

The Recognition of Professional Qualifications and Regulation of Professions Call for Evidence

What is your email address?

If you enter your email address then you will automatically receive an acknowledgement email when you submit your response.

Email *consultations@ihbc.org.uk*

If applicable, which organisation do you represent? (optional)

Organisation

Institute of Historic Building Conservation

Are you happy for your response to be published?

(Required)

Yes

How did you hear about this consultation?

Email from elsewhere

Please choose one of the options below. Are you:

(Required)

Other

If other, please specify

Professional body

Please tell us a little bit about who you are, including why you are interested in responding to this call for evidence. This may include any professional or policy experience, expertise, or research you wish to share. If you are happy to do so, please also let us know who you are and any organisational or institutional affiliations.

The Institute of Historic Building Conservation (IHBC) is the professional body of the United Kingdom representing conservation specialists and historic environment practitioners in the public and private sectors. The Institute exists to establish the highest standards of conservation practice, to support the effective protection and enhancement of the historic environment, and to promote heritage-led regeneration and access to the historic environment for all.

Working with heritage involves making informed judgments and compromises, to achieve the best overall outcomes. Heritage and conservation practices are often undertaken by people from distinct and diverse professional disciplines such as architecture, surveying, engineering and planning. These different disciplines often have their own professional bodies, qualification requirements and professional codes of conduct. Most of these have disciplines their own separate specialist conservation regulation and accreditation systems – CIAT Conservation Register, RIBA Conservation Register, ICE Conservation Accreditation Register of Engineers etc- but others such as planning or archaeology do not have.

Membership of the IHBC indicates professional competencies in dealing with the built and historic environment, its places, buildings and structures, while accredited membership offers relevant quality assurance, in addition to any core professional memberships. It is a voluntary regulation framework. IHBC membership recognises professional activity and experience which extends beyond initial professional specialisms. The approach is defined by the international standards of the ICOMOS Guidelines for Education and training in the conservation of Monuments, Ensembles and Sites ¹(1993) which is the UK standard that defines our cultural management skills perspectives on the care of places. In addition, and in parallel, we incorporate the World Bank's model of environmental project management² which articulates the same model project management and evaluation processes within which members apply their skills. Together these define the standard that underpin the IHBC and are captured in the operation application of the IHBC's Conservation Cycle, as described for example in our draft 'Corporate Plan 2020-25'³.

Successful conservation depends on a combination of academic training, practical experience and insight and accreditation in conservation is based on evidence to show that these requirements have been achieved. Using accredited conservation advice will help properly understand, manage and care for buildings and places.

In which sectors are you primarily interested?

The built and historic environment; and more specifically its care, conservation and sustainable development

In which professions are you primarily interested?

Built and historic environment conservation professionals including those with parallel qualifications as specialist conservation professionals, including architects, engineers, surveyors etc

In which countries are you primarily interested?

England Wales Scotland Northern Ireland

EU/Iceland/Liechtenstein/Norway/Switzerland Other country

If other, please specify.

Please let us know anything you think we need to understand regarding how effectively regulation works within the sectors in which you have particular interest or expertise.

The regulatory system does not generally operate in the conservation historic buildings and areas. Voluntary accreditation is offered through professional bodies such as the Institute of Historic Building Conservation

¹ <https://www.icomos.org/en/charters-and-texts/179-articles-en-francais/ressources/charters-and-standards/187-guidelines-for-education-and-training-in-the-conservation-of-monuments-ensembles-and-sites>

² <https://ihbconline.co.uk/toolbox/docs/download.pdf>, especially Table 2

³ CP25: <https://newsblogsnew.ihbc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/IHBC-Corporate-Plan-2020-25-CP25-Consulation-v.011119-.pdf>

Accreditation in the built and historic environment sector is generally specific to a single core profession such as the RIBA Conservation Register for architects and ICE Conservation Accreditation, CIAT Conservation Register for Architectural Technologists or the Register of Engineers for engineers. Many are members or supported of COTAC⁴ and/or the linked 'Edinburgh Group'⁵ network it supports. IHBC accreditation differs from more familiar conservation specialisms in traditional disciplines in that it operates primarily by regulating both multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary professional practice in conservation.

The care of the historic and built environment is especially important and should be protected by using the skills of those with professional accreditation and could be additionally protected by professional accreditation which is regulated. Our historic environment is a precious and finite resource. Good maintenance and repair of historic buildings is fundamental to their preservation. Important buildings are recognised through Listing statutory protection and formal consent is required for their demolition, alteration or extension. When repairs and alterations to historic buildings are necessary, the correct skills are vital to their protection they need to be designed, promoted, specified and controlled by professionals with special conservation skills. The IHBC's conservation accreditation uniquely recognises the multi-disciplinary skills required to manage and deliver conservation as codified in international conservation skills standards specified in ICOMOS's 1993 guidance.

Please let us know anything you think we need to understand regarding how accessible the regulatory system is within the sectors in which you have particular interest or expertise.

The regulatory system does not generally operate in historic building conservation. Voluntary accreditation is offered through professional bodies such as the Institute of Historic Building Conservation

Please let us know anything you think we need to understand regarding the extent to which the regulatory system is proportionate and/or offers good value for money (for all stakeholders) within the sectors in which you have particular interest or expertise.

Please let us know anything you think we need to understand regarding how effectively the regulatory system serves public interests within the sectors in which you have particular interest or expertise.

The regulatory system currently has limited impact on the multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary practice of built and historic environment conservation. Currently most such conservation of historic buildings activity is carried out by voluntary regulation. Certain qualifications or experience are required for membership of professional bodies such as the

⁴ <https://www.cotac.global>

⁵ <https://www.cotac.global/edinburghgroup/>

Institute of Historic Building Conservation but without membership it is still possible to practice.

The formal recognition and accreditation of building conservation professionals is carried out by a number of professional bodies. The foundation of consistency in conservation accreditation are the principles of the ICOMOS Guidelines for Education and training in the conservation of Monuments, Ensembles and Sites ⁶(1993).

Like professionals working on all buildings, especially where there is potential risk if carried out incorrectly, it may be more appropriate for those working with historic buildings and areas specifically to be a regulated profession. This would ensure a legal requirement to handle our heritage with the appropriate knowledge and training.

The evaluation of multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary skills available through the IHBC's evaluation system provides a possible model for this accreditation as there is no other recognised single accreditation in Britain for conservation professionals. Full Membership of the IHBC confirms that an individual has attained a balance and level of skills, knowledge, experience and understanding to advise on and, where suitably skilled, to carry out professional operations in the historic and built environment. With no comparable model within the sector ours is the only such multidisciplinary model in operation.

⁶ <https://www.icomos.org/en/charters-and-texts/179-articles-en-francais/ressources/charters-and-standards/187-guidelines-for-education-and-training-in-the-conservation-of-monuments-ensembles-and-sites>