellowships in the U.S. is an excellent model from which to build. The Fellow suggests that the consortium should pitch a pilot Fellowship program to philanthropic foundations that champion support in the creative, cultural and/or educational sectors. Funds could be requested to support

the salary of the relevant Fellow, with respective employers contributing an in-kind contribution or co-investment in the form of mentorship.

Competency and skills acquisition is therefore understood not as an outcome but a process that begins in the classroom and continues well into workplace, with each stakeholder having a role to play in fostering that development.

References

- Australian Council for the Arts 2015, Arts Nation: An Overview of Australian Arts, Australian Government, report, viewed 11 June 2020 < <https://www.australiacouncil.gov.au/workspace/uploads/files/arts-nation-final-27-feb-54f5f492882da.pdf>>
- The Australian Institute for the Conservation of Cultural Material 2002, Code of Ethics and Code of Practice, The Australian Institute for the Conservation of Cultural Material, viewed 06 May 2019, <<https://aiccm.org.au/sites/default/files/docs/AICCMBusinessDocs>>.
- Ashley-Smith, J 2018, 'The ethics of doing nothing', *Journal of the Institute of Conservation*, vol. 41, no. 1, pp. 6-15.
- Barrand, G 2019, 'Targeting Specialist Skills through Work-Integrated Learning: A Case-Study in Frames Conservation at the Art Gallery of New South Wales', Minor Thesis, The University of Melbourne, Melbourne.
- Barrand, G and Scott, M 2022, "Targeting Specialist Skills through Work-Integrated Learning: A Case-Study in Frames Conservation at the Art Gallery of New South Wales", *Journal of the Institute of Conservation*, DOI: 10.1080/19455224.2022.2117220.
- Bartlett, H, Bean, M, Dawkins, P, Klomp, N, Kristjanson, L and Maddocks, S 2019, 'Reforming Post-Secondary Education in Australia: Perspectives from Australia's Dual Sector Universities', findings report, viewed 10 June 2020, <https://www.dualsectorpaper.com/s/Reforming-Post-Secondary-Education-in-Australia_FINAL2-k8ad.pdf>.
- Bunch, N 2017, 'Apprenticeship Standards', Institute for Apprenticeships, powerpoint presentation, viewed online 25 May 2020 <https://icon.org.uk/system/files/documents/neil_bunch_institute_for_apprenticeships.pdf>.
- Byrne, A 2008, 'An Accidental Conservator' in C Villis and A Ellem (eds.), *Paintings Conservation in Australia from the Nineteenth Century to the Present: Connecting the Past to the Future*, AICCM Paintings Group Symposium, 9-10 October, Melbourne, AICCM Inc., Canberra, pp. 75-81.
- Conley, S N, Foley, R W, Gorman, M E, Denham, J and Coleman, K 2017, 'Acquisition of T-shaped expertise: an exploratory study', *Social Epistemology*, vol. 31, no. 2, pp. 165-183.
- Cooper, L, Orrell, J and Bowden, M 2010, 'Work integrated learning: a guide to effective practice', Routledge, London.
- Hassard, F 2006, *Heritage, hermeneutics and hegemony: a study of ideological division in the field of conservation-restoration*, PhD Thesis, Brunel University, London.
- Holmes, K 2006, 'Experiential learning or exploitation? Volunteering for work experience in the UK museums sector', *Museum Management and Curatorship*, vol. 21, pp. 240-253.

- Hook, J 2008, 'Reflections on the Early Years of Professional Practice: Intuition, Craft and Risk' in C Villis and A Ellem (eds.), *Paintings Conservation in Australia from the Nineteenth Century to the Present: Connecting the Past to the Future*, AICCM Paintings Group Symposium, 9-10 October, Melbourne, AICCM Inc., Canberra, pp. 133-139.
- The Institute of Conservation 2018, 'The Apprenticeship Debate', ICON, briefing paper, 22 March 2018, viewed online 25 May 2020 at < https://icon.org.uk/system/files/documents/briefing_paper_-_the_apprenticeship_debate_0_0.pdf>.
- Joyce, S 2019, 'Strengthening Skills: Expert Review of Australia's Vocational Education and Training System', Commonwealth of Australia, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, viewed online 4 June 2020 <https://www.pmc.gov.au/sites/default/files/publications/strengthening-skills-independent-review-australia-vets_1.pdf>
- Lloyd, A 1981, 'One hundred years of art restoration/conservation at the Art Gallery of New South Wales', *AICCM Bulletin*, vol. VII, nos. 2-3, pp. 3-15.
- Long, L 2017, 'Developing Apprenticeships for the Heritage Sector', Historic England, powerpoint presentation at a Conservation Trailblazer Event, 6th July 2017, viewed online 25 May 2020 < https://icon.org.uk/system/files/documents/liz_long_historic_england.pdf>.
- Marincola, M 2003, 'A Lifetime of Learning: A Discussion about Conservation Education', *Conservation Perspectives—The GCI Newsletter*, vol. 18, no. 3, viewed 12 September 2019 <http://www.getty.edu/conservation/publications_resources/newsletters/18_3/dialogue.html>.
- Moodie, G and Wheelahan, L 2009, 'The significance of Australian vocational education institutions in opening access to higher education', *Higher Education Quarterly*, vol. 63, no. 3, pp. 356-370.
- National Centre for Vocational Education Research 2019, 'Higher apprenticeships in Australia: what are we talking about?', NCVET, Adelaide.
- Richards, D 2012, 'The Richards Review of Apprenticeships', School for Startups, report, November 2012, viewed online 11 October 2022 at < https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/34708/richard-review-full.pdf>.
- Scott, M and Richardson, S 2011, 'Preparing for practice: how internships and other practice based learning exchanges benefit students, industry hosts and universities', *AICCM Bulletin*, vol. 32, pp. 73-79.
- Universities UK 2017, 'Degree Apprenticeships: Realising Opportunities', Universities UK, London, viewed 29 June 2020 at <<https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/policy-and-analysis/reports/Documents/2017/degree-apprenticeships-realising-opportunities.pdf>>.

Wickens, J, Tedone, M, Irving, J and Grayburn, R n.d, 'WUDPAC announces modifications to its admissions requirements and interview process', The University of Delaware, announcement, viewed 11 October 2022 at <<https://www.artcons.udel.edu/news/Pages/WUDPAC-announces-modifications-to-its-admissions-requirements-and-interview-process.aspx>>.

Appendix 1

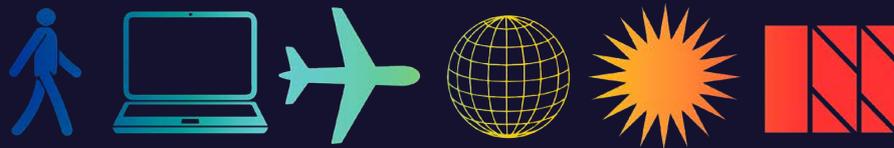
Social Mobility recommendations

36 It is the opinion of the Fellow that existing systemic and pedagogical barriers and a distinct lack of diversity is the greatest challenge facing conservation in Australia. The Fellow does not believe that providing paid opportunities for skills acquisition post-graduation will have a demonstrable impact on increasing social mobility into the sector. This is because the impact of the model is limited to learners who are already within the higher education pipeline. The expertise of the Fellow nor the scope of this research is sufficient to appropriately consider education models in pursuit of greater social mobility into the profession, although the Fellow does realise that education pathways will be critical in tackling this failure into the future. Some learnings will therefore be noted for future reference:

- A key aspect of the Trailblazer model is the assumption of university fees on behalf of the Government. While HECS does relieve some financial pressure associated with studying, the intention of any model that seeks to improve social mobility should appropriately address the impact of university debt.
- The Trailblazer model employs a distinct approach to learning and assessment. It is a unique qualification pathway with a unique delivery mode and a distinct set of standards, and one that sits firmly within a government regulated framework. It is not the same as simply working while studying.

Any attempt to enable social mobility through established qualification pathways needs to target students at a much earlier age (i.e. school leavers).

- Any attempt to enable social mobility should set clear objectives, grounded in evidence, and consider intersectional understandings of disadvantage. Terms such as 'diversity' and 'inclusion' should at the least be defined but ideally avoided



The International Specialised Skills Institute
1/189 Faraday Street, Carlton VIC 3053
Ph: 03 9347 4583
www.issinstitute.org.au