



AUSTRALIAN ASSOCIATION OF CONSULTING ARCHAEOLOGISTS INCORPORATED

AACAI WA Guidelines on Internships and Employing Trainee Archaeologists

The Australian Association of Consulting Archaeologists Incorporated (AACAI) is the peak professional body representing consulting and professional archaeologists across Australia. Our [Constitution](#) sets out the fundamental principles and key objects of our organisation which includes maintaining and encouraging professional standards by fellow consultants. To encourage high quality ethical consulting work in Australia, members sign up to work under a [Code of Ethics](#) that outline principles to govern professional standards in line with international best practice. These internship guidelines have been specifically written to assist WA heritage businesses, and it is one of a number of [Policies, Procedures and Guidelines](#) produced by AACAI which can be used to help guide professionals working in the industry.

Purpose

These guidelines have been put together to aid heritage consultancy businesses in ethically engaging archaeology students, and to outline how to do this in a way that does not put the integrity of the archaeology discipline at risk. The guidelines align with the [Commonwealth Fair Work Act 2009](#), the AACAI [Code of Ethics](#), the AACAI [Volunteering Policy](#) and the [Australian Archaeology Skills Passport](#).

The WA chapter of AACAI (AACAI WA) understands that, at times, heritage consultancy businesses find it difficult to find fully qualified and experienced archaeologists. Consequently, some businesses may resort to employing archaeology students to help fill this gap.

It is crucial that all volunteers, interns, students and early career archaeologists should have proper supervision and mentorship from a fully qualified and experienced archaeologist. Failure to provide this support is considered to be a breach of an AACAI member's duty to the profession under the [Code of Ethics](#) (Section 5 and Section 10).

Internships

AACAI WA advises that any paid or unpaid internships should be through an accredited university-run program. These programs are designed to give students some useful technical skills and a better understanding of what is involved in being employed as an archaeologist in WA. Two main programs for archaeologists in WA are:

- [Work Integrated Learning Internship Program at the University of Western Australia \(UWA\)](#) – organisations are asked to provide students with 2-3 weeks (100-120 hours) of supervised tasks. Students could be second- or third-year archaeology students. UWA prefers that this should occur during the non-teaching winter or summer breaks. Heritage consultancy businesses who are interested should contact wil@uwa.edu.au directly if they are interested in supporting this program.
- [Work Integrated Learning at the School of Arts & Sciences at the University of Notre Dame](#) – organisations are asked to provide students with at least 60 hours. Students who undertake this program will be in their final year of studying a Bachelor of Arts with a major or double major in Archaeology. Heritage consultancy businesses should contact fremantle.artsinternships@nd.edu.au directly if they are interested in supporting this program.



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These programs support companies by providing guidance and learning frameworks. Students who participate in these programs are assessed by the university prior to placement. They also undertake coursework that includes guidance on how to behave professionally, and they must complete an assessment at the end of their placement. Other broadly relevant (i.e. not specific to archaeology) accredited internship programs include those run by the [Aurora Education Foundation](#) and [Curtin University Internship Program](#). These programs might be useful for our affiliate members who work in heritage management.

Unpaid Opportunities for Students

University-accredited internships ensure that unpaid students are covered by their insurances. The universities provide guidance to companies who wish to partake in these internship opportunities, but it is up to the company to ensure that they also align to the AACAI [Volunteering Policy](#), which provides a detailed breakdown of the issues and expectations in such an arrangement. It is important to understand that unpaid opportunities should never replace paid employment, nor should student labour be used to undercut competitors.

Paid Opportunities for Students

As above, paid internships should be run through a university-accredited internship program. However, in this arrangement, students would need to sign a contract with the company, and this would not be covered by the university's insurances.

In this arrangement, paid students may well engage in billable or productive work for the company, but they should always be supervised by a qualified and experienced archaeologist, and they should never be asked to do a task they are not qualified to perform.

The AACAI [Code of Ethics](#) states that employers have a duty to ensure that clients and Traditional Owners are informed when a trainee or student archaeology is being employed on a job (Section 3 and Section 6).

Paid Work

If a company would like to continue to employ an archaeology student after an internship, AACAI WA advises that these students should primarily be employed in support or administrative roles. As with paid internships, anyone employed in this manner should be well supported and mentored.

Companies should support these students in completing their academic program and should not schedule them on anything that would clash with coursework. AACAI WA advises that the work should be arranged in a casual or part-time capacity until the student has completed their Honours degree.