

ROYAL CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION
BHUTAN CIVIL SERVICE EXAMINATION (BCSE) 2025
EXAMINATION CATEGORY: TECHNICAL

PAPER III: SUBJECT SPECIALISATION PAPER FOR CONSERVATOR

Date	:	October 11, 2025
Total Marks	:	100
Writing Time	:	50 minutes (2.5 hours)
Reading Time	:	15 Minutes (prior to examination time)

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Write your Registration Number clearly and correctly on the Answer Booklet.
2. The first 15 minutes is to check the number of pages of the Question Paper, printing errors, clarify doubts and to read the instructions. You are NOT permitted to write during this time.
3. This paper consists of **TWO SECTIONS**, namely SECTION A & SECTION B:
 - **SECTION A** has two parts: Part I - 50 Multiple Choice Questions
Part II – 10 Short Answer Questions
 - **SECTION B** has two long Answer Questions

All questions under both SECTION A & SECTION B are COMPULSORY.

4. All answers should be written on the Answer Booklet provided to you. Candidates are not allowed to write anything on the question paper. If required, ask for additional Answer Booklet.
5. All answers should be written with correct numbering of Section, Part and Question Number in the Answer Booklet provided to you. Note that any answer written without indicating the Section, Part and Question Number will NOT be evaluated and no marks will be awarded.
6. Begin each Section and Part on a fresh page of the Answer Booklet.
7. You are not permitted to tear off any sheet(s) of the Answer Booklet as well as the Question Paper.
8. Use of any other paper including paper for rough work is not permitted.
9. You must to hand over the Answer Booklet to the Invigilator before leaving the examination hall.
10. This paper has **8 printed pages**, including this instruction page.

GOOD LUCK!

SECTION A

PART I: Multiple Choice Questions [30 marks]

Choose the correct answer and write down the letter of your chosen answer in the Answer Booklet against the question number e.g. 31 (d). Each question carries ONE mark. Any double writing, smudgy answers or writing more than one choice shall not be evaluated.

1. Which of the following is NOT a function of a museum?
 - a) Conservation
 - b) Tax collection
 - c) Exhibition
 - d) Education
2. In Bhutan, the primary purpose of heritage conservation is to:
 - a) Boost tourism revenue only
 - b) Modernize all historical structures
 - c) Replace outdated buildings
 - d) Preserve cultural identity and spiritual values
3. Which of the following is an intangible cultural heritage?
 - a) Bronze statue
 - b) Religious manuscript
 - c) Mask dance
 - d) Stone pillar
4. Which of the following best defines a museologist?
 - a) A person who builds museums
 - b) A researcher of ancient texts
 - c) A conservation architect
 - d) A specialist in museum theory and practice
5. What is the primary goal of preventive conservation?
 - a) Minimizing deterioration before damage occurs
 - b) Displaying only newly acquired objects
 - c) Restoring damaged artifacts
 - d) Reproducing lost artifacts
6. Accessioning an object means:
 - a) Selling the object
 - b) Entering it into the museum's collection with a unique ID
 - c) Disposing of duplicate objects
 - d) Creating replicas for education
7. Which of the following is an appropriate material for archival storage?
 - a) Newspaper
 - b) Plastic bags
 - c) Acid-free tissue paper
 - d) Colored cardboard

8. What does an exhibition label typically contain?
 - a) Object title, date, material, and brief context
 - b) Full research article on the object
 - c) Artist's personal history only
 - d) Price of the object
9. Which of the following systems is used for digital documentation of collections?
 - a) Photoshop
 - b) Microsoft Word
 - c) Collections Management System (CMS)
 - d) Excel only
10. The term "deaccession" in museums refers to:
 - a) Removal of an object from the collection
 - b) Temporary loans for exhibition
 - c) Purchasing a new artifact
 - d) Importing items from abroad
11. Which international organization provides guidelines for museum ethics and professional standards?
 - a) UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization).
 - b) ICOM (International Council of Museums).
 - c) UNDP (United Nations Development Programme).
 - d) ICCROM (International Center for the Study of Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property).
12. Which of the following best describes the use of UV fluorescence in the conservation of heritage objects?
 - a) To measure temperature fluctuations in storage rooms
 - b) To detect biological growths, overpainting, or varnish layers not visible to the naked eye.
 - c) To assess the weight and density of organic artifacts.
 - d) To clean delicate surfaces without physical contact.
13. Which of the following **environments** is ideal for storing organic materials like textiles and paper?
 - a) High humidity and warm temperature
 - b) Dry with temperature above 35°C
 - c) Moderate relative humidity (45–55%) and stable temperature (~20°C)
 - d) Uncontrolled outdoor environment.
14. The term "intangible cultural heritage" includes:
 - a) Manuscripts
 - b) Songs, dances, and rituals
 - c) Historic buildings
 - d) Weaponry
15. What does "provenance" refer to in museum practice?
 - a) The artistic style of an object
 - b) The display method
 - c) The material used
 - d) The history of ownership and origin of an object

16. **Relative humidity (RH)** is important because:
- a) It affects how clean a museum looks
 - b) It determines ticket pricing
 - c) Higher RH helps preserve all materials.
 - d) Fluctuations can cause physical stress and damage to organic and inorganic materials
17. What is the best **cleaning method** for dusty textile surfaces?
- a) Rinsing with water
 - b) Rubbing with alcohol
 - c) Gently vacuuming through a protective screen
 - d) Using a wire brush.
18. An object infested by insects should first be:
- a) Washed with detergent
 - b) Isolated and assessed for pest control treatment
 - c) Displayed immediately
 - d) Sent abroad
19. What is the purpose of a **condition report**?
- a) To list visitor feedback
 - b) To record the display position of objects
 - c) To check employee performance
 - d) To document the physical state of an object before and after handling or loan.
20. Which of the following light sources is **least harmful** to sensitive materials?
- a) Natural daylight
 - b) LED lighting with UV filters
 - c) Incandescent spotlight
 - d) Halogen lamp
21. In the event of a mold outbreak, the first step is to:
- a) Vacuum all objects
 - b) Close the room and increase temperature.
 - c) Remove affected objects to a dry, ventilated space and reduce RH
 - d) Repaint the room.
22. **Preventive conservation** involves:
- a) Repairing broken statues
 - b) Environmental monitoring, storage, and pest control
 - c) Redesigning labels
 - d) Increasing footfall in galleries
23. The most suitable gloves for handling **metal artifacts** are:
- a) Cotton gloves
 - b) Rubber gloves
 - c) Nitrile or powder-free gloves
 - d) Woolen gloves
24. **Tarnishing of silver** is caused primarily by:
- a) Oxygen
 - b) Dust
 - c) Sulphur compounds in the air
 - d) Water exposure

25. The ideal way to store a thangka is:
- a) Rolled tightly and tied with string
 - b) Hung in direct light
 - c) Rolled with acid-free tissue on an archival tube in a dark, stable environment
 - d) Folded into a box
26. Which of the following is an **ethical principle** in conservation?
- a) Use of synthetic paints to modernize artwork
 - b) Repainting ancient murals for clarity
 - c) Minimum intervention and full reversibility of treatment
 - d) Changing the object's appearance to suit exhibition
27. A good educational program in a museum:
- a) Focuses only on students
 - b) Engages all age groups and learning levels
 - c) Replaces exhibitions
 - d) Uses only lectures
28. A museum's code of ethics ensures that:
- a) Staff follow office dress code
 - b) Operations are profit-oriented
 - c) Professional behavior upholds public trust and stewardship
 - d) Loans are made freely without agreements.
29. Which of the following is a non-invasive method of conservation?
- a) Using adhesive on artifacts
 - b) Applying varnish
 - c) Regulating temperature and humidity
 - d) Repainting missing areas
30. During an emergency like a flood or fire, the first step in collections response is to:
- a) Call the press
 - b) Evacuate staff and assess the situation
 - c) Turn on heating systems
 - d) Relabel objects

PART II – Short Answer Questions [20 marks]

Answer ALL the questions. Mark for each sub-question is indicated in the brackets. [5*4=20 marks]

Question 1

- a. Identify and briefly explain three core functions of a museum. **(1 mark)**
- b. Explain how museums in Bhutan can actively contribute to community engagement and public education. Include one or two specific examples to support your answer. **(2 marks)**
- c. Name two accredited museums of Bhutan and their thematic focus. **(2 marks)**

Question 2

- a. Define the difference between tangible and intangible cultural heritage. Support your explanation with one relevant example of each from Bhutan. **(2 marks)**
- b. What is a Collections Management System in the context of museum operations? Explain its role and significance in the preservation, documentation, and accessibility of museum collections. **(3 Marks)**

Question 3

- a. Write a brief press release announcing the opening of a new gallery at the Royal Heritage Museum, Trongsa. The release should highlight the gallery's theme, the significance of the launch, and its expected impact on cultural preservation and public engagement. **(3 Marks)**
- b. Draft a concise exhibition label (40–50 words) for a 19th-century handwoven *Kishuthara kira*. Your label should include the object's title, period, region of origin, material, and cultural significance. **(2 Marks)**

Question 4

- a. Identify and briefly describe three key preventive conservation measures used to safeguard museum collections. Explain how each practice contributes to long-term preservation. **(3 Marks)**
- b. A visitor accidentally knocks over and damages an object on display. Outline the immediate actions a museum professional should take following the incident, including object handling, documentation, and communication procedures. **(2 Marks)**

SECTION B: LONG ANSWER QUESTIONS [20 MARKS]

Choose either Case I OR Case II from this section. Each case study carries 50 marks. Mark for each sub-question is indicated in the brackets.

Case I: *Conservation of an 18th-Century Wall Mural in a Community Lhakhang.*

You have been assigned to assess and advise on the conservation of an 18th-century mural in a remote *Lhakhang*. The mural shows signs of deterioration, and the local *lam* and community members request that it be restored to its original appearance. You must balance professional conservation principles with community expectations.

1. Describe the key steps you would take to document and assess the condition of the mural, including any tools or techniques you would use. **(10 marks)**
2. How would you identify the primary causes of deterioration? **(5 Marks)**
3. Based on your assessment, recommend either a preventive or interventive conservation approach and justify your choice. **(10 marks)**
4. How would you explain key conservation principles, such as minimum intervention and reversibility to the *lam* and community in a culturally respectful manner? **(10 Marks)**
5. Recommend preventive measures to reduce further deterioration of the mural.
Describe how you would support the development of local capacity for regular monitoring and basic care of the site. **(15 Marks)**

Case II: Handling a Donated Artifact and Developing an Exhibit.

The National Museum of Bhutan has received a donation of a rare 18th-century ritual object, a *phurba* (ritual dagger) believed to have belonged to Tertön Pema Lingpa. The object shows minor corrosion on the metal tip, and there is limited accompanying documentation. No archival records exist to verify its provenance. The donor, a private collector from Thimphu, wishes for the object to be publicly exhibited as part of Bhutan's sacred heritage.

You are tasked with leading the documentation, conservation, and exhibition planning process for this artifact.

1. What systematic steps would you take to document the artifact, assess its historical context, and verify its authenticity and provenance, especially in the absence of formal records? **(10 Marks)**
2. How would you approach curating an exhibition around this phurba? What central theme or narrative would you explore to frame the object within Bhutan's spiritual and historical traditions? **(10 Marks)**
3. How would you interpret the object meaningfully for both Bhutanese and international audiences? **(10 Marks)**
4. How would you involve relevant stakeholders such as religious authorities, cultural scholars, and local communities in the decision-making process? **(10 Marks)**
5. Identify any ethical considerations that may arise in displaying or interpreting a sacred object like the phurba. **(10 Marks)**

TASHI DELEK