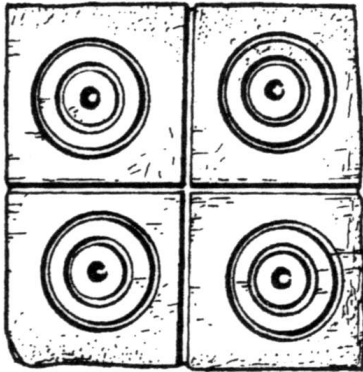


# Archaeology in Higher Education



What is archaeology?

Archaeology Degrees in Scotland

Practical Experience

After Your Degree

Further Information

Contact details

Introductory Books

## What is archaeology?

Archaeology is the study of people and societies in the past through the examination of their material remains. By studying the remains of buildings, artefacts such as pottery, stone, wood and metal objects, and environmental evidence such as animal bones, seeds and insect remains, archaeologists can begin to reconstruct how people lived in the past and the environment that influenced their behaviour. It is a discipline that crosses science and the arts. Many different archaeological techniques are used including excavation, aerial photography, surveying, fieldwalking, and laboratory analysis.

A degree in archaeology can lead to a wide range of careers both within and outwith the academic world. As an academic discipline it crosses boundaries between arts, social sciences and science subjects. The broad-based nature of archaeological study can provide students with skills and interests that are both attractive to prospective employers as well as personally and intellectually satisfying. This information sheet will give an indication of the range of opportunities for studying archaeology in Scotland.

## Archaeology Degrees in Scotland

Most professional archaeologists have a degree in archaeology, although some hold equivalent qualifications in related fields in the social, physical and environmental sciences, such as geography, chemistry and biology. In Scotland, the Universities of Edinburgh and Glasgow have archaeology departments that offer a range of different ways in which to study archaeology. You can study for a single Honours Degree or for a combined Honours Degree in archaeology and another subject such as history, geography, fine arts, anthropology or Scottish Studies. You can also study for a Designated Degree incorporating some courses in archaeology.

Other universities without archaeology departments do, however, offer students the opportunity to study archaeology as a component of a degree such as an MA Honours in Medieval History and Archaeology



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as offered at St. Andrews University. Other universities run modular courses in which it is possible to include at least one module of archaeology as part of a degree in a related subject. The University of Glasgow also offers an archaeology module as an optional course in the first year of three-year BA degrees at its Crichton Campus, Dumfries.

Students of archaeology commonly study for an Honours degree in Arts or Social Sciences (MA Honours). Edinburgh and Glasgow Universities offer MA Honours programmes as well as science degree (BSc) options.

It is also possible to study for a Designated MA Degree in Scottish Archaeology at the University of Aberdeen through Key Learning Opportunities (previously known as the Centre for Continuing Education Department). This course can be taken at a selection of affiliated Study Centres across Scotland through the means of video, audio and computer mediated conferencing. To find out if there is a Study Centre in your area that offers this facility, contact Key Learning Opportunities at Aberdeen University.

If you are interested in studying for a degree in archaeology you should contact the individual departments at the university of your choice to find out more about the courses offered. Entry to the majority of Scottish university courses is obtained through a Faculty i.e. a group of departments. An honours degree normally takes four years to complete, providing students with the possibility of modifying a course of study after it has begun, and the option of including other subjects.

University courses vary greatly in the different types of archaeology on which they focus, with different departments specialising in different aspects of archaeology and specific periods of history and prehistory. However, they all have a similar framework that includes: the history of the subject; theories and methods; broad geographical and chronological views of the subject; the uses of scientific and social theories; and the role of archaeology in today's society. Most courses offer a varying amount of practical fieldwork experience, often on research projects throughout the UK and abroad.

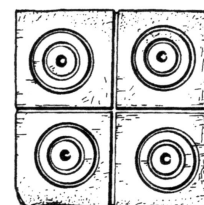
### **Other Certificated Courses**

Many University Departments of Continuing Education offer courses in archaeology. It is now possible to undertake part-time studies during evenings and weekends that can lead to a university qualification such as a Certificate (Aberdeen, Edinburgh and Glasgow), a Diploma (Aberdeen, Edinburgh and Glasgow), or a designated MA degree (Aberdeen). It is possible to treat these courses as a pathway to a full degree in archaeology to meet the requirements expected in archaeological employment.

If, having taken courses of the nature described above, you would like to study for an Honours degree in archaeology, you should note that the SCOTCAT system allows for students who have completed credit-bearing courses from one institution (e.g. a part-time Diploma) to complete a degree course in less time than would otherwise be possible.

### **Entrance Requirements**

Entrance requirements vary considerably between different institutions and you are therefore strongly advised to consult the appropriate handbooks and prospectuses (e.g. the UCAS Handbook or The Herald Entrance Guide to Higher Education in Scotland) and to contact admission officers in the relevant faculties at the universities. Archaeology departments usually have their own information booklets/prospectuses. Universities



also run open days twice every year, to give interested students an opportunity to visit the departments, consult staff and examine teaching facilities and materials.

To study at degree level, applicants usually have SCE Higher, A, AS or GCSE levels in a range of subjects. English, mathematics, history, geography and a foreign language are normally recommended for an MA Honours in Archaeology. For BSc courses, Higher, A or AS level and GCSE in physics or chemistry can be required. Many universities however, look for a mixture of subjects in humanities and sciences across SCE Higher and Standard Grades, A and AS, and GCSE level. For mature students, these conditions may be relaxed, with a greater consideration given to other skills and experience. While background experience or interest in archaeology is always helpful, it is not a requirement for admission to these courses.

The entry requirements for certificate and diploma courses vary greatly. Some institutions require five SCE grades, of which two should be at Higher level. Others may waive academic entrance requirements if the student has relevant experience, while others have no formal entrance requirements. Again, the best way to find out about specific requirements for admission to courses is to contact the relevant institutions directly.

## Practical Experience

If you are thinking of taking a course in archaeology, it can be useful to join a local archaeological society, to take part in an excavation or other fieldwork project, or undertake voluntary work. Experience of this nature is always valuable and it will provide an insight into the nature of archaeological work and practices as well as give you an idea as to whether the nature of archaeological work is something that you will enjoy. The Council for Scottish Archaeology can provide information on current excavations and other fieldwork opportunities (for further information contact the CSA offices).

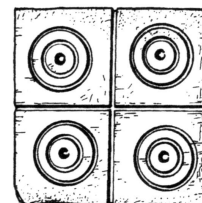
CSA's sister organisation, the Council for British Archaeology, publishes the magazine *British Archaeology* six times a year. This magazine includes *CBA Briefing*, in which fieldwork opportunities across Britain are advertised. Most digs take place during the summer months, therefore it is recommended that you begin to organise practical experience in the spring.

For further information on practical experience, please ask for CSA Information Sheet 2 "Getting Involved in Archaeology".

## After Your Degree

For those who wish to continue archaeological study beyond degree level, there is a wide range of taught post-graduate courses in different areas of archaeology, including conservation, heritage management, archaeological science, maritime archaeology, aerial photography, geophysics and thematic and period-based studies - with both part-time and full-time options available. These courses are mainly available at the Universities of Edinburgh and Glasgow. The latter also offers a one-year conversion course for those with a degree in a different subject.

The University of the Highlands and Islands offers a part-time post-graduate course in Archaeological Practice. You can study for a Postgraduate Certificate, a Postgraduate



Diploma or an MA in Archaeological Practice.

Specialisation in a particular aspect of the discipline can be obtained by taking a postgraduate research Degree (PhD), at the Universities of Edinburgh, Glasgow and St. Andrews.

If you wish to find out about employment in archaeology, please ask for CSA Information Sheet 3 "Archaeology as a Career" or visit the CSA website.

## Further Information about Scottish Archaeology

A good source of current information about Scottish archaeology is Scottish Archaeological News (SAN), which is published three times a year by the CSA for its members. This newsletter provides information on excavations and other fieldwork projects, forthcoming conferences, lectures and other archaeological events, details of new archaeological publications and other notices relevant to all those interested in archaeology in Scotland.

CSA can also provide details of local archaeological societies in your area, answer queries regarding archaeological careers, and offer the opportunity to take part in its annual Summer School. As a CSA member you also receive an annual copy of *Discovery and Excavation in Scotland* - the only comprehensive record of current excavation and survey work going on in Scotland. For further information on how to join contact the CSA offices. Through the CSA there is also an option of joint membership of CSA and CBA; this will bring you six editions of *British Archaeology* per year.

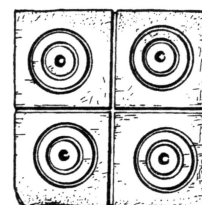
CSA also co-ordinates the Young Archaeologists' Club Scottish Network for young people between the ages of 8-16. The YAC Scottish Network consists of local clubs where young people can participate in archaeological activities ranging from fieldwalking and the interpretation of sites to making replica artefacts and carrying out post-excavation work. Again, please contact the CSA offices for further details.

### Other Useful Sources of Information

The Council for British Archaeology can provide information about archaeology courses at all levels in the UK. Contact the CBA at Bowes Morrell House, 111 Walmgate, York, YO1 9WA, Tel: 01904 671 417

*Current Archaeology* is a popular bi-monthly magazine covering many aspects of archaeology. For further details contact: *Current Archaeology*, 9 Nassington Road, London, NW3 2TX, Tel: 0207 435 7517. or visit [www.archaeology.co.uk](http://www.archaeology.co.uk)

The Archaeology Abroad Service, can provide information about opportunities for excavation work abroad. For further information contact: A.A.S., 31-34 Gordon Square, London, WC1H 0PY.



# Contact details

## **The Council for British Archaeology**

Bowes Morrell House  
111 Walmgate  
York, YO1 9WA  
Tel: 01904 671 417  
E-mail: [education@britarch.ac.uk](mailto:education@britarch.ac.uk)  
Website: [www.britarch.ac.uk](http://www.britarch.ac.uk)  
(for university information go to  
[www.britarch.ac.uk/info/univ.html](http://www.britarch.ac.uk/info/univ.html))

## **Universities & Colleges Admissions Service for the UK**

Rosehill  
New Barn Lane  
Cheltenham  
Gloucestershire, GL52 3LZ  
Tel: 01242 222 444  
E-mail: [enq@ucas.ac.uk](mailto:enq@ucas.ac.uk)  
Website: [www.ucas.ac.uk](http://www.ucas.ac.uk)

## **University of Glasgow**

Department of Archaeology  
The Gregory Building  
Lilybank Gardens  
Glasgow, G12 8QQ  
Tel: 0141 330 5690  
E-mail: [enquiries@archaeology.arts.gla.ac.uk](mailto:enquiries@archaeology.arts.gla.ac.uk)  
Website: [www.gla.ac.uk/archaeology](http://www.gla.ac.uk/archaeology)

and

Crichton University Campus  
Rutherford and McCowan Buildings  
Crichton Estate  
Bankend Road  
Dumfries, DG1 4ZL  
Tel: 01387 702 001  
E-mail: [w.anderson@crichton.gla.ac.uk](mailto:w.anderson@crichton.gla.ac.uk)

## **University of Edinburgh**

Department of Archaeology  
The Old High School  
Infirmary Street  
Edinburgh, EH1 1LT  
Tel: 0131 650 2501  
E-mail: [Archaeology@ed.ac.uk](mailto:Archaeology@ed.ac.uk)  
Website: [www.arcl.ed.ac.uk](http://www.arcl.ed.ac.uk)

## **University of Aberdeen - Key Learning Opportunities**

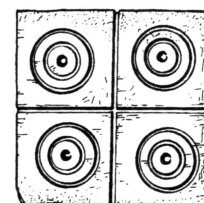
Key Learning Opportunities  
University of Aberdeen  
Regent Building  
Regent Walk  
Aberdeen, AB24 3FX  
Tel: 01224 273 528  
E-mail: [key@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:key@abdn.ac.uk)  
Website: [www.abdn.ac.uk/key/archae.hti](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/key/archae.hti)

## **University of the Highlands and Islands**

UHI Millennium Institute  
Caledonia House  
63 Academy Street  
Inverness, IV1 1BB  
Tel: 0845 272 3600  
E-mail: [uhi.prospectus@ubnet.com](mailto:uhi.prospectus@ubnet.com)  
or [eo@uhi.ac.uk](mailto:eo@uhi.ac.uk)  
Website: [www.uhi.ac.uk](http://www.uhi.ac.uk)

## **University of St. Andrews**

St Andrews  
Fife, KY16 9AJ  
Tel: 01334 462 150  
E-mail: [admissions@standrews.ac.uk](mailto:admissions@standrews.ac.uk)  
Website: [www.st-andrews.ac.uk](http://www.st-andrews.ac.uk)



# Introductory Books

## **Archaeology: A Very Short Introduction**

Bahn, P 2000 (Oxford)

## **Digging Up The Past: An Introduction to Archaeological Excavation**

Collis, J 2001 (Sutton)

## **Field Archaeology: an introduction**

Drewett, P 1999 (University College London Press)

## **Archaeology: The Basics**

Gamble, C 2001 (Routledge)

## **The Archaeology Coursebook**

Grant, J, Gorin, S and Fleming, N 2002 (Routledge)

(This book has been written specifically to tie in with the Archaeology A-level course but is a very good general introduction to archaeology.)

## **Archaeology an Introduction 3rd edition**

Greene, K 2000 (Batsford)

## **Archaeology in Higher Education**

Henson, D (ed.) 2000 (Council for British Archaeology)

## **The Archaeology of Britain - an introduction from the Upper Palaeolithic to the Industrial Revolution**

Hunter, J & Ralston, I (eds.) 1999 (Routledge)

## **Archaeology: methods, theory and practice**

Renfrew, C & Bahn, P 2000 (Thames and Hudson)

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An accessible and well-illustrated set of books is *The Making of Scotland* series, published by Canongate Books with Historic Scotland. In addition there is a range of books published by Batsford and Historic Scotland that looks at Scotland's archaeology in greater depth, but is also aimed at the general public. The *Exploring Scotland's Heritage* series published by HMSO has various volumes which focus on different areas of Scotland, providing an introduction to the archaeological heritage of each area, a gazetteer of sites and suggested visits.

