An archive deposition strategy and programme – additional notes

The requirement to deposit primary archives is a professional obligation enshrined within clause 4.2 of the Code of conduct:

A member shall accurately and without undue delay prepare and properly disseminate an appropriate record of work done under his/her control, which may include the deposition of primary records and unpublished material in an accessible public archive.

This requirement is expanded on within the Chartered Institute’s Standards and guidance, especially the Standard and guidance for the creation, compilation, transfer and deposition of archaeological archives.

An archive strategy and programme may be requested by the Registrations Committee (Organisation) as a condition or recommendation of registration on the Registered Organisations scheme to demonstrate how an organisation is discharging its professional obligations to deposit archives.

The archive strategy and programme should be comprised of two stages

i. identification of the nature and status of archives to be deposited
ii. development of a deliverable, prioritised programme for deposition.

There is no fixed format for preparing and presenting an archive deposition strategy and programme as each organisation will need to consider how this can be integrated into their current records and systems. The following provides some notes on aspects which would normally be considered during the preparation of a strategy. Further guidance is also available in the Standard and guidance for the creation, compilation, transfer and deposition of archaeological archives

www.archaeologists.net/sites/default/files/CIFAS&GArchives_2.pdf

Within the first stage it may be appropriate to consider the following aspects. It may be helpful to present this information in a spreadsheet or database which allows the data to be organised, sorted or interrogated according to different factors which may include

- Name of project
- Type of fieldwork
- Date of fieldwork
- Site code
- Current archive location
- District/County
- Museum and/or repository for deposition
- Status of reporting/publication
- Nature of archive – site and excavation records, plans, photographs, digital data
- Nature of archive – artefacts and samples
- Research potential
- Recommendations for retention/discard
- Consultation with stakeholders
• Transfer of title
• Archive preparation - is the archive consolidated and ready for deposition or requiring further preparation
• Museum and/or repository charges – any negotiated discounts
• Target date for deposition
• Notes – which may include reasons for delay in deposition (see below)
• Next steps/review date

The information for archives awaiting deposition should be accompanied by a statement or summary which sets out the overall strategy and programme for depositing the archives. This would normally be prioritised in relation to archives which can be deposited without significant further preparatory work and those with significant research value to other researchers. This strategy may also include reference to resources (financial and personnel), consultation and key stages in the deposition process.

In terms of Registered Organisations, the Registrations Committee (Organisation) recognises there may be instances where there are external factors which prevent, or make problematic, the timely deposition of archives. Examples include:

• No museum or repository accepting archives in the geographical area
• Clients who have ceased trading prior to paying for deposition of archives
• Archives that relate to projects with an ongoing post-excavation analysis and publication programme, or where that programme is on hold due to contractual or other reasons
• Archives pre-dating CIfA Standards and guidance and relevant planning policies where provision may not have been made for archive deposition
• Significant changes in deposition charges where the original financial provision may no longer be sufficient
• Difficulties in tracing landowners for transfer of title or landowners who will not agree to transfer of title, or wish to retain part of the archive

In these instances, the committee will be looking for the Registered Organisation to have a clear understanding of the number and nature of archives which are yet to be deposited. Where possible, opportunities to resolve these issues should be explored, including consultation with relevant museum curators and archaeological advisors to local authorities. Provision for making archives that cannot be deposited in a museum or other repository accessible to the public or other researchers should be identified where possible.

If you have any questions or require further guidance in the interim please contact Kerry Wiggins, Senior Membership Services Coordinator (Kerry.wiggins@archaeologists.net).