

Universal guidance for archaeological field evaluation

Published December 2023



The Chartered Institute for Archaeologists is incorporated by Royal Charter.

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1 Compliance with the Standard for archaeological field evaluation

- 1.1** Archaeological field evaluation may take place for many reasons and in many circumstances: the Standard and this guidance apply to all of them (see <https://www.archaeologists.net/codes/cifa>).
- 1.2** The Standard **must** be met as a professional obligation. This guidance describes universally applicable good practice for archaeological field evaluation that **should** be followed, setting out how the profession currently anticipates that the *Standard for archaeological field evaluation* may be met, and the *Code of conduct* complied with. If the work undertaken fails to meet the *Standard for archaeological field evaluation* because of the way in which it was conducted, that work is ‘sub-standard’.
- 1.3** This guidance outlines how outcomes or products **required** by the Standard can be attained and against which performance can be monitored. The archaeologist is free to make a considered selection of appropriate established techniques and to develop new methods. However, it is strongly recommended that the universal guidance for archaeological field evaluation, expressed using ‘**should**’ in this document, is followed to maximise the likelihood of compliance with the Standard. Other clauses indicate permitted actions or identify advisable or desirable actions.
- 1.4** Due regard **should** also be given to the jurisdiction-specific guidance on archaeological field evaluation to ensure the work undertaken is in accordance with the legislation and policy of the country or jurisdiction of the place of work.
- 1.5** Departures from the universally applicable or jurisdiction-specific guidance **should** be undertaken with caution. Clear justification is required, with the reasons formally documented, including information outlining how the different approach will meet the Standard.
- 1.6** Professional practice is always evolving. New methods are being developed, and the circumstances in which archaeological work is commissioned and conducted are subject to changing legal, administrative and ideological perspectives. This information is subject to regular review, and comments and recommendations on this guidance are welcome at any time.

2 Project design

Within this guidance project design is used as a universal term for the document that sets out how the archaeological work will be conducted. This document may be called something different depending on the jurisdiction of the work.

- 2.1** The project design author and/or project manager **should** be a Member (MCIfA) of CfA.

- 2.2** The project design **should** be specific to the project under consideration, advocating practicable methods of investigation that reflect the nature, extent, preservation and significance of the archaeological remains likely to be found. Templates should therefore be used with care.
- 2.3** The project design **should** set out the proposed scheme of investigation in enough detail that all relevant parties can understand and agree what will be done, assess whether it is fit for purpose and check that it complies with any conditions or obligations. It **should** provide a benchmark against which the results of the work can be monitored and measured.
- 2.4** All those engaged in the project, including monitors and those commissioning work, **should** have read and understood the project design.
- 2.5** The proposed project team **should** have access to suitable expertise and appropriate reference material to assess the significance of remains, including in relation to relevant research frameworks.
- 2.6** The project design **should** outline the research aims and the author **should** examine all appropriate resources.
- 2.7** The project design author **should** consider all available practicable methods of investigation and decide upon the most appropriate to meet the purpose of the work, seeking specialist advice where necessary.
- 2.8** Wherever possible, non-intrusive methods **should** be considered as the first option, with intrusive techniques used only where necessary to achieve the purpose of the archaeological field evaluation.
- 2.9** The project design **should** set out a dissemination approach which addresses where and how the answers to the project's research questions will be publicised to different audiences, during and after implementation. The approach to dissemination and the level of detail reported **should** be proportionate to the anticipated significance of the asset and include a process for review.
- 2.10** Health and safety issues, public liability and commercial confidentiality, while important considerations, **should** not be used as a barrier to public engagement without clear justification.
- 2.11** Any variations to the project design **should** be circulated and understood within the project team and agreed in writing by all relevant parties.
- 2.12** It is advisable for archaeological field evaluation projects to be governed by a written contract or agreement to which the project design may usefully be annexed.

2.13 It is advisable to include statements on ownership of the paper and digital archive and copyright in a written contract or agreement.

2.14 The following **should** normally be included in the project design or accompanying documentation, subject to jurisdiction-specific requirements. There is no need to replicate in the project design any information adequately covered by a permit, licence, contract, etc so long as it is available to relevant parties if required.

- (a) non-technical summary
- (b) site location (including map) and descriptions
- (c) context of the project
- (d) geological and topographical background
- (e) archaeological and historical background
- (f) a statement on the relevant technical, research and ethical competences of the organisation undertaking the work
- (g) research aims of the project, including explicit reference to existing research frameworks and objectives, where appropriate
- (h) methods of investigation, including environmental sampling and scientific dating strategies, where appropriate
- (i) methods of recording, including spatial data collection standards
- (j) arrangements for immediate conservation and storage of artefacts in accordance with the *Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials* (see <https://www.archaeologists.net/codes/cifa>)
- (k) methodology for producing a post-fieldwork assessment and analysis of project data
- (l) archiving strategy, including reference to data management plans, selection strategy and local repository requirements – in accordance with the *Standard and guidance for the creation, compilation, transfer and deposition of archaeological archives* (see <https://www.archaeologists.net/codes/cifa>)
- (m) publication, dissemination and engagement proposals detailing how the needs of relevant audiences will be met, including how the results may be usable for subsequent research
- (n) copyright
- (o) staffing (including specialists, both external and in-house), resources (excluding financial) and consideration of timescale
- (p) a statement on compliance with relevant professional, ethical and technical standards (including data standards), legislation and appropriate guidance
- (q) a tailored statement and plan detailing how public benefit will be delivered, including

consideration of the potential for engagement and participation proportionate to the project

- (r) health and safety considerations
- (s) reference to the environmental protection policy (including carbon reduction plan) applying to the project
- (t) arrangements for monitoring progress and compliance by regulators, clients and their agents
- (u) contingency arrangements

3 Project execution

- 3.1** It is the responsibility of the archaeologist undertaking the work to define appropriate staff levels. Sufficient and appropriate resources (staff, equipment, accommodation, etc) **should** be used to enable the successful completion of the project in accordance with the project design. Any contingency elements **should** be clearly identified and justified.
- 3.2** Commissioning bodies and monitors **should** be advised that a reasonable degree of flexibility and professional judgement may be necessary to meet project objectives. It **should** be clear that the nature and scale of post-investigation analyses, publications and the archive will be tailored to the significance and research potential of the assets.
- 3.3** The potential of the data and material to answer the research questions identified in the project design **should** be assessed by competent specialists. Artefacts and ecofacts **should** be assessed and reported on in accordance with *CifA Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials* (see <https://www.archaeologists.net/codes/cifa>).
- 3.4** The level of recording and analysis **should** be appropriate to the research aims and purpose of the project and **should** take account of the potential of artefacts and ecofacts to contribute to the understanding of the nature, extent, preservation and significance of a site or asset. For example, consideration **should** be given to the processing of environmental samples at the fieldwork stage, where appropriate, to support the assessment of significance and preservation.
- 3.5** Data generated from assessment and/or analysis **should** be included in the project archive in accordance with the archiving strategy, where applicable, and in accordance with the *Standard and guidance for the creation, compilation, transfer and deposition of archaeological archives* (see <https://www.archaeologists.net/codes/cifa>).
- 3.6** The archaeologist undertaking the work **should** respect the requirements of the client or commissioning body concerning confidentiality, but **should** emphasise their professional obligation to make the results of archaeological work available to the wider archaeological community in accordance with the stated timeframe in the project design.

- 3.7** Subject to any reasonable contractual requirements on confidentiality, copies of the report **should** be submitted to an appropriate national or local record in accordance with the stated timeframe outlined in the project design.
- 3.8** The digital report **should** be made available online to ensure that the results of the project are readily available to support public dissemination, future research and/or decisions about the site or asset.
- 3.9** The report **should** normally include
- (a) non-technical summary
 - (b) the project design or appropriate reference to it
 - (c) the aims, objectives and methods used, including any departure from the project design
 - (d) results, referring to the research aims in the project design and including research implications
 - (e) illustrations, plans and essential technical and supporting detail, with accurate spatial information sufficient to locate the areas of investigation in the future
 - (f) conclusions, including a confidence rating on techniques used, and any recommendations for further work that might improve that confidence
 - (g) archive locations (pre and post deposition if known)
 - (h) a list of all sources used
 - (i) copyright
- 3.10** The report need not normally include all the data generated during fieldwork and post-fieldwork assessment, but this data **should** be included in the preserved archaeological archive, subject to the archiving strategy and in accordance with the *Standard and guidance for the creation, compilation, transfer and deposition of archaeological archives* (see <https://www.archaeologists.net/codes/cifa>). The report and archive **should** contain enough detail to allow any further phases of work to be appropriately designed and planned.