

## Looking for Work Experience in Archaeology

Work experience or volunteer experience is becoming more and more important as a way of showing your interest and commitment to the field. Below is some advice about how to approach looking for a work experience placement or a volunteer position.

When looking for work experience in archaeology or museums, bear in mind that many archaeological bodies are volunteer led like CBA London or your local society. This means that they are unlikely to have an office or workplace which you can volunteer in for a concentrated period, like a week or fortnight. However, they may be able to offer you more ad hoc experience in the form of events, lectures, or even occasional excavations. This kind of membership and experience is really useful for showing that you are serious about your interest in archaeology on a CV or personal statement.

### Voluntary groups

#### Local societies

Have a look at our list of local societies in London on the website. You can follow the links to find out what they do. Societies tend to hold lectures, which can be a mix of local and British or even global archaeology subjects. They may also offer social events and activities, newsletters and possibly even classes. Some societies are more active in terms of fieldwork than others, so this might be something you want to look at before making contact. Most local societies cannot allow members who are under 18 to work with them on archaeological sites as their insurance will not cover this. If you are under 18, you might want to contact the membership secretary of your local society to find out more about what activities you could get involved in.

#### Young Archaeologists' Club (YAC)

You can find out more about YACs in general at the YAC UK website <http://www.yac-uk.org/> and the London YACs on our website. YAC branches work with 8-16 year olds to provide a wide range of archaeological activities. This can include experimental archaeology, art workshops, artefact handling, visits to museums and sites and sometimes even excavations. The YACs in London are both lucky to be based where they have access to large collections of archaeological material, so this does feature in their activities. Once a member is 17 they can choose, if they wish, to remain with the club as a helper. Contact YAC branch leaders for more information.

### Institutions

#### Museums

Museums tend to have a lot of competition for places if they offer work experience.

- The Museum of London offer volunteer experience working with schools, on family workshops and behind-the-scenes: <http://www.museumoflondon.org.uk/get-involved/volunteering-museum-london/>
- The Museum of London's London Archaeological Archive and Research Centre offer one week placements for 16-19 year olds. They also run the award winning

Volunteer Inclusion Programme, as well as other volunteer placements. Check their website for dates and application forms:

<http://www.museumoflondon.org.uk/get-involved/volunteering-museum-london/volunteering-london-archaeological-archive-and-research-centre/>

- The British Museum has a volunteering programme  
[https://www.britishmuseum.org/about\\_us/volunteers.aspx](https://www.britishmuseum.org/about_us/volunteers.aspx)
- The Natural History Museum offer internships, “behind the seen” volunteering and work experience: <http://www.nhm.ac.uk/about-us/jobs-volunteering-internships/volunteering-interns-information/index.html>
- The V&A also offer internships, volunteering and work experience:  
<http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/v/voluntary-and-work-experience-placements/>
- The Sir John Soane’s Museum offer volunteer warder positions and work experience  
[http://www.soane.org/about\\_us/volunteering/](http://www.soane.org/about_us/volunteering/)

National museums and large museums only have limited space so try your local museums as well, they might be more able to help you and you are more likely to get a wide range of experience.

### Commercial Archaeology Units

A large amount of the archaeological work that is carried out is done by units. Some units are able to take on volunteers. Here are links to a few that are active in the London area.

- Archaeology South East  
<http://www.archaeologyse.co.uk/05-Working-with-ASE/Work.htm>
- MOLA  
<http://www.museumoflondonarchaeology.org.uk/Corporate/About-us/>
- Pre-Construct Archaeology  
<http://www.pre-construct.com/contact/volunteering.htm>

### Universities

University departments may be able to offer work experience. Volunteer positions are offered to students as part of their degree programmes. You should think about what you are interested in finding out more about so that you can approach the appropriate department.

### General advice

**Search widely:** Opportunities may be advertised on the websites of the bodies you are interested in, but you might need to email and ask if there are possible vacancies. It is also worth looking at:

- <http://www.do-it.org.uk/>
- <http://www.charitychoice.co.uk/volunteering>
- <http://jobs.theguardian.com/jobs/arts-and-heritage/>
- <http://www.archaeology.co.uk/digs>
- <http://www.britisharchaeology.org/fieldwork>

**Do your research:** You should treat this experience like you would any paid job. Be ready to do your research, if you can, make a visit; find out about the group or museum, think about why you want to join or work for them, what you want to get out of it and what you can offer them.

**Applications:** For work experience or volunteering positions you may be asked to fill in an application form and attend an interview, so your research will help you. Be honest about the time you have available or need to fulfil.

**It's still a job:** Unpaid work is still important and you have made a commitment to work. It is good practice to give your employers plenty of notice if you are unwell or will not be able to make it in. Also to let them know when you will not be able to volunteer or participate any longer. You might wish to ask for references from your volunteering posts in the future, so ensure that you make a good impression!