

Code of Professional Standards

The following Code of Professional Standards was approved by the Council at its December 29, 1994 meeting, and amended on December 29, 1997, January 5, 2008, and January 8, 2016.

Preamble

The AIA recognizes that archaeology is a discipline dealing with the human condition in all its aspects, and that archaeological research must often balance competing ethical principles. This Code of Professional Standards does not seek to resolve all aspects of professional behavior and it acknowledges the conflicts embedded in many of the issues addressed. It sets forth three broad areas of responsibility and provides examples of the considerations called for by each.

The Code of Professional Standards applies to those members of the AIA who play a professional role in the recovery, study, curation, conservation, or publication of archaeological material. Professional members should inform themselves about and abide by the laws of the countries in which they live and work. As primary stewards of the archaeological record, they should work actively to preserve that record in all its dimensions and for the long term. They should give due consideration to the interests of others, both colleagues and the lay public, who are affected by their research.

I. Responsibilities to the Archaeological Record

Professional archaeologists incur responsibilities to the archaeological record, which comprises the physical remains, including those located under water, and all the information associated with those remains.

1. Professional archaeologists should adhere to the AIA's Code of Ethics in their research and publications.
2. The purposes and consequences of all archaeological research should be carefully considered before the beginning of work. Because excavation is an irreversible process, approaches and methods should be chosen that require a minimum of damage to the archaeological record.
3. The recovery and study of archaeological material from all periods should be carried out only under the supervision of trained personnel.
4. Archaeologists should anticipate and provide for adequate and accessible long-term storage and curatorial facilities for all archaeological materials, records, and archives, including digital data, which require specialized archival care and maintenance.
5. Archaeologists should make public the results of their research in a timely fashion, sharing evidence with others if publication is not accomplished within a reasonable time.
6. All research projects should contain specific plans for conservation, preservation, and publication from the very outset, and funds should be sought for such purposes.
7. Professional archaeologists should not participate in fieldwork where the primary goal is to make a profit. This does not apply to cultural resource management and similar projects, even if carried out by a for-profit firm, as long as they otherwise comply with the provisions of the Code of Professional Standards.
8. Professional archaeologists must not engage in plagiarism or the fabrication or falsification of data. They should explicitly and accurately acknowledge their use of words, ideas, data, and research findings of other scholars, and should respect the property rights of copyright holders.

II. Responsibilities to the Public

Because the archaeological record represents the heritage of all people, it is the responsibility of professional archaeologists to communicate with the general public about the nature of archaeological research and the importance of archaeological resources. Archaeologists also have specific

responsibilities to the local communities where they carry out research and fieldwork, as well as to their home institutions and communities.

1. Professional archaeologists should actively engage in public outreach through lecturing, popular writing, school programs, and other educational initiatives.
2. Plans for fieldwork should consider the environmental impact of the project and its overall effects on local communities.
3. For field projects, archaeologists should consult with appropriate representatives of the local community during the planning stage, invite local participation in the project, and regularly inform community members about the results of research.
4. Archaeologists should respect the cultural norms and dignity of local inhabitants in areas where archaeological research is carried out. The legitimate concerns of people who claim descent from, or another connection with, cultures of the past must be balanced with disciplinary objectives and means. Such considerations should be taken into account in designing the project's strategy.

III. Responsibilities to Colleagues and Students

Professional archaeologists owe consideration and respect to colleagues and project members. They should keep ethical considerations in mind as they plan and carry out their research.

1. Directors, principal investigators and staff of archaeological projects should maintain acceptable standards of safety and ascertain that participants are adequately insured.
2. Professional archaeologists should maintain confidentiality of information gleaned in reviewing grant proposals and other such privileged sources.
3. Professional archaeologists should not practice discrimination or harassment based on gender, religion, age, race, national origin, disability, or sexual orientation. Project sponsors should establish guidelines that reduce the potential for discrimination or harassment, and have in place procedures to investigate and resolve complaints.
4. Professional archaeologists should honor reasonable requests from colleagues for access to materials and records, preserving existing rights to publication, but sharing information useful for the research of others. Scholars should not expect to receive interpretive information if research is in progress and unpublished.
5. Before studying, presenting, or publishing any unpublished material, scholars should secure permission, normally in writing, from the appropriate project director, the appointed representative of the sponsoring institution, and/or the antiquities authorities in the country of origin.
6. Scholars studying unpublished material should keep the project director informed of their progress and intentions; project directors should return the courtesy.
7. Members of cooperative projects should prepare and evaluate reports in a timely and collegial fashion.