

**MA in MANAGING ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES**  
**Degree Programme Handbook**  
**2023-2024**



Kerma, Sudan

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Please refer to the online IoA Student Handbook  
(<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/archaeology/current-students>) for general information

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

This is the Handbook for the MA degree programme in Managing Archaeological Sites. It outlines the aims and objectives, structure and content of the degree, and includes other practical information.

This Handbook should be used alongside the Institute's Student Handbook (also available on the Institute web-site: <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/archaeology/current-students>), which contains links about programmes and options within them, being taught this year.

If students have queries about the organisation, objectives, structure, content or assessment of the degree, they should consult the Degree Co-ordinator.

## **2. AIMS, OBJECTIVES, AND OUTCOMES OF THE DEGREE**

The Managing Archaeological Sites MA is a practice-driven programme that examines the preservation, management and interpretation of archaeological and heritage sites including UNESCO World Heritage Sites. It explores contemporary international and local approaches, often with in-depth case studies, to demonstrate how sites can be successfully managed, conserved and presented to preserve their significance. From documentation, legal norms and governance to funding, interpretation and heritage tourism, the programme discusses specific elements of sustainable, modern-day heritage management.

### **2.1 BACKGROUND**

This degree aims to examine the theory and practice of archaeological site management, the reasons for designation and selecting sites for preservation, and the methods for successful management and conservation of a site's significance. Students will also learn about practical methods for documentation and the physical conservation of different categories of archaeological sites and will master a technical vocabulary adequate to communicate with site management specialists of different levels. In balancing theory and practice, this degree will suit those wishing to continue on to academic research and those seeking employment in heritage administration or international organisations.

The emergence of archaeological site management as a discipline results from a combination of factors: widespread concern about proper conservation of sites, besieged by development, pollution and population pressure; growth of cultural tourism often perceived as an important source of revenue and economic growth; development issues and involvement of local communities as an alternative to centralised exploitation of the resource; global challenges such as the climate emergency, as well as the localised and regional conflicts and their impact on heritage sites; etc. From a purely conservation point of view, natural decay is accelerated by all these factors, and site managers and conservators realised that reactive intervention is not sufficient to ensure the long-term preservation of the resources under their responsibility. That is one of the reasons why integrated management has become, in recent years, an appealing solution for both site conservation and for the exploitation of the cultural resource.

International organisations such as ICOMOS and UNESCO, and in more recent years ICCROM and the Getty Conservation Institute, are pushing the agenda of archaeological site management, be it in World Heritage Sites or in sites of national or local importance. Among several possible types of management, the model emerged through the Australian Burra Charter has acquired worldwide respect, mainly for its sensitive approach to the issue of stakeholders and local communities, and the development of the concept of valuing the resource.

The main elements of site management planning are today recognised in documenting the resource, in identifying its stakeholders, in recognising its values, and in preparing statements of significance. The analysis of context, values, and significance leads then to the preparation and implementation of the plan, which is constantly monitored for revisions and improvements. As simple as the model can seem, the iterative process and the large number of actors makes this management process a complex one. It is also one that does not stop with the publication of the plan, but continues throughout its implementation.

The module under this MA programme will explore in depth this process and the way it is applied worldwide, the obstacles it has to overcome and the challenges offered by its application to a wide range of site types, in disparate social, economic, and cultural environments.

The syllabus is based upon a practical model of site management. The core module of the degree will start by exploring the concept of heritage management, the issue of authenticity, and how values and significance, held by different interest groups, can underpin the management process. The module will then explore administrative contexts and how these influence both the process of developing and implementation of a management plan. The model of management planning will be explored through practical issues of site conservation, maintenance, visitor management, tourism, and economic and social development. It will then examine practical issues in the identification of values, stakeholders, and significance, and explore how these can assist in the planning process, in formulating policies and strategies. Overview of charters and recommendations formulated by national and international organisations, will lead into detailed discussions of the World Heritage, and similarly, overview of documentation tools and techniques will lead into discussions of preventive conservation approaches. In term 2, in-depth discussions on site interpretation, cultural tourism, conflict and post-conflict heritage management, funding and governance will also follow to strengthen the foundations necessary for holistic understanding of the modern heritage management. There will be specific lectures on approaches to managing urban and rural archaeological sites, and we will review risks for implementing effective management on complex monuments. A series of contemporary case studies from around the world will exemplify the complexity of the management process and of its implementation, and discussions of the best practice will help students to approach that complexity with knowledge.

By the end of the degree, students should be able to understand and apply a planning process based on the recognition of a site's values and of its interest groups, or stakeholders.

## 2.2 AIMS

- To provide an understanding of the processes that lead to the preparation, implementation and monitoring of a site management plan, including the role of values and stakeholders To equip students with the theory and practice needed to carry out similar processes and site management duties
- To provide an opportunity for critical reflection of ethical approaches to sustainable development and rights-based management of heritage
- To make aware of complexities and challenges of managing heritage in the modern world and to inform about existing and emerging methodologies and approaches for documentation, preservation and interpretation of tangible and intangible heritage.

### 2.3 OBJECTIVES

On successful completion of this course and its core module a student should:

- Understand the role of site/heritage management and planning can play in the conservation, interpretation and sustainable use of archaeological sites and landscapes;
- Be able to facilitate debate on the theory and methodology of value-based and rights-based management planning processes;
- Be familiar with the tools and the techniques for engaging stakeholders, documenting and assessing a heritage site, and producing, implementing, and monitoring an archaeological and heritage management plan;
- Be aware of the debates around and approaches to the World Heritage, including its nomination further management;
- Be informed about governance of heritage in international and national levels, and be aware of networks and organisations working in preservation and documentation of endangered, under-threat and contested heritage;

### 2.4 LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of the core module students should be able to demonstrate:

- Observation and critical reflection
- Application of acquired knowledge
- Written and oral presentation skills

### 2.5 PREREQUISITES

This module does not have any prerequisites. Students will have been accepted to the programme on the understanding that they already have sufficient background in archaeology, heritage, history, architecture or a relevant field, either through their previous degree, or through relevant experience, to be able to follow the programme and its core module.

## 3. PROGRAMME STRUCTURE

The degree is available either full-time over one academic year or part-time over two academic years (commencing September).

It comprises **one core course**, *Managing Archaeological Sites*, which is 30 credits that runs over two terms.

The students are expected to take further **option courses** chosen by the student in consultation with the degree coordinator. Those optional courses should add up to further 60 credits.

They are also expected to write a **dissertation** of 15,000 words prepared on a relevant topic, with guidance from an assigned supervisor. This will result in further 90 credits.

Overall, the weightings of each component are:

**Each 15-credit module is weighted 1/12; 30 credit modules are 2/12; and the Dissertation 6/12 in the Scheme of Award for the overall degree.**

### 3.1 OVERALL TIMETABLE

Taught modules are normally timetabled over the two terms, though assessed work may be scheduled for submission in the third term, depending on which options have been selected. Full details of the timetable for each module are included in the module handbook. Beyond the terms, students are expected to use the remaining months to undertake independent research, their placement (if any) and to work on their dissertation.

### 3.2 THE CORE MODULE

The programme of study for this degree is intended to help students meet the objectives outlined above and also to provide an opportunity for them to achieve any additional personal objectives. It comprises a compulsory 30 credit core module (ARCL0108 *Managing Archaeological Sites*). The core module is taught over two terms. It is taught through formal lectures, seminars and visits.

All students registered for MA in *Managing Archaeological Sites* must take the ARCL0108 (*Managing Archaeological Sites*) module.

The method of assessment of the core module, including the word count, deadlines and nature of the assignments, are provided in the module handbook.

### 3.3 OPTIONS

Students must take 60 credits of optional modules. Normally, students select options particularly relevant to this degree programme, but they may select options from those available in other Masters' degree programmes taught in the UCL Institute of Archaeology, after discussion with and subject to the agreement of the Degree Co-ordinator. More exceptionally, it is possible to take one module provided by another Department at UCL, or one of the other *MA in Managing Archaeological Sites*

Colleges of the University of London - students should discuss this with their Degree Co-ordinator as this may be very challenging this academic year.

**Modules** can be selected from the list of options available this year:

<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/archaeology/study/graduate-taught/graduate-taught-programme-modules>

All options are subject to availability and resources (please note not all courses are available every year).

Student should choose modules bearing in mind potential timetable clashes and should discuss their selection with the Degree Co-ordinator.

Subject to space and the agreement of the Module Co-ordinators involved, students are welcome to sit in on modules, in addition to those for which they are formally registered.

### 3.4 PART-TIME STUDENTS

If students are pursuing the degree on a part-time basis, they will normally be expected to take 60 credits (which will normally include the core module) in the first year and the remaining elements in the second. They must agree their choice of modules with the Degree Co-ordinator. They may start work on the dissertation at the same time as full-time students, or they may wish to start later; either way they should consult the Degree Co-ordinator, and their Dissertation Supervisor, once the latter has been appointed.

### 3.5 PRACTICE ESSAY

To prepare for assignments under different modules, there will be a short practice essay that every degree programme student will need to submit. This will help to ensure the compliance with rules and regulations, awareness of Moodle and submission systems, and approach to academic writing.

**The submission deadline for the practice essay is Friday 13 October**

### 3.6 DISSERTATION

The dissertation of up to 15,000 words (90 credits) is a report on research, the topic chosen being approved as relevant within the general area covered by this degree.

Students should discuss their area of research interest with their Degree Co-ordinator, who will help them to focus their ideas for their dissertation, or refer them to another member of staff who will be able to provide more specific advice, and will probably be appointed to be the student's Dissertation Supervisor. They will help the student define their dissertation topic,

and provide guidance through the main stages of the work. The dissertation provides a further opportunity to define and achieve the student's own particular objectives. It might be used to apply newly learned approaches to an archaeological/heritage problem that has long been of interest, or to gain greater experience with particular methods of data analysis. If a student is studying part-time while working in the field, they might choose to analyse a data set derived from their own work, or to assess the potential of particular theoretical or methodological approaches for their work. They can treat the dissertation as a one-off research project, as a pilot study for a Ph.D. project, or use it to showcase their skills to potential employers.

Guidelines for researching, writing and producing the dissertation are included in the MA/MSc Handbook. There will be specific discussions on dissertations as part of degree.

Work on your dissertation will be your principal activity from April to mid-September. Please give some consideration to how you are going to structure your time and work in order to ensure that you can complete this project in the time available. If you expect to find the preparation of this document difficult, it is advisable to break the work down into smaller, more manageable, chunks.

**The deadline for submission of the dissertation is Thursday 1 September 2023.**

### 3.7 DEGREE ASSESSMENT

The Board of Examiners normally meets in November. At that time students who have completed all elements may be recommended for the award of a degree.

### 3.8 PLACEMENTS

One of the elements of this MA course is the opportunity to undertake a professional placement in a relevant organisation. However, the placements are **not mandatory** and not an assessed part of the degree.

Through the placement the student, guided by a specialist in the institution concerned, will gain experience in the practical aspects on archaeological management, in an area relevant to the student's interests. Another important element of the placement is to provide the student with an overview of the working of an organisation as a whole, and the chance to broaden their contacts. Students come from a variety of backgrounds with a range of different experiences and expectations, and we try to obtain placements that are relevant to each individual, however this depends on the good will of the host institution. Students should aim to spend at least 20 working days undertaking a specific project and gaining insight into the general running of the organisation.

The Degree Co-ordinator will discuss arrangements for a suitable organisation placement during the first term, and the majority of your placement and dissertation work will start in April. If you prefer a specific type of placement, or an organisation that you would like to work with, the Degree Co-ordinator would be interested in discussing this with you, the sooner he knows about your needs the better his chance of finding you a suitable placement.

***Please do not contact host institutions yourself without discussing your placement with your co-ordinator first.***

The Degree Co-ordinator will arrange an interview between you and a representative of the organisation where the placement is to take place to ensure that you are matched to an appropriate placement. It would be helpful if you could produce a CV that is suitable to give to potential placement supervisors.

The project that you work on during the placement will be discussed in advance between you and a suitable member of the organisation where you are being placed. Ideally it is hoped that in this way it will be possible to identify a project that can be finished in a reasonable time and may also be suitable for as dissertation material. Experience of placements in other degree programmes shows that both the student and the host organisation derive the greatest benefit when a defined task can be identified in advance.

Considering current restrictions, the expectation should be that most of the placements will take place on remote working schedule. The experience from previous year shows that it is still possible to achieve the intended goals of the placements.

### 3.9 COMMUNICATION

**The primary channel of communication within the Institute of Archaeology is e-mail.** If you wish to use your personal or work e-mails as primary, please arrange (in settings) for e-mail sent to your UCL address to be forwarded to your other address, since staff and other students will expect to be able to reach you through your university e-mail, which they can find on the UCL system. Students must consult their e-mail regularly. Please also ensure that you keep your contact details (especially your telephone number) up to date on Portico, in case you need to be contacted.

The degree will have a dedicated Microsoft Teams group for this academic year.

Every module will also use UCL's Moodle learning environment. Students will be automatically enrolled to Moodle groups of their chosen modules, or will receive invitations and instructions on how to join.