CORE CONCEPT

Manuscript and Paper Conservation Course: Condition Surveys, Storage and Lab Treatments

9 – 13 November 2026
Paris - Right Bank business hotel

Manuscript and Paper Conservation Course: Condition Surveys, Storage and Lab Treatments

Ref: 1968_29199 **Date:** 9 – 13 November 2026 **Location:** Paris - Right Bank business hotel **Fees:** 23500 SAR

Introduction:

Manuscript and paper conservation, covering condition surveys, storage and lab treatments, is a 1-week course for library, archive, museum and religious-heritage collection staff that ends with a Manuscript Conservation and Storage Plan for a case collection. Holding institutions lose text and bindings to ink corrosion, mould after leaks, insect attack and rough handling during scanning, often because condition was never surveyed. Nominees already handle, catalogue or store manuscripts, and the course runs as a conservation lab with bench exercises. CoreConcept Training Center delivers this manuscript and paper conservation course.

Course Objectives:

- Identify deterioration in paper, parchment, iron-gall ink, pigments and leather bindings and link each sign to its cause
- Carry out item-level and sampled collection condition surveys that rank manuscripts by risk and treatment need
- Specify storage and display conditions for paper and parchment holdings, including relative humidity, temperature, light and enclosures
- Respond to insect infestation, mould growth and water damage affecting books and documents using salvage and drying routines
- Perform basic bench treatments such as dry surface cleaning, tear mending, humidification, flattening and rehousing within minimal intervention limits
- Set safe handling and cradle rules for manuscripts entering imaging and scanning work

Target Audience:

- Manuscript and rare book staff responsible for handling, cataloguing and retrieving bound volumes and loose leaves
- Archive staff responsible for historic correspondence, deeds, maps and paper files in repository stores
- Conservation bench staff responsible for cleaning, mending and rehousing paper-based items
- Religious-heritage library staff responsible for endowed manuscript holdings and their reading rooms
- Collections care staff responsible for monitoring stores, pest traps and environmental data loggers
- Imaging staff responsible for preparing fragile items for scanning and photography

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Course Outline:

Day 1: Paper, Parchment and Ink Deterioration Mechanisms

- Cellulose Fibre Structure, Lignin Content and Acid Hydrolysis
- Parchment Collagen, Liming History and Hygroscopic Movement
- Iron-Gall Ink Corrosion, Haloing and Text Loss Patterns
- Foxing, Cockling, Red Rot and Flaking Media Identification
- Damage Vocabulary Glossary for Recording Manuscript Condition

Day 2: Condition Surveys and Treatment Priorities

- General Preservation Assessment Versus Item-by-Item Survey Design
- Random Sampling Method for Large Manuscript Collection Surveys
- Condition Survey Form Fields, Photographs and Risk Ratings
- Treatment Priority Matrix Combining Value, Use and Damage
- Minimal Intervention and Reversibility Principles in Treatment Decisions

Day 3: Storage Environments, Enclosures and Bench Treatments

- Relative Humidity and Temperature Targets for Paper Stores
- Lux and Ultraviolet Limits for Displaying Manuscript Leaves
- Acid-Free Boxes, Phase Boxes and Polyester Sleeve Selection
- Dry Surface Cleaning With Brushes, Smoke Sponges and Erasers
- Japanese Tissue Mending With Wheat Starch Paste and Methyl Cellulose

Day 4: Pests, Water Damage, Mould and Digitisation Risk

- Integrated Pest Management Trap Plans for Book Stores
- Low-Oxygen and Freezing Treatment Choices for Infested Volumes
- Water-Damaged Book Salvage by Freezing and Air Drying
- Mould Removal by Aspiration With Personal Protective Equipment
- Book Cradles, Opening Angles and Handling Rules for Scanning

Day 5: Conservation Lab Case Study and Storage Plan

- Case Study Surveying a Mixed Endowed Manuscript Collection
- Humidification Chamber and Blotter Flattening of Cockled Leaves
- Rehousing Specification for Survey-Ranked Priority Items
- Pest, Leak and Mould Response Steps for the Case Store
- Manuscript Conservation and Storage Plan Completion and Peer Review

Skills You Will Gain:

- Deterioration Diagnosis
- Condition Survey Sampling
- Conservation Treatment Prioritisation
- Archival Enclosure Specification
- Paper Mending Technique
- Book Salvage Response
- Integrated Pest Management
- Imaging Handling Control

Why Attend This Course:

- Present a Manuscript Conservation and Storage Plan to the head of collections and the facilities lead for approval and funding
- Decide which manuscripts to treat in-house, rehouse only or refer to a specialist conservator using survey evidence
- Avoid ink corrosion losses, mould outbreaks after leaks and tears caused during scanning sessions
- Train reading-room, store and imaging colleagues in handling rules, cleaning routines and survey forms used during the lab exercises

Conclusion:

Back at work, the participant presents the Manuscript Conservation and Storage Plan to the head of collections, the facilities lead and the imaging team. They use it to agree which items to rehouse first, which store conditions to correct, which damaged leaves to treat on the bench and which to refer to a specialist conservator. After the first survey cycle under the plan, the unit should compare logged humidity, pest catches, handling incidents and treated item counts with the baseline and reset priorities.

Frequently Asked Questions FAQ:

What should participants know before a manuscript and paper conservation course?

Participants should already handle, catalogue or store manuscripts, archives or historic books. No chemistry background is needed. Bringing anonymised photographs of damaged items and any store humidity records helps the survey and bench exercises reflect real holdings.

How does manuscript and paper conservation differ from a museum collections management course?

It concentrates on paper, parchment, ink and bindings at the bench: how they decay, how to survey them and how to clean, mend, flatten and house them. Museum management courses cover governance, acquisitions, loans and exhibitions across all object types.

Why does manuscript and paper conservation favour minimal intervention?

Every treatment removes or adds material and can erase evidence of how a manuscript was made and used. Stabilising condition, using reversible adhesives and documenting each step protects the item and leaves options open for future conservators.

What do participants take back from the manuscript and paper conservation course?

Participants take back a Manuscript Conservation and Storage Plan for a case collection, with a survey form, priority matrix, enclosure specification, pest and water-damage response steps and handling rules for scanning.