



AHIS3306

Field Methods of Archaeology

Session 2, In person-scheduled-weekday, North Ryde 2026

School of Humanities

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General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

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Contact via Email

By appointment

Convenor, Lecturer

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Credit points

10

Prerequisites

130cp at 1000 level or above or (20cp in AHIS or AHST units at 2000 level)

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description

This unit examines the methods and techniques used by archaeologists in a variety of field contexts to identify, recover, analyse and interpret their data. In addition to basic archaeological skills, we will also address the key elements involved in designing archaeological field projects, the ways in which theoretical approaches to archaeological work shape the outcomes of fieldwork, and the essential role of disseminating archaeological data to the professional community and the public. The aim is to provide an active understanding of both basic and more advanced archaeological skills and the development of strategies for the study of sites and the recovery and processing of archaeological data, whether via survey, excavation or post-excavation study.

Important Academic Dates

Information about important academic dates including deadlines for withdrawing from units are available at <https://www.mq.edu.au/study/calendar-of-dates>

Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this unit, you will be able to:

ULO1: Deploy knowledge of the principles of archaeological excavation and survey.

ULO2: Analyse archaeological features and artefacts (e.g., architecture, pottery, stone).

ULO3: Communicate effectively with others regarding strategies for excavation of an archaeological site.

ULO4: Demonstrate critical thinking in the interpretation of the archaeological data

ULO5: Synthesize and communicate acquired knowledge and understanding to produce a critical analytical report

General Assessment Information

IMPORTANT PENALTIES TO BE APPLIED

Rubrics and other guidance for the Assessments will be posted on our iLearn site and discussed in class. To complete the unit successfully you will need a minimum mark of 50% overall, and you will have to attempt all the assessments. F / FA: 0-49% P: 50-64% CR: 65-74% D: 75-84% HD: 85-100%

LATE SUBMISSION OF ASSESSMENT TASKS Please always let one of us know ahead of time if you are having difficulty completing an assessment or if you will not be able to attend class or complete the online tutorial task. It's just good for us to know what is going on with you -- it is not necessary to give specifics of your situation -- but it helps to hear from you, partly because Special Considerations get be delayed in busy times.

Most importantly though, please make sure to apply for a Special Consideration if you are not able to submit a task on time. That will help us to help you. I highly recommend that you become familiar with the procedure before you are in the position of having to use it - so that it does not become another challenging hurdle when you are already experiencing difficulties.

Here is the link to the webpage that will talk you through the requirements and process of Special Considerations.

<http://connect.mq.edu.au>

LATE ASSESSMENT SUBMISSION PENALTY: Unless a Special Consideration request has been submitted and approved, a 5% penalty (of the total possible mark) will be applied each day a written assessment is not submitted, up until the 7th day (including weekends). After the 7th day, a mark of '0' (zero) will be awarded even if the assessment is submitted. Submission time for all written assessments is set at 11.55pm. A 1-hour grace period is provided to students who experience a technical issue.

This late penalty will apply to non-timed sensitive assessment (incl essays, reports, posters, portfolios, journals, recordings etc). Late submission of time sensitive tasks (such as tests/exams, performance assessments/presentations, scheduled practical assessments/labs etc) will only be addressed by the unit convenor in a Special consideration application. Special Consideration outcome may result in a new question or topic. For further information on Special Considerations, use this link <https://students.mq.edu.au/study/assessment-exams/special-consid>

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IMPORTANT NOTE ON MARKS Grading decisions for each assessment task will be moderated against the set criteria and standards before task results are released.

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Hurdle	Due	Groupwork/Individual	Short Extension	AI Approach
Archaeological Photography and Illustration	30%	No	13/09/2026	Individual	Yes	Open
Problem Set	30%	No	25/10/2026	Individual	Yes	Open
Research Grant Application	40%	No	08/11/2026	Individual and Group	No	Open

Archaeological Photography and Illustration

Assessment Type ¹: Portfolio

Indicative Time on Task ²: 29 hours

Due: **13/09/2026**

Weighting: **30%**

Groupwork/Individual: Individual

Short extension ³: Yes

AI Approach: Open

The students will produce archaeological photos and artefact illustrations based on the experience they gain throughout the unit, and then digitize them using appropriate software. They will also keep a process journal which they will submit with their photos and illustrations.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Deploy knowledge of the principles of archaeological excavation and survey.
- Analyse archaeological features and artefacts (e.g., architecture, pottery, stone).
- Communicate effectively with others regarding strategies for excavation of an archaeological site.
- Demonstrate critical thinking in the interpretation of the archaeological data
- Synthesize and communicate acquired knowledge and understanding to produce a critical analytical report

Problem Set

Assessment Type ¹: Problem-based task

Indicative Time on Task ²: 17 hours

Due: **25/10/2026**

Weighting: **30%**

Groupwork/Individual: Individual

Short extension ³: Yes

AI Approach: Open

Short answer questions that focus on unit content

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Deploy knowledge of the principles of archaeological excavation and survey.
- Synthesize and communicate acquired knowledge and understanding to produce a critical analytical report

Research Grant Application

Assessment Type ¹: Professional task

Indicative Time on Task ²: 39 hours

Due: **08/11/2026**

Weighting: **40%**

Groupwork/Individual: Individual and Group

Short extension ³: No

AI Approach: Open

The students will design an archaeological project based on their research and discussions in the unit, and then they will write a grant proposal including a budget that will be designed to persuade a grant review panel to award the requested funds needed to finance that archaeological project.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Deploy knowledge of the principles of archaeological excavation and survey.
- Analyse archaeological features and artefacts (e.g., architecture, pottery, stone).
- Communicate effectively with others regarding strategies for excavation of an archaeological site.
- Demonstrate critical thinking in the interpretation of the archaeological data

¹ If you need help with your assignment, please contact:

- the academic teaching staff in your unit for guidance in understanding or completing this

type of assessment

- [Academic Success](#) for academic skills support.

² Indicative time-on-task is an estimate of the time required for completion of the assessment task and is subject to individual variation.

³ An automatic short extension is available for some assessments. Apply through the [Service Connect Portal](#).

Delivery and Resources

DELIVERY

This class involves lectures and tutorial-type work as well as practical hands-on work. All of these activities will occur during your selected three-hour block of class time. We will meet in our designated classroom to start, but we will also meet in the Macquarie Archaeological Research Simulation (MARS) pit when learning excavation skills and near the MARS pit when we are doing surface survey work (taking into account weather conditions). The locations for each week will be communicated in class and on our iLearn site. Please make sure to read the Announcements! We will use the Announcements to communicate important information.

We endeavour to provide online/flexible students with equivalent experiences, and we invite you to participate in the fieldwork whenever possible! If you would like to talk to us about the class, please feel free to get in touch.

RESOURCES

Technology Used and Required:

You will need a computer to do the work for this class. You will be expected to bring it to class. We will be teaching certain skills during the class time and you will need your own computer to learn them. Basic computer and word-processing skills are required.

This unit will use the iLearn system (<https://ilearn.mq.edu.au/login/MQ/>) to communicate with the students, so you will need access to a computer and a good internet connection.

Main Texts: These texts are available online through our Macquarie Library system, and you are not required to purchase them. However, you may want to get a hard copy for yourself. The first text by Burke, Morrison, and Smith, is the one I would recommend if you were going to buy just one of them because we will be reading the majority of that book over the course of the unit.

- Burke, H., Morrison, and M., Smith, C. 2020. *The Archaeologist's Field Handbook: The Essential Guide for Beginners and Professionals in Australia*, 2nd edition, Routledge.
- Balme, J., and Paterson, A. 2014. *Archaeology in Practice*, Malden, Oxford.

Supplemental Readings:

We will also assign or recommend supplemental readings whenever we find an article or chapter that particularly supports our focus for that week.

Supplies:

For the artefact illustration activity, you will be required to bring your own 2B pencils (or HB is ok), 30 cm ruler, pencil eraser and sharpener, a couple of set squares, and a protractor. We will be using 1 mm graph paper, which can be downloaded from the iLearn site. If you get serious about artefact illustration, Vernier calipers are also good to have.

For the survey and excavation activities, we will provide all of the tools you will need, but you will probably want to have your own work gloves (although we will have some pairs available), and maybe knee pads if you feel this will make you more comfortable. If you want to put together a dig kit of your own, you might want, for instance, your own trowel (WHS or Marshalltown are considered the best, but others work just fine! A medium-sized trowel is best, seek advice from us if needed!). Optional items are a compass (which nowadays you can call up on your phone) and perhaps, if you're feeling really keen, a hand lens. But really, we will have what you need for the excavation!

Unit Schedule

See the Unit iLearn site for the weekly schedule.

Policies and Procedures

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from [Policy Central](https://policies.mq.edu.au) (<https://policies.mq.edu.au>). Students should be aware of the following policies in particular with regard to Learning and Teaching:

- [Academic Appeals Policy](#)
- [Academic Integrity Policy](#)
- [Academic Progression Policy](#)
- [Assessment Policy](#)
- [Fitness to Practice Procedure](#)
- [Assessment Procedure](#)
- [Complaints Resolution Procedure for Students and Members of the Public](#)
- [Special Consideration Policy](#)

Students seeking more policy resources can visit [Student Policies](https://students.mq.edu.au/support/study/policies) (<https://students.mq.edu.au/support/study/policies>). It is your one-stop-shop for the key policies you need to know about throughout your undergraduate student journey.

To find other policies relating to Teaching and Learning, visit [Policy Central](https://policies.mq.edu.au) (<https://policies.mq.edu.au>) and use the [search tool](#).

Student Code of Conduct

Macquarie University students have a responsibility to be familiar with the Student Code of Conduct: <https://students.mq.edu.au/admin/other-resources/student-conduct>

Results

Results published on platform other than [eStudent](#), (eg. iLearn, Coursera etc.) or released

directly by your Unit Convenor, are not confirmed as they are subject to final approval by the University. Once approved, final results will be sent to your student email address and will be made available in [eStudent](#). For more information visit connect.mq.edu.au or if you are a Global MBA student contact globalmba.support@mq.edu.au

Academic Integrity

At Macquarie, we believe [academic integrity](#) – honesty, respect, trust, responsibility, fairness and courage – is at the core of learning, teaching and research. We recognise that meeting the expectations required to complete your assessments can be challenging. So, we offer you a range of resources and services to help you reach your potential, including free [online writing and maths support](#), [academic skills development](#) and [wellbeing consultations](#).

Student Support

Macquarie University provides a range of support services for students. For details, visit <http://students.mq.edu.au/support/>

Academic Success

[Academic Success](#) provides resources to develop your English language proficiency, academic writing, and communication skills.

- [Ask a Study Coach](#)
- [Access StudyWISE](#)
- [Upload an assignment to Studiosity](#)
- [Complete the Academic Integrity Module](#)

The Library provides online and face to face support to help you find and use relevant information resources.

- [Subject and Research Guides](#)
- [Ask a Librarian](#)

Student Services and Support

Macquarie University offers a range of [Student Support Services](#) including:

- [IT Support](#)
- [Accessibility and disability support](#) with study
- Mental health [support](#)
- [Safety support](#) to respond to bullying, harassment, sexual harassment and sexual assault
- [Social support including information about finances, tenancy and legal issues](#)
- [Student Advocacy](#) provides independent advice on MQ policies, procedures, and processes

Student Enquiries

Got a question? Ask us via the [Service Connect Portal](#), or contact [Service Connect](#).

IT Help

For help with University computer systems and technology, visit <https://students.mq.edu.au/support/technology/service-desk>.

When using the University's IT, you must adhere to the [Acceptable Use of IT Resources Policy](#). The policy applies to all who connect to the MQ network including students.

Unit information based on version 2026.03 of the [Handbook](#)