

Developing the cultural heritage workforce

Consultation on the development of a workforce action plan for the cultural heritage workforce

creative
& cultural
skills

MUSEUMS
ASSOCIATION

A workforce action plan for the cultural heritage sector:

In recent years there has been a growing focus on the effectiveness and development of the UK's workforce. This has been mirrored by an increasing interest and concern about some workforce issues affecting the cultural heritage sector.

Sector Skills Councils were established as independent employer-led UK wide organisations. Their remit is to:

- reduce skills gaps and shortages
- improve productivity, business and public service performance
- increase opportunities to boost the skills and productivity of everyone in the sector's workforce
- improve learning supply including apprenticeships, higher education and National Occupational Standards (NOS).

The Sector Skills Council that represents cultural heritage is Creative & Cultural Skills (CCSkills). This sector includes built heritage, museums and galleries, conservation and archaeology.

To support the development of the cultural heritage workforce, the Museums Association (MA) is working with CCSkills and its Cultural Heritage Skills Advisory Panel to develop an action plan to address some of the workforce issues affecting the sector. (membership of the panel can be found in appendix 1 of the full consultation document available at www.museumsassociation.org)

Scope and development of the action plan

The action plan will be broadly applicable across the UK, and relevant across all the sub sectors: conservation, archaeology, built heritage and museums and galleries. Although the plan will include areas of interest and influence to CCSkills, such as skills development and qualifications reform, it will also include issues and suggest solutions that go beyond their remit. These need to be addressed by employers, individuals and other bodies within the sector.

This consultation document has been informed by the discussions and contributions of the Cultural Heritage Skills Advisory Panel members. The action plan will focus on the following areas:

- workforce diversity
- entry into the sector
- development
- leadership, management and entrepreneurship
- sector-specific skills and knowledge.

The action plan should be led by and reflect the needs of the sector's employers. We are particularly seeking the views of employers, as well as others who work in the sector.

The main focus is to identify specific actions that the sector can undertake to improve and develop the workforce. These range from recommendations for some UK-wide initiatives, which may require funding, to smaller actions that individual organisations or regional partnerships may take forward.

What are we consulting on?

The focus is to seek views, identify existing examples of good practice and elicit suggestions of additional or alternative actions.

The action plan aims to reflect the needs of the whole sector. What has been proposed may not currently reflect the needs of your organisation. The consultation is an opportunity to rectify this.

The consultation document is in two parts: an executive summary provided here, which outlines key challenges and suggests some priority actions, and the full document which can be found at www.museumsassociation.org

Consultation questions

Executive summary

1. Do you agree that the recommendations suggested here are the most important?

Full document

Under each of the workforce areas where potential actions have been suggested we ask you to consider the following:

2. Have you experienced, or do you know of any examples of activities or approaches being used to address this issue?
3. Can you contribute additional actions that you think could make an impact on this area of workforce development?
4. Which of the suggested actions would have the most impact on you or your organisation?

Who are we consulting?

Sector employers and representative bodies across the UK and the sub sectors.

How to respond

Responses to the consultation can be sent by 13 June to Caitlin Griffiths

The Museums Association
24 Calvin Street
London E1 6NW
caitlin@museumsassociation.org

The Cultural Heritage Action Plan will be published in September 2008

Executive summary

Creative & Cultural Skills and the cultural heritage sector

Developing the workforce for the cultural heritage sector

The aim

To strive for a workforce which as well as being diverse and skilled to deliver the changing work of the sector and meet the needs of the public, is creative, knowledgeable, imaginative and willing to take risks...

Challenges and key recommendations

The plan proposes a wide range of actions so that every organisation is able to make changes to develop and improve its workforce. However for significant change to happen the following are recommended as priorities:

A. Workforce diversity and entry in to the sector

Challenges

- to increase the diversity of the sector's workforce – socioeconomic, ethnic, gender and disability. The lack of diversity extends to all areas, including governing bodies and volunteers
- to create more ways of entering the workforce. Currently entry routes are narrow and potentially discriminatory.

Recommendations

To open up and diversify the cultural heritage sector workforce we recommend:

- the development of careers advice that reflects the variety of jobs within the sector. Active promotion of careers to encourage a wide range of people to consider working in the sector
- the creation of a UK-wide framework and best practice guidance for high-quality work placements and volunteering opportunities; particularly targeted to those who currently do not engage with the sector
- an increased use of positive action schemes, embedding them into organisational working practice
- the development and delivery of more employer-led entry training opportunities, such as a national programme of apprenticeships and traineeships.

B. Development, leadership and entrepreneurship

Challenges

- to nurture and develop our staff, and to train and develop them appropriately
- to continue and expand the progress that has been made to improve the leadership and management abilities of those in the sector, in particular to develop the skills of new leaders and at governance level
- to address the growing need for business and entrepreneurial skills.

Recommendations

To ensure people develop and have the right skills and knowledge and can lead the sector we recommend:

- the development of a national secondment scheme
- the creation of a listing and brokering service for development opportunities – to source, coordinate, and promote a range of opportunities: mentoring, secondments, shadowing, study visits, learning sets etc together with guidance on hosting development activities
- the establishment of a national framework to offer structured development for recent entrants in their formative years
- a programme of training for line managers to enable them to develop their staff.

C. Sector-specific skills and knowledge

Challenges

- to develop sector-specific knowledge and skills so that the sector can fulfil its core function – to understand, communicate, preserve and develop the UK's cultural heritage. The sector is at risk of losing expertise in some areas, and failing to keep up in others.

Recommendations

To ensure the availability of sector-specific skills and knowledge are not lost we need to:

- identify the specialist skills needed in the sector that are in short supply or at risk and take action to strengthen them.

