

Overview

This standard is about assessing the conservation needs of cultural heritage. Cultural heritage can refer to objects that are on display or in storage or to historic buildings, structures, sites or settings. They could be part of a collection or a series of collections. Conservation needs could involve conservation treatments or preventive conservation measures.

It includes inspecting cultural heritage, identifying and assessing their nature and use, assessing their condition and its likely causes, identifying established procedures to monitor environmental conditions, recording observations and assessments and reporting findings. This may include the use of ongoing monitoring and auditing as part of the assessment.

This standard is for anyone who is responsible for assessing the conservation needs of cultural heritage.

Performance criteria

You must be able to:

1. refer to appropriate records to obtain information about the significance, context, materials and structure of the cultural heritage you are assessing
2. obtain reliable information about how cultural heritage is, or is going to be, displayed, stored, protected or used
3. evaluate the risks of assessment activities on cultural heritage before undertaking them
4. assess the condition of cultural heritage, identifying recognised visual and other signs of damage, degradation or decay
5. identify any need for on-going monitoring and auditing as part of the assessment
6. identify the likely cause of damage, degradation or decay within the limits of your expertise and experience
7. seek advice from specialists or arrange for further analysis when more information is needed
8. identify and assess any risks posed by the condition of cultural heritage and its current or expected use and environment
9. identify suitable methods for monitoring the environment and routine adjustments that can be made to prevent deterioration within appropriate conservation guidelines
10. record and report observations and assessments in line with organisational procedures
11. liaise with appropriate people in working towards the best options for the treatment and care of cultural heritage
12. work within health and safety parameters when assessing cultural heritage

Knowledge and understanding

You need to know and understand:

1. the significance in its context of the cultural heritage you are assessing
2. how to find, interpret and use existing and previous records
3. the physical and chemical characteristics of materials, the causes and characteristics of decay of heritage, and the effects of treatment and preventative measures on long-term condition and use of the heritage
4. the links between materials, structure, environment and use of the cultural heritage you are assessing and actual or potential damage, degradation and decay
5. how to distinguish between active and historic deterioration and relate this to environmental factors
6. how to find out about any planned or expected changes to location or use
7. the significance of change in condition of cultural heritage
8. the limits of your expertise and experience and who to refer to
9. how to use methods for assessment that will not threaten the condition or integrity of the cultural heritage to any significant extent
10. how to identify and assess condition using visual and other senses
11. how frequently monitoring and recording is necessary, and when to adjust these intervals according to observed problems
12. how to use recording devices and interpret their readings
13. the level at which the reporting is to be carried out, whether individual object or collection, part or whole of a structure
14. the implications of any conservation or preservation measures you identify, the health and safety implications of this approach and the long-term effect on the materials and structure
15. the probable consequences of not taking any action, including risks to the cultural heritage and any associated objects or structures and to health and safety
16. the context in which you are working, and the relevant organisational and conservation policies
17. communication channels, who to liaise with and when
18. how to carry out recommended work without putting yourself, other people or cultural heritage at risk

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