

HLF/IFA Workplace Learning Bursary funded training placement

In Archaeological Archives With Suffolk County Council

Training Plan

Introduction

This document sets out the background to the placement, its desired outcomes and the skills it offers set against the National Occupational Standards in Archaeological Practice.

Skills for the creation, promotion and use of accessible archives are highlighted as particular IfA training priorities. This placement is primarily concerned with developing skills relating to all stages of the management of archaeological archives (digital, documentary and physical), through partnership working between the Conservation Team of Suffolk County Council, who maintain the County Archaeological Store, and the Contracting Team, who generate archive material. Through case-work and on the job training, the successful candidate will develop skills for archive creation, curation and promotion. They will gain a broad knowledge of policy and processes, and will be encouraged to engage with wider debates on the long-term future of archaeological archives. The trainee will work with a range of archives from archaeological sites of different date, and will have the opportunity to develop spin-off portfolio projects to a major English-Heritage funded archive enhancement project that will make accessible significant unpublished data from excavations in Ipswich (1974-1990).

The trainee will develop transferable skills in IT, data management, report writing and appraisal. These have been identified as training priorities by the IfA in their assessment of the sector (Profiling the Profession, IfA 2007/8).

Over the year, the placement holder will acquire the following key skills:

- Ability to prepare and catalogue paper, digital and finds/environmental archives according to national and local standards/procedures.
- Skills in collections management.
- Competence in using database and other software applications in the suite used by SCCAS.
- Skills in selecting archive material for research and for displays.
- Dissemination skills: the trainee will use archive data to enhance information on existing channels (Historic Environment Record, Portable Antiquities Scheme) and will be encouraged to identify, design and undertake enhancement projects.
- Communication skills, working with a large Historic Environment team

Supporting staff

The trainee will work with the County's archaeological collections, under the line management and supervision of SCCAS Conservation Team's Senior Finds Recording Officer and our Assistant Archaeological Officer. They will receive supervision and mentoring from other specialist staff. The County Archaeologist is involved with digitisation and wider archiving strategies. Our Finds and Post Excavation Manager, Contracting Team will provide training in physical archive care. Our Project Officer, Contracting Team co-ordinates the Contracting Team's archiving. Another colleague who completed an IfA placement in Rural Archaeology in 2011/2012 will offer the trainee peer support.

The trainee will attend Ipswich Archive project meetings and will be invited to shadow colleagues working on broader Suffolk County Council and Records Office heritage data digitisation and accessibility strategies. Opportunities to work shadow colleagues from partner organisations will be taken where possible. Mini-placements are proposed with St Edmundsbury Borough Council Heritage Service so that the trainee can gain experience within an accredited museum environment, and with Cambridgeshire County Council, so that the trainee can gain broader experience through work with another local authority.

To meet with others working in the field and think about best practice, the trainee will be encouraged to join the IfA's Archives Group and to attend other relevant courses and workshops.

Outcomes

At the end of the 12 month bursary the trainee will be able to:

1. Demonstrate knowledge of the standards required for the long-term curation of archaeological archives.
2. Understand the components of an archive and the project management stages that are involved.
3. Demonstrate knowledge of national and local procedures and policies relating to varied aspects of archive management.
3. Prepare and document digital archives for long term curation and potential dissemination.
4. Prepare and catalogue paper and photographic archives to appropriate standards.
5. Prepare and catalogue physical archives (finds, environmental) to appropriate standards.
6. Check and accession archives.
7. Monitor storage conditions.
8. Use database applications to document and track collections.

9. Confidently take part in professional meetings and engage with members of the public.
10. Deal with transfer of archives, loans requests and information requests.
11. Use archive data to enhance information on Suffolk's Historic Environment Record and Portable Antiquities Scheme using relevant IT packages.
12. Assist with the creation of a temporary display/exhibition.
13. Design and undertake enhancement projects.
14. Prepare an individual investigative report on an aspect of improving access to Suffolk's archaeological archive.

Activities

	Proposed learning goals	National Occupational Standards (NOSs) to be met	Learning activities and tasks	Who will support the bursary holder with this goal?
1	Learn how to operate safely and follow Health and Safety and security procedures; be able to respond to emergencies.	AJ10	Completion of Health and Safety Checklist, completion of risk assessments. Attend SCC Introduction to Health and Safety course and others.	Senior Finds Recording Officer and IfA placement
2	Increased understanding of national issues in archiving and engagement with wider debates	AK3	Introduction to national and local literature. Attend conferences and talks and IfA archive group events.	Assistant Archaeological Officer, County Archaeologist and Senior Finds Recording Officer
3	Working knowledge of the requirements for the deposition of an archaeological archive	AG3	Case-work to national standards, local guidelines and briefs and specifications	Assistant Archaeological Officer, Project Officer and the Finds and Post Excavation Manager

4	Ability to prepare and catalogue digital archives to ADS standards for dissemination and long term curation	AF3, AF4	In house training Project work.	Assistant Archaeological Officer and Project Officer
5	Ability to prepare and catalogue paper archives (learning how to pack, transfer and describe).	AC6, AF3	In house training and case work (e.g. accessioning old archives to modern standards)	Assistant Archaeological Officer
6	Ability to prepare and document bulk finds and sensitive finds archive (learning how to pack, transfer and describe)	AC6, AC7, AF3	In house training and case-work – learning through placement with museums.	Finds and Post Excavation Manager
7	Learn about aspects of collections management: accessioning archives, collections policies, storage and handling, monitoring, tracking, documenting, disaster management	AC6, AC7, AE6, AG2, AJ10, AF3, AF4, AG3.4	Familiarity with Arts Council accreditation requirements, ordering supplies, monitoring store conditions, cataloguing and audits, integration of historic archives with new systems, work-shadowing with museums.	Assistant Archaeological Officer, Senior Finds Recording Officer and IfA placement
8	Learn IT skills required to record and manage archaeological archives	AF3, AF4	In-house database training using Microsoft Access. Some use of HBSMR and PAS database.	Assistant Archaeological Officer and other staff
9	Ability to respond to enquiries (e.g. loan requests, accessing archives to provide information to researchers)	AF4, AC7, AG4	Supervised case-work	Assistant Archaeological Officer
10	Communication skills	AK3	Project and team meetings, dealing with enquiries, outreach events (such as opening of office/store for Heritage Open Days (Sept 2013))	Assistant Archaeological Officer, County Archaeologist and the Finds and Post Excavation Manager
11	Use existing ways of disseminating archive information	AF3, AF4	HER accessioning of data from archives, PAS uploading of pre-PAS	Senior Finds Recording

			datasets	Officer and IfA placement
12	Ability to select material for display	AG2	With guidance, assist with revision of display case in SCC's main building, Endeavour House.	Senior Finds Recording Officer
13	Confidence in designing and undertaking enhancement projects	AF3, AK3	Case work with particular archives.	Assistant Archaeological Officer, County Archaeologist and Senior Finds Recording Officer
14	Investigative report (e.g. on potential enhancement projects and their delivery)	AC1, AK3	Investigative report (e.g. on funding, use of archives, ways of archive delivery, promotion of an archive through flickr/ADS, work with a local community, critique of guidelines, collating old archives from diverse sources).	Assistant Archaeological Officer, County Archaeologist and Senior Finds Recording Officer

There is scope for the portfolio of projects to be tailored to the interests of the individual.

Training Elements and Allocated Timings

The post will be one year in length, over a period of 217 working days made up as follows: 260 working days less 24 days holidays, 8 bank holidays, and 11 other days (to allow for sickness).

Training is grouped under the main elements with reference to the Learning Goals (LG) listed in the table above.

1. Introduction and Familiarisation

3 days

Staff Induction

A full staff induction will take place on commencement of work by the successful candidate. This will include an introduction to the office (including fire safety and health and safety at work), administrative housekeeping, staff introductions, talks on company culture and expectations. This will also provide an opportunity for the trainee to discuss their own aspirations for the placement and review the training plan with the line manager and training supervisor (LG 1).

The Line Manager and Supervisor will give an introduction to the Suffolk County Archaeological Stores, and a practical introduction to the handling and storage of archaeological archive material of different media.

2. *Professional standards and guidance familiarisation* 10 days

The Training Supervisor will talk the trainee through the various national and local professional standards and guidance documents of relevance to the preparation and management of archaeological archives. With work shadowing and selected reading, this will provide the framework for tasks undertaken later in the placement. This will include an overview of provision provided by local and regional museums for archaeological archives, associated problems and current issues.

The trainee will be encouraged to keep abreast of debates in archives throughout the placement, attending conferences and talks, particularly IfA Archive group events and those hosted by SHARE Museums East (LG 2). Work shadowing at Cambridgeshire County Council will enable them to gain experience of different systems.

Training will particularly focus on the requirements of commercially generated site archives, and will ensure that the trainee gains full understanding of the framework under which this work is undertaken, the stages of project management and the interests of different organisations. Through supervised case work, the trainee will arrange for deposition and transfer of archives in Suffolk and other counties, and they will work shadow on projects from the design and fieldwork stage to gain insights into decision making and selection/retention issues (for example, engaging with large projects such as Flixton and Coddendam quarries, which have large archives at different stages of assessment, publication and display) (LG3).

3. *Preparation of Digital Archives for Deposition* 40 days

With initial training and supervision, the placement holder will carry out the preparation of digital archives to ADS standards, with cataloguing of metadata. They will work on data for dissemination and long term curation (LG 4). The trainee will also develop projects related to the main Ipswich project, for example, scanning targeted visual material. This training will form a framework for potential dissemination projects later in the placement.

4. *Preparation of Paper Archives for Deposition* 40 days

With initial training and supervision, the placement holder will carry out packing and documenting of paper archives, working on a portfolio of projects. The placement holder will work on preparing new sites and accessioning old archives to modern standards. Projects include packing Snape Anglo Saxon cemetery from the 1990s to modern standards (LG 5).

5. *Preparation of Finds/Environmental Archives for Deposition* 35 days

With initial training and supervision, the placement holder will pack and document bulk finds, sensitive finds and environmental remains, and will gain a working knowledge of the requirements of different materials (LG 6). Through a work placement with St Edmundsbury Borough Council, they will gain experience in an accredited museum environment. The

trainee will, with guidance, appraise and re-pack old material and assess it for display potential. Projects include material from Snape Anglo-Saxon cemetery, from the past 11 years of excavations at Flixton Quarry, and Roman finds from Pakenham (1985).

6. *Collections Management* 41 days

The placement holder will learn about aspects of collections management, undertaking supported casework. They will accession archives, learn about collection and disaster management policies, monitor archaeological and documentary stores, document and track archives, order supplies, deal with transfer of ownership and help keep databases up to date (LG 7). Projects include accessioning the Anglo Saxon settlement at Carlton Colville excavated and published by CAU and cataloguing x-rays of objects from all periods.

The placement holder will gain the technical skills needed to maintain the information base, particularly using Microsoft Access. This will provide the placement holder with IT skills. (LG 8)

With guidance, the trainee will respond to loan requests and information requests. This will provide the placement holder with appraisal skills (LG 9)

Museums placements will offer experience of areas beyond SCCAS in-house expertise, within an accredited museum environment.

7. *Dissemination and Promotion of Archives* 36 days

The placement holder will develop skills to use archives for research and will contribute to initiatives to enhance and make information more accessible. They will benefit from engagement with the Ipswich Archive project (see above) and will develop spin-off portfolio projects. The placement holder will attend Ipswich Archive project meetings, developing their professional meeting skills (LG 10). They will assist with a new venture, which is opening the office/store for the national Heritage Open Days in September 2013, and will engage with members of the public.

The trainee will, with guidance, use the existing channels of the Portable Antiquities Scheme and the Historic Environment Record to make old archives publically accessible (LG 11) – for example material from Coddensham and Barham to complement existing research and post-excavation projects.

With support, the trainee will assist with display and outreach projects that draw on archives, undertaking background research and preparing material. They will assist with revising the display case in SCC's main building, Endeavour House in Ipswich. This will provide the placement holder with appraisal skills (LG 12)

Towards the end of the placement, the bursary holder will be encouraged to design enhancement projects that bring old archives into new SCCAS systems and explore innovative forms of dissemination (LG 13).

8. *Wider issues in archiving and Investigative report* 12 days

SCCAS has working relationships with the Suffolk Records Office and local museums, and the trainee will be invited to shadow colleagues working on broader SCC and records office digitisation and data accessibility strategies. A placement with Cambs will give the bursary holder an insight into different systems and approaches to sustainable archive curation. Towards the latter part of the placement, the bursary holder will, with mentoring, draw on these experiences to produce an investigative report into an aspect of archaeological archiving in Suffolk (e.g. on funding, use of archives, ways of archive delivery, promotion of an archive through flickr/ADS, work with a local community, critique of guidelines, collating old archives from diverse sources, following up display potential of sites they have accessioned such as Carlton Colville, potential for scanning and making available aerial photographs or working with the records office on Tithe Map digitisation (LG 14).