

Routes for IHBC Full Members: Guidance on becoming a historic environment conservation professional

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Introduction

As a specialist contributing to the conservation of our historic places, you will want to become a member of the IHBC, the UK's professional body for specialists working to secure the future of our historic places.

IHBC members often have special skills in working across different disciplines – so the interdisciplinary needs that support conservation can be co-ordinated effectively. Equally, many have specialist interests in one or two areas relevant to conservation – architectural history and archaeology, for example, or project management – while also applying within their specialist areas a deep understanding of conservation principles and processes. In either case becoming a Full Member of the IHBC has given them access to a unique array of professional services and standards, all focussed on the conservation of our historic places.

It is important to appreciate that when you become a Full Member of the IHBC, you will not be expected to have the same level of skills or experience across all the areas relevant to historic environment conservation. Strengths in one area can compensate for more theoretical experience in another.

[Click here](#) for full guidance.

Becoming a Full Member: Professional standards in conservation

To become a Full Member of the IHBC, you must complete a Full Member application form, and have the application approved by the Council of the IHBC. The application form (available on our web site at www.ihbc.org.uk) is designed to help you provide the Institute with a comprehensive understanding of your capacity to work as a conservation professional. This is conveyed primarily through the 'testimonial', your statement that you are able to meet the membership requirements of the IHBC.

The testimonial should convey a balance between your breadth of understanding of the process of conservation, and your depth of experience within one or more areas of conservation. The testimonial must be written up in accordance with the IHBC's professional standard, the Areas of Competence.

The IHBC's Areas of Competence are used to define our membership criteria and – with the competences that underpin them – these form the basis for our assessment and regulation of professional standards. The Areas of Competence are defined in terms of the 'Competences', specific specialist skills-sets that, when working in unison, underpin successful and sustainable historic environment conservation. They are identified in the following table:

AREAS OF COMPETENCE	Professional	Practical – Evaluation	Practical – Management	Practical – Intervention
COMPETENCES	1. Philosophy	3. History	5. Legislation & Policy	7. Design & Presentation
	2. Practice	4. Research, Recording & Analysis	6. Finance & Economics	8. Technology

Our web site provides detailed guidance on Areas of Competence and the application process through the 'Membership Standards and Guidelines for Applicants' (see [Membership Downloads](#)). **You must follow the institute's guidance if you are to demonstrate the necessary balance of skills, knowledge, experience and understanding across the Areas of Competence.**

What being a Full Member means

Full membership of the IHBC has specific entry requirements and brings with it mandatory duties and responsibilities. You must observe the Code of Conduct, carry out Continuing Professional Development (CPD), and apply relevant professional standards to your work. Failure to respect these principles will lead to disciplinary action.

Affiliate Members

Prospective applicants for full membership are strongly encouraged to first secure membership as an Affiliate Member of the IHBC, regardless of their professional background. Affiliate Members are those that expect to put in an application to become a Full Member, and as such the national office of the institute can provide them with suitable guidance and support. Even well-qualified professionals will find this route useful, as this provides a first step to full membership that can be more manageable for people already faced with significant professional duties.

Affiliate membership is an inclusive membership category. It is easy to subscribe to, and is structured to allow us to help you through the more substantial process of becoming a Full Member. As Affiliate status includes duties to observe our Code of Conduct and encourages CPD, it is the perfect training ground for prospective Full Members, or a testing ground for professionals exploring the advantages of being a Full Member. As a membership class, Affiliate Member applies equally well to individuals early in their career or to experienced professionals interested in exploring the benefits of full membership of the IHBC.

Entry routes for Full Members

Routes to full membership of the IHBC are very varied, reflecting the wide range of skills-sets that conservation of the historic environment can require. Furthermore, as entry depends on the acceptance of the application form by the IHBC's Council, no single route can guarantee full membership. Regardless of training, skills and experience, a successful application must demonstrate the competences to an appropriate level.

That said, appropriate routes to developing the Areas of Competence to a suitable level include:

1. The equivalent of five years of professional experience in a suitable working environment, such as professional progress in an inter-disciplinary conservation practice, or a local planning authority conservation service. Typically the applicant will have achieved the status of 'Conservation Officer', as represented by the built environment class of Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) 3551 (see [www.
\[http://www.statistics.gov.uk/methods_quality/ns_sec/soc2000.asp\]\(http://www.statistics.gov.uk/methods_quality/ns_sec/soc2000.asp\)](http://www.statistics.gov.uk/methods_quality/ns_sec/soc2000.asp)) or its equivalent. Such experience may be complemented usefully by appropriate vocational qualifications identified in 4 below.
2. A passing grade in a conservation course recognised by the IHBC (see [Recognised Courses](#)), or a demonstrable equivalent *and* the equivalent of two

years of professional activity in a suitable working environment, as above.

3. A built environment professional qualification (architecture, surveying, planning, engineering etc), supplemented by

a. additional relevant experience, training and/or educational development outside the core discipline, for example through the completion of all or appropriate modules on conservation courses referred to in 2 above *and/or* relevant experience complemented by appropriate educational support programmes. The CPD programme provided at www.understandingconservation.org/, developed with the support of the IHBC, provides the standard for a pan-professional resource covering conservation interests for architects, surveyors, engineers, etc.

and/or (depending on the qualification and accreditation)

b. accreditation in conservation within that specialism [*N.B. The IHBC's Code of Conduct may impose ethical requirements that are additional to those identified within a professional's main discipline*]

4. Professional engagement in a sufficient range of specialised activities across the Institute's Areas of Competence to allow for the demonstration of an appropriate standard in conservation.

If an applicant has not had formal training or educational qualifications, or if skills have been developed outside traditional training programmes, an application can be usefully supported by securing relevant national occupational standards (NOSs) and/or vocational or equivalent qualifications (see www.ukstandards.org).

Among those accepted by the IHBC as providing a suitable framework for an application - and featured on the www.ukstandards.org website - are:

a. Conservation Consultancy vocational qualification (N/SVQ) level 5, for 'professionals already competent in a relevant discipline, including architecture, landscape architecture, town planning, structural and building services engineering, building economics and building surveying' [see http://www.ukstandards.org/Find_Occupational_Standards.aspx?NosFindID=4&FormMode=ViewModeSuite&SuiteID=781]

b. Conservation Control vocational qualification (N/SVQ) Level 4 [see http://www.ukstandards.org/Find_Occupational_Standards.aspx?NosFindID=4&SuiteID=782; as of 2007 no longer available]

c. Built Environment Development and Control vocational qualification (N/SVQ) Level 4, **where the options secure a suitable balance of the Areas of Competence** (see http://www.ukstandards.org/Find_Occupational_Standards.aspx?NosFindID=4&FormMode=ViewModeSuite&SuiteID=950)

d. Other Professional, Managerial and Technical Occupations in the Built Environment National Occupational Standards where balanced by

appropriate experience

e. Other vocational qualifications that correspond to the competences where applicants can convey sufficient additional skills, knowledge, experience and understanding, including Architectural Practice, Archaeological Practice, Cultural Heritage, Environmental Conservation Management etc.

Regardless of the route taken, the essential pre-requisite for successful applications for full membership is the demonstration of an appropriate balance of the Areas of Competence and the corresponding competences. Regardless of your actual experience or standing in conservation, unless your application demonstrates a sufficient standard in your capacity to operate as a conservation professional, membership of the IHBC cannot be granted.

And finally...

And of course you have our full encouragement and support in submitting your application. If you are taking the trouble to apply, we will do our best to help you, advise you and guide you in the process. We appreciate it takes some time to prepare your submission, so if there are any queries do not hesitate to contact our dedicated national office at membershipservices@ihbc.org.uk.

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