

University of Pretoria Yearbook 2025

MSocSci specialising in Heritage Conservation (Coursework) (01253120)

Department School of the Arts

Minimum duration of study 2 years

Total credits 180

NQF level 09

Programme information

This programme is directed at a general education in preventive conservation/preservation and general collections-based management of tangible cultural heritage (TCH) resources, with a view to specialise in the management of TCH, preservation of TCH or conservation of TCH.

Admission requirements

1. Relevant honours degree
or
Relevant four-year bachelor's degree
2. A weighted average of at least 65% for the honours
or
A weighted average of at least 65% at final-year level of the four-year bachelor's degree

Additional requirements

A limited number of places are available. Selection for the programme is on an individual basis and may require an interview.

Other programme-specific information

The programme is offered over two years of which both years are presented at Van Wouw House, 299 Clark Street, Brooklyn. All modules must be passed to progress to the second year of the programme at or carried out under supervision in a partner institution or under supervision in private practice. Students are required to attend relevant departmental seminars as well as local conferences to present aspects of their research project. A poster presentation of their research report is strongly recommended. Students must conduct 5-6 months of conservation or collections-based research by the end of the master's programme and demonstrate mastery over basic conservation techniques. The MSocSci (Tangible Heritage Conservation) by coursework can be completed in segments as part of continuing professional development.

Examinations and pass requirements

A student must pass all the modules at the end of the first year of study. Students who do not successfully complete the first year of the programme will not be admitted to the second year.

In addition to the successful completion for all modules, all the students are required to perform the following as part of their continuous assessment:

- Perform on outreach activities
- Participate in the departmental seminar series when in residence
- Submit a draft article to an accredited publication at the end of their study
- Demonstrate mastery over basic and intermediate preservation and conservation interventions
- Complete a 5 to 6 weeks full-time (or 9–10 weeks part-time) supervised and documented internship
- Submit a mini-dissertation of 20 000–30 000 words on an approved conservation topic.

Curriculum: Year 1

Core modules

Conservation principles and strategies 801 (THC 801)

Module credits	6.00
NQF Level	09
Prerequisites	No prerequisites.
Contact time	2 Block weeks
Language of tuition	Module is presented in English
Department	School of the Arts
Period of presentation	Semester 1

Module content

This introductory module reviews the significance, value and use of cultural heritage, as well as the roles and responsibilities of its custodians within relevant professional, ethical and legislative frameworks. This module has both theoretical and practical components where preservation and collections care principles and strategies will be examined, practised, reviewed, and discussed for appropriate decision-making. In addition, the module will consider the shifts, conflicts and tensions in the museum and will critically examine the frictions between the global and the local in an attempt to reimagine the institution in the contemporary moment.

Science fundamentals for conservation 802 (THC 802)

Module credits	18.00
NQF Level	09
Prerequisites	No prerequisites.
Contact time	2 lectures per week, 1 practical per week
Language of tuition	Module is presented in English
Department	School of the Arts
Period of presentation	Semester 1

Module content

An introductory chemistry module specifically tailored at enabling students with no previous science background to gain a greater insight into the chemical processes present in the practices and techniques used in conservation. Module content focusses on major conservation issues including material types, environment, cleaning and deterioration.

Research theory and methodology in conservation 803 (THC 803)

Module credits	18.00
NQF Level	09
Prerequisites	No prerequisites.

Contact time	2 lectures per week, 1 practical per week
Language of tuition	Module is presented in English
Department	School of the Arts
Period of presentation	Semester 1

Module content

This module focusses on the research involved in conservation, aspects of collections-based research including documentation of artefacts, photography, the preparation of research projects, writing project proposals and academic writing for publication. This module has both theoretical and practical components where students will examine, document and carry out analyses on a variety of museum objects.

Materials, mechanisms of decay and stabilisation of artefacts 810 (THC 810)

Module credits	48.00
NQF Level	09
Prerequisites	No prerequisites
Contact time	4 practicals per week, 4 lectures per week, Yes
Language of tuition	Module is presented in English
Department	Historical and Heritage Studies
Period of presentation	Year

Module content

This module explores the physical, mechanical and chemical properties of organic, inorganic and synthetic base materials. It explores the technology and manufacturing processes involved in creating or assembling a variety of heritage objects. Each material type is explored in dedicated block sessions where individual objects are discussed according to material types and properties, potential risks and weaknesses identified, and appropriate storage, exhibition and handling guidelines examined. This module has both theoretical and practical components where students will learn to differentiate between material types, isolating different component parts of composite objects and learning about examination, documentation and record keeping in conservation. The introductory principles of remedial conservation will be explored from treatment options and evaluation with final decision-making processes for appropriate treatment options for cleaning, stabilisation and conservation of artefacts.

Curriculum: Final year

Core modules

Mini-dissertation: Tangible heritage conservation 800 (THC 800)

Module credits	60.00
NQF Level	09
Prerequisites	No prerequisites.
Language of tuition	Module is presented in English
Department	School of the Arts
Period of presentation	Year

Module content

A mini-dissertation of 20 000– 30 000 word on an approved conservation-based topic.

Collections-based training (internship) 805 (THC 805)

Module credits	30.00
NQF Level	09
Prerequisites	No prerequisites.
Contact time	Yes
Language of tuition	Module is presented in English
Department	School of the Arts
Period of presentation	Semester 1

Module content

Practice forms an integral part of interventive conservation to apply theoretical knowledge on treatment evaluation and development, decision-making and to hone bench skills. This is a compulsory module for training in interventive/remedial conservation in the field of specialisation of the students choosing, dependant on the availability of the particular field of specialisation available at the University. Training is carried out under supervision within a museum collection or in private practice with an approved conservator-restorer and contains the practical component of the mini-dissertation.

General Academic Regulations and Student Rules

The [General Academic Regulations \(G Regulations\)](#) and [General Student Rules](#) apply to all faculties and registered students of the University, as well as all prospective students who have accepted an offer of a place at the University of Pretoria. On registering for a programme, the student bears the responsibility of ensuring that they familiarise themselves with the General Academic Regulations applicable to their registration, as well as the relevant faculty-specific and programme-specific regulations and information as stipulated in the relevant yearbook. Ignorance concerning these regulations will not be accepted as an excuse for any transgression, or

basis for an exception to any of the aforementioned regulations. The G Regulations are updated annually and may be amended after the publication of this information.

Regulations, degree requirements and information

The faculty regulations, information on and requirements for the degrees published here are subject to change and may be amended after the publication of this information.

University of Pretoria Programme Qualification Mix (PQM) verification project

The higher education sector has undergone an extensive alignment to the Higher Education Qualification Sub-Framework (HEQSF) across all institutions in South Africa. In order to comply with the HEQSF, all institutions are legally required to participate in a national initiative led by regulatory bodies such as the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), the Council on Higher Education (CHE), and the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA). The University of Pretoria is presently engaged in an ongoing effort to align its qualifications and programmes with the HEQSF criteria. Current and prospective students should take note that changes to UP qualification and programme names, may occur as a result of the HEQSF initiative. Students are advised to contact their faculties if they have any questions.