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## Enhancing standards and guidance for archaeology: sector survey

Thank you for taking part in this survey on standards and guidance for archaeology in the UK. The survey is part of the Phase 2 research project [Enhancing and promoting Cifa Standards and guidance on archaeological practice \(HE9408\)](#), funded by Historic England and led by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIFA).

One of the aims of this project is to clarify what we mean by 'Standards and guidance' in archaeology. For the purposes of this survey, please interpret the term broadly — it includes formal Standards, technical guidance, advice notes, professional guidance, sector toolkits and guides, and your own organisation's internal templates, manuals and standard operating processes. Don't worry if you're unsure whether something 'counts' — please include it.

This short survey is for anyone who works with / in archaeology in the United Kingdom — whether full time, occasionally, as a volunteer or student. The survey will take about 20 minutes. There are 40 questions; most are short, and a handful invite a longer written response if you would like to share more. If you would like to see a copy of all questions in advance, you can access a copy of the survey script from the [Cifa project page](#).

Your responses will be analysed anonymously and used to:

- identify which standards and guidance the sector uses, finds helpful, and finds problematic;
- prioritise areas for development and revision;
- understand the barriers practitioners experience when accessing and using guidance.

This project (HE9408) is funded by Historic England as part of the 21st Century Challenges for Archaeology Programme with oversight of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists. Project research is being delivered by Dr Manda Forster and Dr Sam Paul, with oversight from Cifa. The survey is anonymous and any data gathered will be stored and used in accordance with Cifa's [GDPR policy](#): submitting the form is taken as agreement to participate, but any data or responses gathered via this consultation will not be attributed to named individuals without explicit agreement. All diversity questions include a prefer not to say option.

If you have any questions, please contact Head of Professional Standards and Project Lead, Jen Parker Wooding ([jen.parkerwooding@archaeologists.net](mailto:jen.parkerwooding@archaeologists.net)).

To find out more about the project, and to find a downloadable PDF of the survey questions, visit the project page [here](#).



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## Section A – About you

This section asks about you, so we can better understand your perspective and the context of your responses.

You can respond to the survey as yourself or for your organisation. If you would like to see a copy of all questions in advance, you can download a copy of the survey questions from the [CIFA Project webpage](#). (You can also answer as both by completing the survey twice if you feel your responses will differ.)

**\* 1. Are you responding as an individual or on behalf of an organisation?**

- Individual  
 Organisation

**\* 2. What is your current job title or role?**

**\* 3. Which best describes the area of the historic environment sector you usually work in?**

[Choose the one that best fits your main role]

- Contractor (development-led field investigation and research including invasive and non-invasive fieldwork together with post-fieldwork analysis and reporting)
- Local Heritage Management (provision of historic environment advice and information to local planning authorities and/or management of historic environment records)
- Consultancy (provision of historic environment advice and information to clients or customers)
- National heritage body or agency (provision of historic environment advice and information at a national level, including curation of scheduled monuments, provision of grant support and sector development, training, policy etc.)
- Museum or heritage / Cultural attraction (Museum, gallery, heritage site, archive or visitor / user services)
- Academia (academic research, teaching or training)
- Public Engagement (public engagement / public archaeology. Community archaeology / community engagement)
- Specialist services (e.g. finds, environmental, geophysics, archives)
- Student / early career
- Other (please specify)

**\* 4. How would you describe your current status?**

[Tick all that apply]

- Paid employee (permanent)
- Paid employee (contract / temporary)
- Self employed (freelancer, independent contractor, or business owner)
- Volunteer
- Student or trainee
- Retired

**\* 5. How would you describe your career stage?**

[Choose the one that best fits]

- Less than 2 years in the sector
- 2-5 years
- 6-10 years
- 11-20 years
- More than 20 years
- Prefer not to say

**6. Where are you based?**

This is where you consider your home to be.

- East of England
- East Midlands
- London
- North East England
- North West England
- South East England
- South West England
- West Midlands
- Yorkshire and the Humber
- Scotland
- Wales
- Northern Ireland
- Republic of Ireland
- Outside the UK and Republic of Ireland

**\* 7. Which jurisdiction(s) of the UK do you mainly work within?**

[Tick all that apply]

- England
- Scotland
- Wales
- Northern Ireland

**\* 8. Are you a member of Cifa, and if so at what grade?**

- Affiliate / Student
- Practitioner (PCifa)
- Associate (ACifa)
- Member (MCifa)
- Not a Cifa member
- Not a Cifa member, but I am a Cifa Group Supporter

**\* 9. Are you a member of another professional body?**

- Yes
- No

If 'yes', which one?

**\* 10. Do you work for a CifA Registered organisation (RO)?**

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

**\* 11. Do you consider yourself to be neurodivergent?**

We're asking this because this project specifically commits to understanding neurodiversity needs in accessing standards and guidance. Your answer is anonymous and used only to analyse barriers data.

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

**\* 12. Do you consider yourself to be a disabled person?**

We're asking this because this project specifically commits to understanding needs in accessing standards and guidance. Your answer is anonymous and used only to analyse barriers data.

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say



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Archaeologists



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## Section B – Which standards and guidance you use

This section asks about the Standards and guidance you actually use in your work. As noted on the welcome page, we're using the term broadly — covering Historic England's Historic Environment Advice Notes, CIFA Standards and Codes, IHBC and ICON professional standards, sector toolkits, and your own organisation's internal templates, manuals and standard operating processes.

**\* 13. Roughly how often do you use or refer to standards and guidance in your work?**

- Daily
- Several times a week
- Weekly
- A few times a month
- Occasionally / project-by-project
- Rarely or never
- Not sure

**14. Which of the following types of standards and guidance do you use or refer to in your work?**

[Tick all that apply]

- Cifa Standards and Universal Guidance (e.g. archaeological excavation, field evaluation, monitoring and recording, geophysical survey, archives, archaeological materials etc)
- Cifa Code of Conduct and Regulations
- Cifa Toolkits (Digital Data Management, Selection Toolkit etc)
- IHBC standards or guidance
- ICON standards or guidance
- Historic England guidance (e.g. Historic Environment Advice Notes, technical guidance etc)
- Cadw Legislation and guidance
- Historic Environment Scotland Legislation or guidance
- Northern Ireland Historic Environment Division guidance
- European Archaeological Council Guidance (EAC)
- Regulatory planning frameworks (National Planning Policy Framework / local authority specification etc)
- Human remains compliance (BABAO guidelines and codes, APABE guidance etc)
- ALGAO standards and guidance
- Environmental Compliance (Including National agencies, RSPB, Forestry, Environment agencies etc)
- Sector toolkits and resources (e.g. First Aid for Finds, ARCHES, ADS guidelines, SMA resources etc)
- BAJR guides
- Non sector toolkits and resources (FAIR principles, Social Value Toolkit)
- Specialist guidance (e.g. MPRG's Pottery Standards)
- National Occupational Standards
- Your own organisation's internal standards, manuals or templates
- International guidance (e.g. ICOMOS, EAA, Society for American Archaeology guidance etc)
- None of the above
- Other (please specify)

**15. Consider key areas of your work (up to three); which standards and guidance are you REQUIRED to use (or required to ask others to use)?**

[optional]

Please name specific documents where you can, and the area of work each relates to. Up to three is fine — no need to list everything.

**16. Consider the same key areas of your work as above (up to three); which additional standards, guidance or resources do you CHOOSE to use or refer to?**

[optional]

"Chosen" guidance is anything you turn to that isn't strictly required — toolkits, organisational manuals, specialist resources, etc.



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Enhancing standards and guidance for archaeology: sector survey

## Section C – How you use standards and guidance

This section asks how you find and access standards and / or guidance as part of you work in archaeology.

**\* 17. When you need to find standards or guidance, how do you usually start?**

[Tick all that apply]

- Search engine (Google etc.)
- Go directly to a known website (e.g. CIFA, Historic England)
- Browse my own organisation's intranet / shared drive
- Ask a colleague or manager
- Use a saved bookmark or downloaded PDF
- Refer to a printed copy
- Ask a question in a sector mailing list or social media group
- Other (please specify)

**\* 18. In what format do you most often access standards and guidance?**

[Tick all that apply]

- PDF download
- Web page / online article
- Printed hard copy
- Embedded in organisational templates or workflows
- Other (please specify)

**19. What device(s) do you use to access standards and guidance?**

- Mobile device (phone or tablet) in the field
- Mobile device in the office
- Desktop/ laptop in the field
- Desktop/ laptop in the office
- Other (please specify)

**\* 20. When you use a standard or guidance document, how do you usually engage with it?**

[Tick all that apply]

- Read it in full at least once
- Dip in and out for the specific part I need
- Rely on summaries, templates or checklists rather than the full document
- Key word search to find relevance or use
- Assume that if it's cited in a brief, spec or template, someone has already checked it
- Rely on a colleague's interpretation
- Skim to confirm I'm on the right track
- Other (please specify)

**21. How would you describe the way standards and guidance are used in your day-to-day work?**

[optional]

For example: are they embedded in templates? Consulted at the start of a project? Referred to when something specific comes up? Used to write briefs or quality-check others' work? A few sentences is plenty.

**22. Do you feel that clients and other stakeholders understand the role of standards and guidance in archaeology?**

do you have any examples or experiences to share?



**24. Can you give specific examples of standards, guidance or resources that you think are particularly helpful or a brilliant example of good guidance? Please name them and tell us why.**

[optional]

In Phase 1, Historic England technical guidance, CifA toolkits, the Social Value Toolkit and the FAIR principles were all mentioned positively. We're interested in any examples — from inside or outside archaeology.

**25. Can you give specific examples of standards, guidance or resources you have found confusing, contradictory, out of date, or simply not useful? Please name them and tell us why.**

[optional]

Please be candid — anonymity is preserved and we won't publish criticism attached to named individuals. "Why" is more important than "what".

**26. What do you think is missing from the current standards and guidance landscape?**

[optional]

Phase 1 highlighted navigation and signposting, accessibility for non-CifA practitioners, and consistency across jurisdictions as common themes. We'd like to hear what's missing in your view, whether that's a topic area, a way of organising things, or a type of resource.



**\* 28. Have you ever experienced any of the following as a barrier to accessing or using standards and guidance?**

[Tick all that apply]

- Cost (paywalls, membership fees, subscriptions)
- Documents are hard to find or scattered across websites
- Documents are too long or dense
- Language is too technical or unclear
- Out-of-date content
- Contradictions between different documents
- Poor digital accessibility (screen-reader incompatibility, no alt text, small fonts, low contrast, etc.)
- PDF-only formats that are hard to read on mobile or in the field
- Lack of plain-language summaries
- No translation or alternative formats (audio, video, easy-read)
- Lack of guidance suitable for early-career or trainee staff
- Lack of guidance suitable for volunteers or community archaeologists
- Connectivity / internet access on site
- Time pressure — no opportunity to consult guidance during the working day
- Lack of support from managers / employer
- I haven't experienced any of these
- Other (please specify)

**29. If you could change how standards and guidance are made available and accessed, what would you change?**

[optional]

For example: searchable online index, interactive / linked resources, physical copies, in house library of resources.

**30. If you identify as neurodivergent (or work with neurodivergent colleagues), are there specific features that would make standards and guidance easier to use?**

[Tick all that apply]

- Clearer document structure (headings, summaries, signposting)
- Plain-language summaries / glossaries
- Shorter, more focused documents
- Visual aids (diagrams, flowcharts, icons)
- Step-by-step / checklist formats
- Alternative formats (audio, video, animated explainers)
- Sans-serif fonts and adjustable text size
- Customisable colour / contrast options
- Reduced reliance on dense PDFs
- Clearer indication of which sections are mandatory vs. advisory
- Worked examples and case studies
- Not applicable / prefer not to say
- Other (please specify)



**\* 32. Are current standards and guidance pitched at the right experience level for the people who need to use them?**

	Far too basic	A bit too basic	About right	A bit too advanced	Far too advanced	Not sure
For students and trainees	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
For early-career practitioners (under 5 years)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
For mid-career practitioners	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
For senior practitioners and managers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
For volunteers and community archaeologists	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
For specialists (finds, environmental, geophysics, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**\* 33. Thinking about the environments you work in, how do current standards and guidance perform?**

	Very well	Well	Adequately	Poorly	Very Poorly	N/A
Working in the field (excavation, survey, recording)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Working in an office or studio	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Working from home / remote working	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Working on a mobile device	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Working with limited or no internet connectivity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**34. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about barriers you have experienced?**

[optional]

Use this space for anything that didn't fit the questions above — for example specific lived experience, employer-level issues, or suggestions we haven't asked about.



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## Section F – Shaping and contributing to standards and guidance

This section is about how the sector helps shape standards and guidance (of any type) – whether you've had a chance to contribute, and whether you'd like more opportunity to do so. Your answers will help us design better ways for practitioners and organisations to feed in.

**\* 35. Have you ever contributed to the development or revision of standards and/or guidance?** Including but not limited to; formal Standards, technical guidance, advice notes, professional guidance, sector toolkits, and your own organisation's internal templates, manuals and standard operating processes.

[Tick all that apply]

- Responded individually to a formal consultation on a professional standard and / or guidance document
- Responded individually to a formal consultation on specialist or sector guidance and / or toolkits
- Responded as part of a group or committee to a formal consultation on a standard and / or guidance document
- Fed back informally to a colleague or organisation
- Sat on a formal working group, panel or committee that developed a standard, guidance document or toolkit
- Contributed to the development of in-house manuals, guides or standard operating processes
- Drafted or co-authored a standard, guidance document or toolkit
- Suggested that new professional guidance was needed
- Suggested that new in-house guidance was needed
- Reviewed or tested draft guidance
- No, but I've been aware of opportunities to do so
- No, I didn't know I could
- Not sure

Do you have any comments or experiences you can share?

**\* 36. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following?**

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	N/A
I understand how to suggest changes to existing standards and guidance.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I understand how to propose that new standards or guidance are developed.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I know which organisation to approach about a particular standard or guidance document.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel my views would be taken into account if I contributed.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would like more opportunity to shape the standards and guidance I use.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**37. If you haven't contributed (or not as much as you'd like), what has held you back?**

[Tick all that apply]

- Didn't know how or where to start
- Didn't know it was open to someone in my role or at my career stage
- No time during the working day
- Didn't think it would make a difference
- Not a member of the relevant organisation
- The process felt too formal or technical
- Haven't had a reason to
- Nothing - I contribute when I want to
- Other (please specify)

**38. If you could change one thing about how the sector develops and revises its standards and guidance, what would it be?**

[optional]

For example: clearer routes to feed in, more notice of consultations, more involvement from particular roles or career stages, faster updates.



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Enhancing standards and guidance for archaeology: sector survey

## Section G – Follow-up & close

The project to enhance and promote standards and guidance in archaeology will continue through 2026 and beyond. If you are happy to stay involved, please provide your details below — this is entirely optional.

### 39. If you'd like to stay in touch and continue to support development of standards and guidance in archaeology, please provide your contact details below:

Name

Organisation

Email address

### 40. Please let us know if you would be happy to . . .

- Take part in project focus groups or consultation interviews
- Take part in further project-based surveys
- Take part in a sector feedback panel or group
- Help to develop or review Standards or guidance

Thank you for completing this survey.

Your responses will help to shape the development of the current project to promote and support standards and guidance in archaeology.

If you'd like to be kept informed about the project, please follow Cifa's communications or contact [jen.parkerwooding@archaeologists.net](mailto:jen.parkerwooding@archaeologists.net).