



Institute of
Archaeologists of
Ireland

Code of Conduct for Archaeological Excavation

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The Code of Professional Conduct has been adopted by the Board of the Institute of Archaeologists of Ireland as the standard by which all members should achieve and adhere to. The Code was ratified by the membership at the membership at the Annual General Meeting in Spring 2006.

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1 Objectives

1.1 The objectives of an Archaeological Excavation are:

- (a) To systematically and forensically investigate, document, and interpret the archaeological remains of a given site;
- (b) To establish a record and archive of the results of the Archaeological Excavation;
- (c) To ensure that the artefact record of an excavated site is properly recovered, conserved, archived, and appropriately available for deposition at a designated repository;
- (d) To report and publish the results.

2 Scope of Works

2.1 The archaeological works to be carried out in relation to an Archaeological Excavation are as follows:

- (a) Project planning
- (b) Archaeological Excavation
- (c) Reporting
- (d) Treatment of Archaeological Objects and other materials

(e) Creation of Archive

3 Project Planning

3.1 Archaeological Excavation requires careful and considered project planning. This planning shall involve the following:

- (a) Project Familiarisation
- (b) Project Design
- (c) Liaison Framework
- (d) Project Preparations

3.2 Project Familiarisation

In preparation for the project the Archaeological Director(s) shall familiarise him/herself/themselves with the project and its archaeological environment by undertaking to;

- (a) consult all existing archaeological reports relating to the commission or project;
- (b) identify and highlight specialist requirements indicated by previous assessment of the site – particular attention should be given to the type of artefacts anticipated, and the soil conditions that would affect on-site preservation qualities;
- (c) inspect the Area of Operation,

- (d) familiarise themselves with all aspects of the development scheme, in particular any phasing of works.

The proposed Archaeological Director(s) shall ensure that he/she/they have to hand on-site copies of the relevant statutory archaeological mapping, the various development drawings, and all existing assessment reports, all of which should be made available to the archaeological staff selected for the Archaeological Excavation. No commission or project should be undertaken until all such documentation has been made fully available.

3.3 The Project Design

All elements of the excavation shall be conducted in accordance with a written Project Design. The purpose of the Project Design is to identify within a single document the entire archaeological scope and requirements of the commission or project. The Project Design shall be submitted to the client, the client's representative (where relevant) and the prescribed State authorities. The Project Design should detail the following:

- (a) Objectives
- (b) History of the development
- (c) Area of operation
- (d) Archaeological and cultural environment

- (e) Methodology and resources

- (f) Health, Safety & Welfare

- (g) Liaison Framework

- (h) Treatment of finds

3.3.1 Objectives

The Project Design shall briefly describe the objectives of the Archaeological Excavation.

3.3.2 History of the development

The Project Design shall provide a brief account of the planning history of the development.

3.3.3 Area of Operation

The Project Design should clearly and unambiguously define the areas of the proposed archaeological excavation, and the reason for their selection. Supporting plans and maps must be included.

3.3.4 Archaeological and cultural environment

The Project Design should provide a brief account of the archaeological and cultural environment of the development, and any previous archaeological and associated reports relevant to the development.

3.3.5 Methodology and resources

The Project Design should provide a description of the proposed Methodology and Resources. This should specify:

- the proposed procedure and strategy for the archaeological excavation,
- The staging of works and any dependent factors.
- the Project Team designated to carry out the work,
- the resources required, in terms of conservation, recording, surveying and any other identified specialist tasks,
- office and other staffing facilities,
- storage facilities for equipment and artefacts.

3.3.6 Health, Safety & Welfare

A Safety Statement must be prepared as part of any project in the Republic of Ireland, pursuant to Section 12 of the *Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 1989*. In Northern Ireland a Risk Assessment of the working environment shall be prepared, pursuant to Section 3 of the *Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2000*. This Safety Statement/Risk Assessment should be specific to the requirements of the particular

project. The Safety Statement/Risk Assessment shall be included in the Project Design.

3.3.7 Liaison Framework

The Project Design shall describe the agreed Liaison Framework (see Section 3.4).

3.3.8 Treatment of objects recovered during the excavation

The Project Design shall describe provisions for the care, storage and conservation of objects that may be recovered during the Archaeological Excavation (see Section 5). The Project Design shall similarly describe the provisions for the care and storage of other archaeological materials that may be recovered during the excavation.

3.4 Liaison Framework

As part of the Project Design, it is essential to establish a Liaison Framework with the client and their nominated representatives and relevant State authorities. No commission or project should be undertaken until such has been agreed. The Liaison Framework shall define the reporting and consultation procedures for a given commission or project. Carefully planned reporting and communication procedures are required in order to ensure the safety of the field archaeologists, the protection of the archaeology and a professional service to the client. The reporting procedures should identify the key representatives from each relevant

organisation (architectural, engineering, local authority, governmental, and emergency services). It should also identify the key members of the Archaeological Project Team and define their roles. It should outline the reporting structures and procedures between each party, in the event of;

- (a) archaeological material being identified;
- (b) archaeological material being put at risk;
- (c) an increase or reduction in the area being excavated;
- (d) a change in the works schedule;
- (e) a Health, Safety & Welfare issue;
- (f) a change in the Project Design or methodology;
- (g) any conservation, storage, or other resource requirements not previously identified;
- (h) Any other.

For larger schemes, regular meetings should form part of the Liaison Framework. Similarly, Discovery Reports (see Section 8.1.3) and Progress Reports (see Section 8.1.2) should be submitted as part of this Framework.

3.5 Project Preparations

In order to ensure the efficient and safe conduct of the Archaeological Excavation, it is essential that preparations have been made for all on-site requirements, including:

- (a) Qualified and experienced personnel.
- (b) Equipment;
 - recording and surveying equipment;
 - tools and their storage facilities;
 - office and other staffing facilities;
 - temporary storage facilities for the archive and artefacts;
 - off-site facilities should be considered for large-scale excavations with longer-term storage needs;
 - Identified specialist advice is available and, if necessary, on-call.
- (c) Health, Safety & Welfare procedures;
 - all staff are inducted in the Safety Statement/Risk Assessment;

- sufficient protective clothing is available for the staff,
 - First Aid treatment will be available on-site,
 - it may be necessary to arrange for appropriate security fencing and hazard signs in advance of the on-site phase of the project.
- Conduct for the Treatment of Archaeological Objects;
- (d) Human Remains are excavated and treated in strict accordance with the Code of Conduct for the Treatment of Human Remains;
 - (e) Specialist advice is called for immediately it is required;

4 Archaeological Excavation

4.1 The Archaeological Excavation Assessment shall be carried-out in accordance with the Project Design, and in particular the Methodology described therein. Any changes to the Methodology shall be communicated under the agreed Liaison Framework.

4.2 Given the risk to exposed archaeology during an excavation, it is imperative that the necessary steps or procedures are in place. These may include the following;

- (a) the Area of Operation should be appropriately protected from the weather – consideration should be given to the use of temporary shelters from weather conditions;
- (b) measures should be taken to protect the Area of Operation, or part thereof, where it is to be left unattended for any length of time;
- (c) Archaeological Objects are excavated and treated in strict accordance with the Code of

- (f) Secure and dedicated storage facilities are available on-site for the immediate storage and processing of objects and other archaeological materials;
- (g) Off-site storage facilities should be made available where there is any doubt as to the security of the on-site facilities.

4.3 During the course of the excavation, the Archaeological Director(s) should;

- (a) oversee the conduct of the excavation and ensure a professional standard of recording;
- (b) oversee the processing of archaeological objects and other archaeological materials, and take immediate action where urgent specialist or conservation requirements are identified;
- (c) maintain Daily Logs;
- (d) submit Progress Reports;

- (e) submit Discovery Reports for features or artefacts of special interest,
 - (f) participate fully in the agreed Liaison Framework.
- 4.4 All archaeological works shall be carried out in strict accordance with the Health & Safety regulations and the Safety Statement/Risk Assessment. In particular;
- (a) Access to the Area of Operation is strictly monitored. A register of all site visitors should be maintained.
 - (b) Any breach of either Health & Safety regulations or the Safety Statement/Risk Assessment shall be urgently reported as part of the Liaison Framework.
 - (c) A register of any injuries or other such incidents should be maintained.
 - (d) The Area of Operation should be securely fenced off and clearly marked with warning signs, if it becomes necessary during the course of the excavation.
- 5 Treatment of Archaeological Objects**
- 5.1 Archaeological Objects and other archaeological materials shall be cared for and curated in accordance with the IAI Code of Conduct for the Treatment of Archaeological Objects.
- 6 Archaeological Treatment of Human Remains**
- 6.1 Human Remains shall be recovered, cared for, and curated in accordance with the IAI Code of Conduct for the Archaeological Treatment of Human Remains.
- 7 Post-Excavation Design**
- 7.1 On completion of the on-site works, a Post-Excavation Design shall be formulated to identify the post-excavation requirement, and should include the following;
- (a) Post-excavation work completed to date;
 - (b) Outstanding post-excavation work;
 - (c) Conservation Needs Assessment (see Code of Conduct for the Treatment of Human Remains);
 - (d) Specialist Analysis Assessment of artefacts and/or ecofacts (see Code of Conduct for the Treatment of Archaeological Objects and/or the Code of Conduct for the Treatment of Human Remains);
 - (e) Archiving schedule;
 - (f) Storage requirements.

8 Reporting

8.1 The commission or project may involve some or all of the following types of reporting;

- Daily Logs;
- Progress Reports;
- Discovery Reports;
- Preliminary Report, and;
- Excavation Report.

8.1.1 Daily Log

Daily Logs should be kept by the Archaeological Director(s). The aim of the Daily Log is to record the daily progress of the archaeological excavation. The Daily Log should be accompanied by a full photographic record, which shows:

- (a) work-in-progress;
- (b) Any significant archaeological features or artefacts identified.

8.1.2 Progress Reports

On large schemes, Progress Reports may be appropriate. The aim of the Progress Report is to present a brief progress account of the Archaeological Excavation project. The reports shall be submitted at agreed intervals. The reports should

contain the project details and date. The reports should contain a short overview of how the excavation is progressing. They should be accompanied by an updated list of discoveries. Finally, the Progress Reports must highlight any problems or outstanding issues that need to be addressed. Progress Reports should be formally submitted according to the Liaison Framework.

8.1.3 Discovery Reports

Discovery Reports are appropriate where features or artefacts of significance are discovered. For example, a rare artefact, or an artefact in urgent need of conservation/stabilisation. Include photographs of the initial discovery and, in the case of artefacts, the subsequent recovery. The context of the find should be described.

8.1.4 Preliminary Excavation Report

On completion of the excavation, the Archaeological Director(s) shall formulate a Preliminary Excavation Report, outlining in brief the results of the excavation. The Preliminary Excavation Report, should incorporate the following:

- (a) an Interim Finds Report (see Code of Conduct for the Treatment of Archaeological Objects);
- (b) a Post-Excavation Design; and
- (c) A schedule for the completion of the full report.

8.1.5 *Archaeological Excavation Report*

The aim of the Archaeological Excavation Report is to collate all the results into a single report. The report must contain the following information:

- (a) an overview of the landscape or streetscape (physical and archaeological) in which the excavation took place;
- (b) a description of the project or development scheme;
- (c) a description of the areas excavated, and details of the methodology, including any variations from the initial Project Design;
- (d) the dates and duration of the excavation;
- (e) an overview of the ground, weather, and overall conditions, particularly with respect to any problems encountered;
- (f) a description of the main archaeological features;
- (g) a detailed catalogue of the archaeological objects, by way of an appendix or Supplementary Finds Report;
- (h) a discussion on the overall archaeological findings and their significance;

- (i) conclusions and recommendations;
- (j) bibliography and references;
- (k) supporting plans, maps, sections, photographs, and illustrations;
- (l) a Stratigraphic Record by way of an appendix or supplementary report;
- (m) specialist results/analysis by way of an appendix or supplementary report;
- (n) Details on the content of the Excavation Archive.

The final report must be submitted within six months (in Northern Ireland) or twelve months (in the Republic of Ireland) of the completion of site works. Where this is not possible, an Interim Progress Report should be submitted, outlining the progress of the post-excavation work and the report writing, indicating the work completed, and the work outstanding. Copies of the final report must be sent to the client and all the relevant authorities.

9 **Creation of Archive**

- 9.1 The Excavation Archive should contain all the data gathered during the course of the fieldwork and must be ordered, indexed and internally consistent. The archive should contain, where relevant, the following;

- (a) a copy of the Project Design;
- (b) all the Feature sheets;
- (c) all the Progress Reports, Daily Logs, and Discovery Reports;
- (d) all relevant mapping, plans, illustrations and photography and video;
- (e) all correspondence relating to the commission or project;
- (f) any other site notebooks or diaries;
- (g) a catalogue of all artefacts and ecofacts,
- (h) Conservation Needs Assessment;
- (i) Specialist Analysis Assessment;
- (j) A copy of the Preliminary Report;
- (k) A copy of the Post-Excavation Design;
- (l) A copy of the Excavation Report;
- (m) Archaeological Object Conservation Report(s);
- (n) A Stratigraphic Report;
- (o) A copy of all reports describing previous archaeological assessments of the site;
- (p) All other registers, catalogues or listings, pertaining to the excavation;
- (q) All digital elements of the excavation archive.