
AIMA Code of Ethics

Definition: A Maritime Archaeologist is a person who:

- holds an honours or other post-graduate degree in Maritime Archaeology or in another area of Archaeology with a major in Maritime Archaeology; **or**
- has gained recognition by Australian State, Commonwealth or New Zealand governments as a maritime archaeologist plus a minimum of two and a half years of full time professional experience applying the theories, methods and practices of Maritime Archaeology to the identification, evaluation, documentation or treatment of maritime archaeological sites in Australasia (one year experience in maritime archaeology must be under supervision of a maritime archaeologist); and products and activities that demonstrate the successful application of acquired proficiencies to the practice of maritime archaeological preservation.

A. CODE OF ETHICS

1. The AIMA Member's Responsibility to the Public

1.1 Members shall:

- a) Recognise a commitment to represent archaeology and its research results to the public in a responsible manner;
- b) Actively support conservation of the archaeological resource base;
- c) Be sensitive to, and respect the legitimate concerns of, groups whose cultural histories are the subjects of archaeological investigations;
- d) Avoid and discourage exaggerated, misleading, or unwarranted statements about archaeological matters that might induce others to engage in unethical or illegal activity;
- e) Support and comply with the terms of the ICOMOS Burra Charter.
- f) Support and comply with the terms of the UNESCO Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage.

1.2 Members shall not:

- a) Engage in any illegal or unethical conduct involving archaeological matters or knowingly permit the use of her/his name in support of any illegal or unethical activity involving archaeological matters;
- b) Give a professional opinion, make a public report, or give legal testimony involving archaeological matters without being as thoroughly informed as might reasonably be expected;
- c) Engage in conduct involving dishonesty, fraud, deceit or misrepresentation about archaeological matters;
- d) Undertake any research that affects the resource base for which he/she is not qualified, nor represent themselves as archaeologists without the appropriate qualifications or professional recognition as outlined in the definition.
- e) Engage in nor support any illicit or unethical trade in archaeological material from any nation, including the commercial excavation, salvage or recovery of archaeological, material for irretrievable dissemination and/or sale.

2. The Archaeologist's Responsibility to her/his Colleagues

2.1 An archaeologist shall:

- a) Give appropriate credit for work done by others;
- b) Stay informed and knowledgeable about developments in her/his field or fields or specialisation;
- c) Encourage less qualified or experienced co-workers to develop skills and experience through participation in archaeological projects;
- d) Communicate and co-operate with colleagues having common professional interests;
- e) Give due respect to colleagues interests in, and right to, information about sites, areas, collections, or date where there is a mutual active or potentially active research concern;
- f) Know and comply with all laws applicable to her/his archaeological research, as well as with any relevant procedures promulgated by duly constituted professional organisations;
- g) Report knowledge of violations of this Code to AIMA and other appropriate authorities.

2.2 An archaeologist shall not:

- a) Falsely or maliciously attempt to injure the reputation of another archaeologist;
- b) Commit plagiarism in oral or written communication;
- c) Undertake research that affects the archaeological resource base unless reasonably prompt, appropriate analysis and reporting can be expected;
- d) Refuse a reasonable request from a qualified colleague for research data.

3. The Archaeologist's Responsibility to Employers and Clients.

3.1 An archaeologist shall:

- a) Respect the interest of her/his employer or client, so far as is consistent with the public welfare and this Code of Ethics;
- b) Refuse to comply with any requests or demands of an employer or client which conflict with this Code of Ethics;
- c) Recommend to employers or clients the employment of other archaeologists or other expert consultants upon encountering archaeological problems beyond her/his own competence;
- d) Exercise reasonable care to prevent her/his employees, colleagues, associates and others whose services are utilised by her/him from revealing or using confidential information. Confidential information means information of a non-archaeological nature gained in the course of employment which the employer or client has requested be held inviolate, or the disclosure of which would be embarrassing or would likely be detrimental to the employer or client. Information ceases to be confidential when the employer or client so indicates or when such information becomes publicly known.

3.2 An archaeologist shall not:

- a) Reveal confidential information, unless required by law;

- b) Use confidential information for the advantage of herself/himself or a third person, unless the client consents to full disclosure;
- c) Accept compensation or anything of value for recommending the employment of another archaeologist or other person, unless such compensation or thing of value is fully disclosed to the potential employer or client;
- d) Recommend or participate in any research that does not comply with the requirements of the Standard of Research Performance.

B. STANDARD OR RESEARCH PERFORMANCE PREAMBLE

The research archaeologist has a responsibility to attempt to design and conduct projects that will add to our understanding of past cultures and/or that will develop better theories, methods, or techniques for interpreting the archaeological record, while causing minimal attrition of the archaeological resource base. In the conduct of a research project, the following minimum standards should be followed:

1. The archaeologist has a responsibility to prepare adequately for any research project whether or not in the field. The archaeologist must:
 - 1.1 Assess the adequacy of her/his qualifications for the demands of the project, and minimise inadequacies by acquiring additional expertise, by bringing in associates with the needed qualifications, or by modifying the scope of the project;
 - 1.2 Inform herself/himself of relevant previous research;
 - 1.3 Develop a scientific plan of research which specifies the objectives of the project, takes into account previous relevant research, employs a suitable methodology, and provides for economical use of the resource base (whether such base consists of an excavation site or of specimens), consistent with the objectives of the project;
 - 1.4 Ensure the availability of adequate staff and support facilities to carry the project to completion, and to adequate curatorial facilities for specimens and records;
 - 1.5 Comply with all legal requirements, including, without limitation, obtaining all necessary governmental permits and necessary permission from, landowners or other persons;
 - 1.6 Determine whether the project is likely to interfere with the program or projects of other scholars and if there is such a likelihood, initiate negotiations to minimise such interference.
2. In conducting research, the archaeologist must follow her/his scientific plan of research, except to the extent that unforeseen circumstances warrant its modification.
3. Procedures for field survey or excavation must meet the following minimal standards:
 - 3.1 If specimens are collected, a system for identifying and recording their provenances must be maintained.
 - 3.2 Uncollected entities such as environmental or cultural features, depositional strata, and the like, must be fully and accurately recorded by appropriate means and their location recorded.
 - 3.3 The methods employed in data collection must be fully and accurately described. Significant stratigraphic and/or associational relationships among artefacts, other specimens, and cultural and environmental features must also be fully and accurately recorded.
 - 3.4 All records should be intelligible to other archaeologists. If terms lacking commonly held references are used, they should be clearly defined.
 - 3.5 Insofar as possible the interest of other researchers should be considered. For example, upper levels of a site should be scientifically excavated and recorded whenever feasible, even if the focus of the project is on underlying levels.

4. During accessioning, analysis, and storage of specimens and records in the laboratory, the archaeologist must take precautions to ensure the correlations between the specimens and the field records are maintained, so that provenance, contextual relationships, and the like are not confused or obscured.
5. Specimens and research records resulting from a project must be deposited or placed under the control of an institution with permanent curatorial facilities.
6. The archaeologist has responsibility for appropriate dissemination of the results of her/his research to the appropriate constituencies with reasonable dispatch.
 - 6.1 Results viewed as significant contributions to substantive knowledge of the past or to advancements in theory, method, or technique should be disseminated to colleagues and other interested persons by appropriate means, such as publications, reports at professional meetings, or letters to colleagues.
 - 6.2 Requests from qualified colleagues for information on research results ordinarily should be honoured, if consistent with the researcher's prior rights to publications and with her/his other professional responsibilities.
 - 6.3 Failure to complete a full scholarly report within 10 years after completion of a project shall be construed as a waiver of an archaeologist's right to primacy with respect to analysis and publication of the data. Upon expiration of such 10-year period, or at such earlier time as the archaeologists shall determine not to publish the results, such data should be made fully accessible for analysis and publication to other archaeologists.
 - 6.4 While contractual obligations in reporting must be respected, archaeologists should not enter into a contract which prohibits the archaeologist from including her or his own interpretations or conclusions in contractual reports, or from a continuing right to use the data after completion of the project.
 - 6.5 Archaeologists have an obligation to accede to reasonable requests for information from the news media.
7. Archaeologists have a responsibility to prevent the publication of precise site locations whenever such publication might lead to vandalism of the sites.

References

- Rock Art Research, A.N.A. **Reporter** (1985), 16(8):3
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- Dunnell, R.C., 1984, The ethics of archaeological significance decisions. In: Green, E. (ed), **Ethics and values in archaeology**, 1984:62-74. The Free Press, New York.
- Society of Professional Archaeologists, 1984, Code of Ethics and Standards of Research Performance. In: Green, E. (ed), **Ethics and values in archaeology**, 1984:22-27.
- Wildesen, L.E., 1984, The search for an ethic in archaeology: a historical perspective. In: Green, E. (ed), **Ethics and Values in archaeology**, 1984:3-12.