

“PLAN B”

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If the local university’s graduate archaeology program isn’t quite your cup of tea, how’s this for an alternative?

Britain’s University of Leicester School of Archaeology and Ancient History offers a two-year program leading to a Postgraduate Diploma, a Postgraduate Certificate, or an MA in archaeology and heritage. To qualify, you need a BA with a major in Archaeology, or an Honours BA in the same specialty. If you don’t have either of those, five years’ professional experience in archaeological fieldwork or a cognate field (Anthro? Environmental Studies?) would be considered as an entrance qualifier. They even offer “bridging courses” for persons without a suitable first degree.

The aim of the program is to provide the student with a range of skills needed in (1) site evaluation, (2) project management, (3) analysis of found archaeological data, and (4) the opportunity to apply the skills so gained in the interpretation and presentation of archaeological findings. The program is especially well suited to those involved in cultural resource management (CRM) and archaeological consulting.

The program is made up of four “modules,” and each module involves two assignments of written work. The assignments are graded by two markers who are academics or professional archaeologists, and the students are offered extensive feedback on each assignment. All modules are delivered by distance learning, so you don’t even have to leave Winnipeg!

The modules are as follows:

- (1) **Critical Approaches to the Archaeological Heritage:** Examines the ways in which archaeological sites and landscapes are presented to the public, and the ethical and political issues surrounding preservation, conservation or restoration. Case studies are taken from around the world, and the student is asked to take a critical look at a museum or an archaeological or heritage site of his/her choice. One Winnipeg student has chosen The Forks as her topic for this module.
- (2) **Archaeology of Standing Buildings:** Provides an archaeological understanding of building construction and evolution, the ability to recognize different building materials, and to determine the different functions of historical buildings. Students are introduced to analytical and survey skills and to more sophisticated methods of investigation. They are encouraged to investigate buildings in their own

- localities, and to produce a detailed survey and report of one such building as part of their coursework.
- (3) **Landscape Archaeology:** Introduces the theoretical issues underpinning of landscape archaeology, and the range of techniques in the human and natural sciences that can be combined in the broad field of landscape studies. Students learn to assess the different strengths and weaknesses of these techniques and their appropriate application within problem-solving research and [professional practice.
 - (4) **Managing Archaeological Practices.** This module is in two parts. The first focuses on “writing archaeology” – students engage in different ways of turning archaeological data and records into coherent and reader-friendly texts for different types of audience and addressing wider research frameworks. The second part, “the archaeological workplace,” explores the nature of professional contract archaeology. Current practices are mapped into a wider framework of managing projects human resources, and meeting professional specifications and standards.
 - (5) **Dissertation:** Students are required to submit a 15,000-word dissertation in an area of their choice. The topic, structure and content are discussed and agreed upon with a tutor, and the student receives one-to-one supervision throughout the period of research.

By the way, do you recall Shakespeare’s play “Richard III” in your English Lit course? (“A horse, a horse, my kingdom for a horse”). And do you recall the excitement over the discovery and archaeological recovery a few years ago of the skeletal remains of that very same King Richard III?

Well, Leicester is the university that did the honours!

Amber Zimmerman Flett is currently enrolled in the program and if anyone is interested in discussing it they should feel free to contact her via the MAS at mbarch@mts.net.