

Introduction to Archaeological Excavation and Recording with Osteology

Module Details	
Module Code:	n/a
Full Title:	Introduction to Archaeological Excavation and Recording with Osteology APPROVED
Valid From:	Semester 2 - 2020/21 (February 2021)
Language of Instruction:	English
Duration:	1 Semester
Credits:	7.5
Module Owner::	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Annaleigh Margey ● Conor Brady
Departments:	Humanities
Module Description:	<p>This module aims to provide participants with a 'hands-on' experience of an archaeological excavation and includes an introduction to the archaeological excavation and recovery of human remains. Participants will be introduced to the aims and objectives of archaeological excavation and the steps involved in the research process that leads to an excavation. They will also be introduced to the range of techniques used and the components of the on-site recording system including the very specific protocols and procedures involved in the treatment of human remains in an archaeological context. They will participate under appropriate supervision in a research excavation and also in the recovery of artefacts, environmental samples and human remains where appropriate. This module is normally delivered in an intensive five-week block during the summer.</p>

Module Learning Outcome	
On successful completion of this module the learner will be able to:	
#	Module Learning Outcome Description
MLO1	Apply the series of techniques of archaeological excavation on site including the specific requirements of excavating human remains
MLO2	Integrate the principles of the single context recording system into all on-site excavation and recording practice
MLO3	Discuss the elements of the on-site recording system and the approach to recording human burials in particular
MLO4	Apply the range of methods of recording of archaeological information on site with a focus on recording burials of human remains
MLO5	Generate preliminary interpretations of contexts and features including burials and other material encountered during excavation
Pre-requisite learning	
<p>Module Recommendations <i>This is prior learning (or a practical skill) that is strongly recommended before enrolment in this module. You may enrol in this module if you have not acquired the recommended learning but you will have considerable difficulty in passing (i.e. achieving the learning outcomes of) the module. While the prior learning is expressed as named DkIT module(s) it also allows for learning (in another module or modules) which is equivalent to the learning specified in the named module(s).</i></p>	
No recommendations listed	

Module Indicative Content	
Site safety briefing Introduction to the site safety statement and procedures. Everybody responsible.	
Introduction Introduction to the process of archaeological excavation, the destructive nature of archaeology. The role and responsibilities of the individual excavator. Duties relating to excavating human remains. Site selection/reasons for excavation. Background research prior to excavation.	
Legal Responsibilities The legal context for the conduct of excavations in Ireland. The role of the National Monuments Service, the National Museum of Ireland. The legislation. National Monument designation. The role of the local authority. Legislation governing the reporting and treatment of human remains. Particular emphasis on ethical considerations of excavating and processing human remains.	
Site research strategy Staff structure on a site. Responsibilities of each level in the hierarchy. Assessment of previously collected survey and excavation data. Setting research questions and objectives season by season. The local context of the site and its relationship to the wider environment/region. Consultation for advice on strategy with osteoarchaeologist.	
Units of investigation The Single Context Recording System. Identifying and understanding contexts and features. The numbering system. Cuttings and trenches. Sondages. Positioning cuttings. The site grid.	
Excavation The process of excavation. Tools. Desodding. Spoil management. Topsoil removal and processing. Identifying and classifying contexts and features. Deposits and cuts. Consultation for advice on best practice excavation and recording techniques with osteoarchaeologist.	
Excavating human remains One of the more highly skilled and paperwork heavy jobs on the site. Need for full exposure and recording prior to lifting. Need for careful systematic approach. Appropriate packaging and labelling. Consultation for advice on best practice excavation and recording techniques with osteoarchaeologist. Particular emphasis on ethical considerations of excavating and processing human remains.	
The Written Record Creation of a permanent 'virtual' site record. The importance of the context/feature number. Context/Feature sheets. Creation of stratigraphic matrix. Other registers: context/feature register, finds, soil samples, planning/drawings, photographs, disarticulated human bone register, burial register.	
The Drawn Record The site grid, reference points. Setting out right-angled cuttings. Taking levels, the Temporary Bench mark. Using planning boards and planning frames. Appropriate scales for drawings. Using coordinates. Plans and sections, profiles/elevations.	
The Photographic Record Numbering and registering photographs. Preparing an area for a photograph. Progress shots v 'publication' shots. Using scales and ranging rods.	
Production of the Stratigraphic Report Introduction to the first step in the site reporting process whereby the contexts and features encountered during excavation are described and presented, along with the context register, the finds catalogue, the samples register etc. Preliminary interpretation presented. Production and submission of Preliminary Post-Excavation Report to NMS	
Module Assessment	
Assessment Breakdown	%
Course Work	100.00%
Module Special Regulation	

Assessments

Full Time

Course Work			
Assessment Type	Reflective Journal	% of Total Mark	60
Marks Out Of	100	Pass Mark	40
Timing	End-of-Semester	Learning Outcome	2,3,5
Duration in minutes	0		
Assessment Description			
Students will be required to submit a journal of their experiences, maintained on a day-by-day basis for the duration of the module and detailing the tasks assigned to them and what they learned. This assessment element will be maintained simultaneously with and will be integrated with the Learning Journal requirement for the other module in this programme: Introduction to Post-Excavation Processing and Recording with Osteology. approx. 1500 words will deal with on-site excavation activities while a further c.1500 words will deal with the post-excavation activities.			
Assessment Type	Continuous Assessment	% of Total Mark	20
Marks Out Of	100	Pass Mark	40
Timing	n/a	Learning Outcome	1,2,3,4,5
Duration in minutes	0		
Assessment Description			
This will examine the student's attendance, participation in discussions, willingness to complete tasks assigned in a timely manner, ability to work well in a group situation, comprehension of the management of the excavation, ability to work under direction, attention to detail and accuracy particularly in the production of material relating to the written record.			
Assessment Type	Essay	% of Total Mark	20
Marks Out Of	100	Pass Mark	40
Timing	n/a	Learning Outcome	1,3,5
Duration in minutes	0		
Assessment Description			
The essay element requires that students submit a 1,500 word essay on archaeological research and excavation techniques and on-site recording and the post-excavation process. This will be an integrated assessment along with the other module in this programme: Introduction to Post-Excavation Processing and Recording with Osteology			
No Project			
No Practical			
No Final Examination			
Part Time			

Course Work			
Assessment Type	Reflective Journal	% of Total Mark	60
Marks Out Of	100	Pass Mark	40
Timing	n/a	Learning Outcome	2,3,5
Duration in minutes	0		
Assessment Description			
Students will be required to submit a journal of their experiences, maintained on a day-by-day basis for the duration of the module and detailing the tasks assigned to them and what they learned. This assessment element will be maintained simultaneously with and will be integrated with the Learning Journal requirement for the other module in this programme: Introduction to Post-Excavation Processing and Recording with Osteology. approx. 1500 words will deal with on-site excavation activities while a further c.1500 words will deal with the post-excavation activities.			
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Marks Out Of	100	Pass Mark	40
Timing	n/a	Learning Outcome	1,2,3,4,5
Duration in minutes	0		
Assessment Description			
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No Project			
No Practical			
No Final Examination			
Reassessment Requirement			
No repeat examination			
<i>Reassessment of this module will be offered solely on the basis of coursework and a repeat examination will not be offered.</i>			

Module Workload

Workload: Full Time					
<i>Workload Type</i>	<i>Contact Type</i>	<i>Workload Description</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Average Weekly Learner Workload</i>	<i>Hours</i>
Lecturer-Supervised Learning (Contact)	Contact	Central to this module is the student's direct participation in live research excavation which takes place in an 'open-air classroom' on an archaeological excavation site	Every Week	13.00	13
Lecture	Contact	There will be one formal lecture each week. These will cover an introduction to Irish prehistoric and historic period archaeology and various archaeological techniques. Some lectures will be delivered by invited guest lecturers who are acknowledged experts/specialists in their areas.	Every Week	2.00	2
Directed Reading	Non Contact	Students will be directed to a series of publications on the reading list designed to support the material covered in the lectures and provide detailed information for use in completion of continuous assessment work.	Every Week	1.00	1
Independent Study	Non Contact	Students will spend time researching and writing their reflective journal each day	Every Week	2.00	2
Practical	Contact	Students will participate in a series of practicals/workshops where they will be introduced to total station surveying, architectural stone handling and recording, and other topics as arise.	Every Week	2.00	2
Total Weekly Learner Workload					20.00
Total Weekly Contact Hours					17.00
Workload: Part Time					
<i>Workload Type</i>	<i>Contact Type</i>	<i>Workload Description</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Average Weekly Learner Workload</i>	<i>Hours</i>
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Directed Reading	Non Contact	Students will be directed to a series of publications on the reading list designed to support the material covered in the lectures and provide detailed information for use in completion of continuous assessment work.	Every Week	1.00	1
Independent Study	Non Contact	Students will spend time researching and writing their reflective journal each day	Every Week	2.00	2
Practical	Contact	Students will participate in a series of practicals/workshops where they will be introduced to total station surveying, architectural stone handling and recording, and other topics as arise.	Every Week	2.00	2
Total Weekly Learner Workload					20.00
Total Weekly Contact Hours					17.00

Module Resources

Recommended Book Resources

- Green, Kevin and Moore, Tom. (2010), *Archaeology: an Introduction*, 5th edition. Routledge, London.
- Renfrew, Colin and Bahn, Paul. (2000), *Archaeology: Theory, Methods and Practice*, 2nd edition. Thames & Hudson, London.
- Barker, P.. (1993), *Techniques of Archaeological Excavation*, 3rd edition. Routledge, London.

Supplementary Book Resources

- Museum of London Archaeological Service. (1994), *Archaeological Site Manual*, Museum of London, London.
- Gaffney, Chris and Gater, John. (2003), *Geophysics for Archaeologists*, Tempus, Stroud.

This module does not have any article/paper resources

Other Resources

- [PDF/hard-copy handout], Blackfriary Archaeology Field School. (2019), *BAFS Student Handbook*, Trim, Blackfriary Archaeology Field School.
- [PDF/hard-copy handout], Blackfriary Archaeology Field School. (2019), *BAFS Handbook for Students*, Trim, Blackfriary Archaeology Field School.
- [Website], Geraldine Stout and Matthew Stout. (2013), *Bective Abbey Excavation Project*, <https://bective.wordpress.com/>
- [Website], Northern Ireland Environment Agency. (2011), *Excavation at Tirnonny Dolmen*.
- [Website], Conor Brady. (2012), *The Rossnaree Excavation Project*, <https://rossnareedig.wordpress.com/>