

Standards of Research Performance

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:

- I. 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 minimize 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 and competent staff and support facilities to carry the project to completion, and of 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 minimize such interference.
- II. In conducting research, the archaeologist must follow her/his scientific plan of research, except to the extent that unforeseen circumstances warrant its modification.
- III. 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 proveniences 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 artifacts, 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 referents are used, they should be clearly defined.
- 3.5 Insofar as possible, the interests 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.

IV. During accessioning, analysis, and storage of specimens and records in the laboratory, the archaeologist must take precautions to ensure that correlations between the specimens and the field records are maintained, so that provenience contextual relationships and the like are not confused or obscured.

V. Specimens and research records resulting from a project must be deposited at an institution with permanent curatorial facilities, unless otherwise required by law.

VI. The archaeologist has responsibility for appropriate dissemination of the results of her/his research to the appropriate constituencies with reasonable dispatch.

- 6.1 Results reviewed 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 directly should be honored, if consistent with the researcher's prior rights to publication and with her/his other professional responsibilities.
- 6.3 Failure to complete a full scholarly report within 10 years after completion of a field project shall be construed as a waiver of an archaeologist's right of primacy with respect to analysis and publication of the data. Upon expiration of such 10-year period, or at such earlier time as the archaeologist shall determine not to publish the results, such data should be made fully accessible to other archaeologists for analysis and publication.
- 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 the 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.