

Victoria and Albert Museum
South Kensington
London SW7 2RL

Phone +44 (0)20 7942 2000
Fax +44 (0)20 7942 2266
Visit www.vam.ac.uk



The Committee Chairperson
Higher Education Quality Committee
The Council on Higher Education
Pretoria
South Africa

10th June 2015

Dear Sir/Madam

Letter of Endorsement: Accreditation

The V&A Conservation Department has been in contact with The South African Institute for Heritage Science and Conservation since 2003. During this time, there has been a regular exchange of information between our two organisations as the Institute has developed and extended its conservation training programmes. The Conservation Department has facilitated fact-finding visits for staff from the Institute to our conservation workshops and other UK National Museums.

I have personally been involved with the Institute's programme from 1994, when the first ceramics and glass conservation programmes were developed. Throughout my association with this burgeoning conservation training entity, the Institute has consistently maintained a professional and intellectually rigorous approach to the development of its conservation training programmes. It has actively developed its staff to equip them with the knowledge and confidence to teach an expanded curriculum. During a brief visit to the conservation workshops, I was impressed by the holistic approach to teaching, which combines good practical skills, intellectual understanding of materials, problem solving and reflective learning, whilst also incorporating unique adaptations to the African context. These skills are essential for conservators who are likely to work as private practitioners and face complex conservation situations in their future careers.

It is my understanding that the Institute's conservation training programme by and large constitutes a sole national resource of its kind within South Africa. During the past twenty-one years, the Institute's conservation model and curriculum path have been refined and become resilient. The conservation study programmes go from strength to strength and are making a valuable and significant contribution to heritage management and preservation studies.

I would respectfully recommend that strong consideration be given to extending accreditation to the Institute's training programme within South Africa's higher education framework at Postgraduate Diploma level.

Yours sincerely

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Sandra Smith FSA FIIC ACR
Head of Conservation
Conservation and Collections Management Division
Victoria and Albert Museum
South Kensington
London SW7 2RL

Tel +44 (0) 2079422132
Mobile +44 (0) 7917586807
Email: sm.smith@vam.ac.uk