

# Inclusive, Accessible, Archaeology

HEFCE FDTL5



Inclusive, Accessible, Archaeology (IAA) aims to address the dual issues of disability and transferable skills in the teaching of archaeological fieldwork:

- ➔ Increase the awareness of disability issues in archaeology
- ➔ Improve the integration of disability in fieldwork teaching
- ➔ Increase all students' awareness of the transferable skills that are learned through participating in archaeological fieldwork.

# The IAA project

## Project outcomes

- ➔ Developed a self-evaluation tool kit (ASSET) to encourage students to reflect on their developing abilities
- ➔ Embedded the tool kit into archaeological fieldwork training and professional skills teaching.

## Phase 1: Assessment

Used questionnaires to evaluate the issues surrounding, and the current practices relating to, disability and archaeology. Investigated the individual experiences of disabled students and professional archaeologists through case studies based on interviews.

## Phase 2: Characterisation

Developed a generic method of assessing the physical and cognitive demands of the various archaeological tasks taught in fieldwork training. Produced the pro-forma of the self-evaluation tool kit.

## Phase 3: Controlled testing

Tested and refined the characterisation through real-world tests with disabled and non-disabled volunteers.

## Phase 4: Field trials

Assessed the suitability of the self-evaluation tool kit through field trials with disabled and non-disabled volunteers on archaeological excavations.

ASSET is the Archaeological Skills Self-Evaluation Tool kit.

It is available as an online resource and has been designed for users with little or no previous experience of archaeological fieldwork.

It will help them assess their potential to successfully complete various archaeological tasks, as well as their transferable skills.

## ASSET: 4 parts

### 1: Self-evaluation of abilities

This is completed before participating in archaeological fieldwork training. It asks a series of questions about everyday activities, designed to identify a person's abilities in relation to

- particular archaeological tasks
- transferable skills, and
- physical and cognitive abilities.

### 2: Abilities and tasks: pre-fieldwork checklist

This is completed before starting fieldwork training. By comparing this with the answers to the questions in Part 1, the student gets an idea of their

- 'potential' ability to participate in particular archaeological activities
- transferable skills
- physical and cognitive abilities.

### 3: Abilities and tasks: post-fieldwork checklist

This is completed after participating in fieldwork training. The student can evaluate their 'actual' abilities and compare them to their 'potential' abilities identified in Part 2.

### 4: Self-evaluation of skills

This is completed after participating in fieldwork training. Students can evaluate how well they performed particular tasks and what transferable skills they have gained.

*Parts 3 and 4 of the tool kit can be completed again after subsequent periods of fieldwork training, allowing the development of abilities and skills to be tracked.*

# Embedding the tool kit in the curriculum

**ASSET** can be fitted neatly into existing programmes of PDP and modules such as Professional Skills and Career Management Skills. These are on-going processes which involve a number of stages relating to professional and transferable skills. A simple model of application would be:

## **First-year undergraduate** (prior to fieldwork):

- Complete Parts 1 and 2 – identify skills possessed, and those to be developed and acquired
- Plan to develop and acquire these skills
- Participate in fieldwork training
- Develop and acquire skills.

## **Second-year undergraduate** (post-fieldwork):

- Complete Parts 3 and 4 of the tool kit – evaluate skills and level of achievement
- Identify which skills still need to be acquired/developed.

The process can be repeated with further participation in fieldwork training, allowing students to track their acquisition and development of skills. This will form part of their PDP progress file.



**'If the idea that we cannot all do everything could be accepted, I don't see why archaeology can't be inclusive'**

Disabled archaeology student

# Self-evaluation

- ➔ Disabled students have successfully participated in archaeological fieldwork training when there has been an understanding and knowledge of their potential abilities and possible limitations.
- ➔ In a totally new environment, like an archaeological excavation, this self-awareness can be enhanced by methods of self-evaluation.
- ➔ A person's abilities are not static, they change and develop with experience; any method of self-evaluation must reflect this dynamic aspect.
- ➔ The reflective process of self-evaluation benefits all students, not just those with a disability. It helps them:
  - develop a self-awareness of potential and changing abilities
  - understand and absorb a new range of experiences
  - identify areas of strength and weakness.
- ➔ This applies not only to the archaeological skills learned through fieldwork training, but also the transferable skills which employers consider to be very important.



# Transferable skills and Archaeology

The transferable skills gained through participation in archaeological fieldwork training include:

- Practical skills
- Research skills
- Organisational skills
- Team and independent working skills
- Communication and social skills
- Problem solving and decision making
- Time management
- Flexibility
- Self-motivation
- Potential leadership skills
- Physical and mental stamina.

These are the 'competencies' that employers consider represent an 'all-round individual'.

Discovering individual ability through self-evaluation is the approach that has been taken by the IAA project...



## Disability in Archaeology

### Higher Education

- ➔ Approximately 14% of undergraduate students have a declared disability. Of this percentage, dyslexia is the most common, followed by 'hidden' disabilities.
- ➔ Compared to national figures, more students with restricted mobility are choosing archaeology as an undergraduate degree, while fewer students with a visual impairment are choosing the subject.

### Employment

- ➔ The number of disabled workers employed in commercial archaeology is probably less than the national average, but greater than previously estimated
- ➔ Hidden disabilities (especially diabetes and arthritis, which tend to be late onset conditions) are the most reported conditions, followed by dyslexia
- ➔ Disabled employees are mostly employed in field investigation activities, whatever their impairment, including those with restricted mobility.

## Social model of disability

- ➔ This model takes the view that the disabled person may be excluded because of the barriers (physical, social, economic or attitudinal) in society, rather than considering that there is something 'wrong' with them.
- ➔ In reality, restrictions in a person's ability may preclude them from some aspects of archaeological fieldwork.
- ➔ The criteria used to establish whether someone can participate should be based on their individual ability, and not whether they are a disabled or a non-disabled person.
- ➔ Discovering individual ability through self-evaluation is the approach that has been taken by the IAA project.

# Resources

- ➔ The Archaeological Skills Self-Evaluation Tool kit (ASSET)
- ➔ Inclusion and Self-Evaluation in Archaeological Fieldwork Practice: Guidelines for Good Practice
- ➔ Case studies
- ➔ Project reports

These resources are available on the project website:

[www.hca.heacademy.ac.uk/access-archaeology/inclusive\\_accessible](http://www.hca.heacademy.ac.uk/access-archaeology/inclusive_accessible)

The tool kit is also available on the CBA website:

[www.britarch.ac.uk](http://www.britarch.ac.uk)

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