

New Standards and guidance format

CIfA has introduced a new structure for its Standards and guidance which we are gradually applying across the suite, with some exceptions that are outlined below. The key change is that the new Standards and guidance are now published as separate documents to clarify their different purposes and to improve usability.

Standards now available in the new format

Standard and universal guidance	Updated
Buildings or structures of architectural and historic interest	August 2026
Forensic archaeology*	February 2026
Archaeological excavation	December 2023
Archaeological field evaluation	December 2023
Archaeological monitoring and recording	December 2023

**The forensic archaeology document remains a combined Standard and guidance document because of its specialist nature.*

Five Key Changes

1. Standards and guidance are now separate

Previously published together, the new documents are now separate to reduce confusion between requirements and supporting advice.

2. Standards now include definitions

Each Standard now includes a definition section to improve clarity.

3. Guidance is being split into two levels

Universal guidance documents plus signposting to jurisdiction-specific guidance that is currently under development (this will appear on the redesigned CIfA S&G webpages).

4. Guidance documents are shorter

Redundant material has been removed and replaced with signposting to existing resources.

5. Terminology has been updated

Watching briefs are now referred to as Archaeological Monitoring and Recording. WSI is referred to more generally as Project Design.

What's Coming Next?

Standard and guidance	Expected Review Start
Historic environment desk-based assessments	Autumn/Winter 2026
Commissioning work or consultancy advice	Spring/Summer 2027
Archaeological advice by historic environment services	Spring/Summer 2027
Archaeological geophysical survey	Summer/Autumn 2027
Archives, finds, nautical archaeology and stewardship	TBC

Binding for accredited archaeologists and registered organisations



Code of conduct: professional ethics in archaeology

- defines the rules that tell a professional archaeologist how to behave in accordance with our shared values
- application of the rules in the *Code* is supported by Standards, guidance, policy and good practice guidance



Standard

- sets out the **required** outcome of the archaeological 'product' and/or activity eg field evaluation or archaeological advice
- working to the Standard = compliance with the *Code*
- supported by additional guidance demonstrating how to deliver the Standard



Policy statements / Practice papers

- additional **advice** to support adherence to the *Code* and/or Standard

Strongly recommended for accredited archaeologists and registered organisations



Universal guidance

- **Higher level guidance** to support the delivery of the Standard
- advises on what the profession presently considers good practice
- deviation from the guidance is not recommended and must be justified



Detailed guidance

- detailed guidance highlighting **jurisdiction/country specific** differences
- supports the universal guidance and adherence to the *Code* and/or Standard



Toolkits

- additional **resources** to support adherence to the **guidance**