

Archaeological Institute of America Statement on Sexual Harassment and Assault and Guidelines for Archaeological Field Projects

Introduction: Expectations

The Archaeological Institute of America (AIA) encourages environments that foster trust, safety, and transparency in all endeavors undertaken by its constituency, including fieldwork. The AIA therefore encourages awareness of potential problems and situations surrounding harassment and sexual assault that negatively affect the experience of those participating in field work and the need for each project to create a working plan for how to address issues that may arise. The following guidelines set out an expectation of responsible professional conduct on the part of all parties involved in field work (directors, supervisors, volunteers, specialists, student participants, etc.) and offer guidance for adjudication in the event that sexual harassment or assault occurs.

Fieldwork, particularly excavation and field survey, is a central component of our discipline and can be a principal requirement for training in the field and obtaining a professional position. Fieldwork takes place away from our home institutions, and can involve collaborative interaction between directors, supervisors, artifact specialists, conservators, student participants, volunteers, and community members from areas all around the world. Sexual harassment and assault pose heightened challenges in cross-cultural, multi-institutional, or geographically remote contexts, both for those taking part in and those leading field projects.

The AIA views the field as an extension of the working environments at our home institutions. The AIA encourages everyone taking part in archaeological field work and related activities to adhere to the professional standards of their home institution, while taking into account the laws and cultural expectations of the country or institutional setting in which they are working. Everyone should be aware of professional expectations and rules surrounding appropriate behavior, and they should be aware of the resources available in the workplace in the event that harassment or assault occurs.

The AIA is not an adjudicating body and, therefore, cannot take legal or reparative action in the event that sexual harassment or assault occurs in the field. These guidelines do not stand as legal advice to any individual.

Harassment and Misconduct

Harassment of any sort, including verbal, physical, or visual harassment, whether it targets race, creed, color, religion, national origin, alienage or citizenship status, ancestry, sex, age, disability, marital status, familial status, military status, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, genetic predisposition or carrier status, is unacceptable and should not be tolerated while conducting fieldwork.

Sexual harassment is defined by the U.S. Equal Opportunity Employment Commission in the following ways: *“It is unlawful to harass a person (an applicant or employee) because of that person’s sex. Harassment can include “sexual harassment” or unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical harassment of a sexual nature. Harassment does not have to be of a sexual nature, however, and can include offensive remarks*

about a person's sex. For example, it is illegal to harass a woman by making offensive comments about women in general. Both victim and the harasser can be either a woman or a man, and the victim and harasser can be the same sex. Although the law doesn't prohibit simple teasing, offhand comments, or isolated incidents that are not very serious, harassment is illegal when it is so frequent or severe that it creates a hostile or offensive work environment or when it results in an adverse employment decision (such as the victim being fired or demoted). The harasser can be the victim's supervisor, a supervisor in another area, a co-worker, or someone who is not an employee of the employer, such as a client or customer." The definition from the Canadian Human Rights Commission is similar: *"Harassment is a form of discrimination. It includes any unwanted physical or verbal behaviour that offends or humiliates you. Generally, harassment is a behaviour that persists over time. Serious one-time incidents can also sometimes be considered harassment."* (For further information see links at the end of this document.)

Suggested Guidelines for Encouraging a Professional and Safe Environment on Field Projects

Project Directors:

1. Project Directors and Principal Investigators (PI) on field projects should create, distribute and enforce a code of conduct for work and living on site during the fieldwork period that applies to all members of the team.
2. Before leaving for the field project, directors should engage their Title IX offices (in the US) or the appropriate campus resources to undertake training, workshops, or other preparatory courses to understand all obligations and resources surrounding sexual harassment and assault while on field projects.
3. Project Directors and PIs should make clear to all team members the appropriate resources and mechanisms for reporting an incident of sexual harassment or assault without fear of reprisal.
4. Project Directors and PIs should assign an individual, either on site or at the home institution (or both), to act as adjudicator for the sake of immediate reporting and intervention should an act against the code of conduct occur. That information should be distributed to all team members at the start of the season and it should be made clear how team members can communicate with that adjudicator.
5. Project Directors and PIs should make clear with their staff and participants the rules about worksite relationships, socializing, or other activities that may put anyone in an uncomfortable situation during the project, both during work hours and social time. This may include rules about meeting with students even for professional reasons. Relationships between anyone in a supervisory role and anyone else in a role to be supervised should be discouraged because of the power asymmetry that may cause serious problems or misunderstandings.
6. Project Directors and PIs should make clear rules surrounding alcohol consumption, buying drinks for others (even if legally allowed in the host country), and other rules around socializing since potential problems tend to be heightened when alcohol is involved.
7. An adjudicator should maintain privacy around a complaint that does not violate Title IX or other applicable laws. Project Directors and others in supervisory roles are legally obliged under Title IX in the US to report any illegal actions to the appropriate institutional authorities when an incident occurs or is reported. They may also need to report to local authorities.

Participants

1. Students, researchers, specialists, and visitors participating in a fieldwork experience should request to see a code of conduct for the fieldwork period.
2. Students should engage the Title IX office (in the US) or appropriate campus resources (even if not required for project participation) to undertake training in situations surrounding sexual harassment and assault and to understand the resources available to them on campus should anything occur while in the field.
3. Participants in a field program should research fully the program they intend to take part in and feel free to ask about policies of conduct while on site.
4. Discussion of expectations and definitions surrounding sexual harassment and assault should be open and clear to all members of the team. It should be understood that everyone taking part comes from diverse backgrounds and has different perspectives and experiences, so may not have the same feelings about jokes, stories, images, or physical contact.
5. If an incident occurs the issue should be taken immediately to the appropriate representatives (see number 4 above).
6. Bystander awareness should be practiced (see links below for more information). If someone witnesses sexual harassment or assault of another person they should approach a designated or appropriate member of the team with this information.
7. Relationships between anyone in a supervisory role and anyone else in a role to be supervised should be discouraged because of the power asymmetry that may cause serious problems or misunderstandings.
8. Particularly in a field school context, relationships between any staff member and any field school participant (regardless of age differences/similarities) should be avoided.

Links for more information:

The Society for American Archaeology (SAA) has an extensive list of resources available here: <http://www.saa.org/AbouttheSociety/StatementonSexualHarassmentandViolence/tabid/1547/Default.aspx>

The Society for Classical Studies (SCS) statement on harassment at the Annual Meeting (held jointly with the AIA Annual Meeting): <https://classicalstudies.org/scs-news/scs-statement-harassment-annual-meeting>

For more information about Title IX in the USA:
https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/tix_dis.html

For the Canadian Human Rights Act:
<https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/h-6/>

For Canadian HRA including sexual harassment specifically:
<https://www.chrc-ccdp.gc.ca/eng/content/what-harassment-1>

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