

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR FIELDWORK IN THE FACULTY OF ARCHAEOLOGY

General code of conduct, ethics and guidelines

Updated October 2025

Introduction

Archaeological fieldwork is an essential part of our course curriculum and provides professional experience for both our students and staff. It helps them to understand and apply a variety of requisite methodological archaeological processes, and also results in long-lasting friendships and lifetime memories. It is therefore important to ensure that the setting in which fieldwork takes place is team-oriented, diverse, inclusive, safe and secure for everyone.

The various fieldwork situations of the Faculty of Archaeology (FdA) are located within a wide range of natural, social and cultural environments, with sometimes new and very different protocols, norms and legal frameworks. These can constitute a serious challenge for students who are away from their safe, familiar setting for the first time. A context of this kind requires that the FdA fieldwork organisers should take extra care to minimise the risk of inappropriate conduct and to ensure that both staff and students behave in a professional manner within the team and during interactions with the local communities and society. A general code of conduct for fieldwork in the FdA has therefore been drawn up, which applies for the staff and students of this faculty. Its purpose is to create a safe environment for everyone during the fieldwork.

This document is a code of conduct for behaviour between all those involved within the context of the archaeological fieldwork organised by the FdA.ⁱ It is intended to create a framework and to give guidelines for a correct, safe and stimulating fieldwork environment within the FdA, where all those concerned behave respectfully towards one another and where trust and acceptance of one another are important values.

I. Before the fieldwork

Before the start of the actual fieldwork, the fieldwork staffⁱⁱ must write their own site-related, specific *Field Guidebook*, identifying the issues that must be taken into account during this fieldwork (political, economic, identity-related, environment, medical care), including the relevant links to contact persons and information. They must inform all participants not only about the fieldwork rules and the code of conduct, but also about the expectations relating to the local interactions, ethics, customs, stakeholders and local authorities.

- The fieldwork organisersⁱⁱⁱ are committed to taking all the necessary measures during the work to minimise personal and health risks and hazards to participants; this includes monitoring the security situation and keeping in contact with officials in the home and host countries, and making a possible evacuation plan. This point must also be covered in the *Field Guidebook*.
- The FdA ensures a safe environment for reporting behaviour that is contrary to this code of conduct by applying a zero tolerance policy for personal retaliation against participants who make complaints. The organisers are obliged to inform participants in advance that the FdA study advisors can act as confidential advisers, and they provide information on how the study advisors can be contacted if needed.
- For all FdA fieldwork projects, the [FdA study advisors](#) can act as confidential advisers for student participants, to confidentially discuss any issues that may arise during the fieldwork (via email or telephone, or in person), in order to ensure a safe work environment. In the event of misconduct, the normal procedures of the FdA will be followed (see: [Confidential counselors for Leiden University staff](#) and [Complaint procedures for FdA students](#)).
 - All complaints that are made during the fieldwork period will be reported to the [FdA study advisors](#) (students) or the [Confidential counselors for Leiden University staff](#). They will inform the Executive Director of the FdA, the Head of Department of staff member(s) involved, and the Faculty Board about any complaints, anonymised if necessary. The Faculty Board will discuss them with the relevant fieldwork organiser(s) and the student(s) involved.
- The FdA is committed to enabling students with personal circumstances and/or disabilities to participate in fieldwork projects and to contribute to the fieldwork. Fieldwork organisers are expected to take this into account, where possible, in the design of their projects.
- Fieldwork organisers must guarantee the privacy of participants and must organise the projects as inclusively and diversely as possible, taking account of the local cultural and religious sensitivities. This means that the organisers should try to achieve gender balance in the team and to ensure that participants have equal opportunities to fulfil valuable and/or important (responsible) tasks. It does not entail, however, that single rooms and other facilities can be made available.
- FdA fieldwork organisers are committed to informing prospective fieldwork participants, before they apply, about the setting (social, political, economic and natural), the project situation and the working conditions, including information about potential (local) hazards and difficulties.
 - Students are strongly advised to share information about health issues, both mental and physical, with the fieldwork organiser, either in person or through the study adviser. The same applies for information about any dietary requirements, faith matters or observance of ritual requirements that could influence their well-being and performance during the fieldwork. This may not form the basis for discrimination and must take place in good faith, with the intention of ensuring the safety of the person in question, of the

other participants and of the project. Fieldwork organisers should consult the [FdA Privacy Officer](#) about how to handle this privacy-sensitive information and inform the students about it.

- The FdA must provide the fieldwork organisers and students with clear information about the FdA's responsibilities in relation to insurance matters. During the preparatory phase of each FdA fieldwork project, clear information about the insurance specifications must be shared with students and other participants. Students and other participants are personally responsible for arranging all the necessary insurance policies, and they must have done this before departing for the fieldwork project. The same applies for the vaccinations that are required for the fieldwork project.
- FdA fieldwork organisers and students must read and take note of the [Leiden University Regulations on Studying Abroad](#).
- FdA fieldwork organisers must follow the Dutch policies and regulations, as formulated by the Dutch [Ministry of Foreign Affairs](#) (BuZa) and the Dutch [National Institute for Public Health and the Environment](#).
- Before the start of their project, FdA fieldwork organisers are obliged to attend one pre-departure meeting organised by the Faculty Board. The content and dates of these meetings will be communicated via the newsletter and by email via the heads of department.

In the case of new research projects where interviews are envisaged with members of local communities (involving personal data and/or privacy protection), FdA fieldwork organisers must submit a research plan (three months before the start of the project) in order to obtain the informed consent of the [Ethics Committee of the FdA](#).

II. In the field

II.1 Practical matters and internal aspects of social conduct between members of the FdA team

The FdA is committed to creating a safe, secure, inclusive, respectful and non-threatening work and social environment. In fieldwork projects (including field schools and internships) organised by the FdA, there is an absolute prohibition of physical and mental abuse, exploitation of archaeological labour, sexual relations between members of the team (all staff, including team members who are not Leiden University employees) and students, and all forms of discrimination, threatening behaviour, sexual harassment and physical or mental intimidation.

- The fieldwork organisers will not tolerate excessive alcohol consumption during their project(s), including after working hours. They will ensure that people who do not drink alcohol are not excluded. If alcohol is consumed, this must be done exclusively in moderation. The fieldwork

organisers will ensure that at least one of the fieldwork leaders will not drink alcohol, and they will communicate clearly to all project participants who this is. This does not have to be the same person at all times.

- All participants are asked to report any instances of unacceptable behaviour^{iv} or intimidation that they personally experience or witness. Fieldwork organisers are obliged to investigate and respond to any kind of unacceptable behaviour, whether it is explicitly reported or remains implicit. Fieldwork organisers are also obliged to provide all possible means of support to any participants in a fieldwork project who experience unacceptable behaviour or intimidation.
- If the fieldwork organisation (or persons who have been assigned specific organisational or supporting tasks by the organisation) is itself involved in any way in a situation of unacceptable or intimidating behaviour, students should contact the [FdA study advisors](#) (see also Section I, Before the fieldwork, bullet 3). Students can also contact [the confidential counsellor](#), who can listen and advise, but who cannot undertake any practical action.
- Participants who are involved in any form of unacceptable behaviour or intimidation, or whose behaviour compromises the safety, well-being, equality or dignity of others, may be removed from the fieldwork. If the persons concerned are students, the fieldwork organisers will decide on this. If they are staff, the Faculty Board will decide.

II.2 External aspects of social conduct between the FdA team and local stakeholders

FdA fieldwork organisers acknowledge that our fieldwork and other research activities must be integrated within local communities and that their success relies on good relations and trust between both sides. The projects are dependent on good communication and a clear understanding of the needs of the local communities.

- We aim to share our knowledge with the local community, while observing any applicable restrictions arising from the interests of the stakeholders and/or the authorities.
- Offensive and/or other inappropriate behaviour in relation to local communities and other parties will not be tolerated (for example, clothing that could be regarded as inappropriate by local communities and/or other parties). This includes zero tolerance for behaviour that compromises the well-being, equality, safety or dignity of others. Such behaviour is unethical and could also damage the reputation of the FdA fieldwork project; it may therefore result in immediate removal from the FdA fieldwork by the fieldwork organisers.
- Offensive and/or other inappropriate behaviour of local communities and other parties in relation to the staff and student participants will not be tolerated (for example, intimidation, sexual harassment, taking photographs of students without their permission). Fieldwork organisers are expected to discuss this with the relevant parties before the start of the project.
- Any behaviour that endangers members of staff, members of the local community or students is reason for the person(s) causing the danger to be immediately removed from the fieldwork. If

the persons concerned are students, the fieldwork organisers will decide on this. If they are staff, the Faculty Board will decide.

- Fieldwork organisers will take all necessary measures, together with local stakeholders and the local community, to prevent theft and any dissemination of misinformation that could endanger the heritage or archaeology as a discipline.

II.3 Management of research data

Before fieldwork, make sure to timely consult [the data steward of the Faculty of Archaeology](#) for a tailor-made Data Management Plan.

During the fieldwork, the standards of accountability will be applied through good data management. This means that a clear audit procedure must be realised with regard to all finds, the physical and digital data relating to these, and the original sites where they were found, even under difficult and complex conditions.

II.4 Privacy

- The FdA undertakes to comply with the European Union privacy regulation (GDPR). As an institution within the EU, the FdA is bound by its provisions, which also apply in other countries and in relation to non-EU citizens.
- Transfer of personal fieldwork data to a 'third country' (a country outside EU jurisdiction) requires that the legal basis for transferring the data must be correct. The legal ground is consent of the 'research subjects'. Especially in jurisdictions with less strict privacy rules, informed consent of the research subjects must be obtained (three months before the start of the project) and best efforts must be made to implement all possible other measures that are needed to effectively protect the data through encryption (via the [Information Manager](#)).
- Even if the research does not relate to persons as such, the FdA staff must recognise that their handling of personal data (such as student administration, field notes, photographs) must be in line with the applicable rules. Before students apply for the fieldwork, they must be informed about which (types of) personal data will be collected, and they must be asked to give their written consent before departing for a project.
- This is also important with regard to persons who do not have a formal relationship with the FdA (such as people working at the site, visitors etc.).

III. Ethical guidelines

III.1 Ethics relating to work and excavations

- FdA fieldwork organisers recognise that they are responsible for offering an unbiased learning experience for all FdA student participants. They fulfil this responsibility by ensuring equal opportunities for participation, supervision and support in the relevant tasks, and by making clear at the start of the project which specific competencies can be trained during the project.
- FdA fieldwork organisers recognise that they are responsible for conserving the (pre-)historic environment and that they must take all necessary steps to minimise damage to the local archaeological heritage. They must also actively avoid and prevent damage to vulnerable landscapes and threatened flora and fauna.
- FdA fieldwork organisers acknowledge that they have a responsibility in engaging local communities, sharing fieldwork results in an accessible manner and assuring that there is sufficient budget for local storage of finds and documentation, in accordance with the required standards.
- FdA fieldwork organisers acknowledge that they have a responsibility with regard to sustainability (for example, attempting to reduce the ecological footprint) and for designing their projects with respect for the Earth's natural resources.

III.2 Financial ethics

- FdA field schools^v are primarily intended to train FdA students and local/regional students.
- The FdA is committed to offering affordable and accessible field schools for its students. Commercial field schools, where students fund the project (almost) entirely themselves, do not match this description.
- The FdA field school organisers are not permitted to organise summer schools funded by student members, as they pay tuition. They can, however, ask for reasonable student contributions for accommodation etc. (see information under following bullet). In addition, it is permitted to ask more substantial financial contributions by non-student participants.
- Students are not required to make advance payment for anything other than their own costs, such as personal travel costs and possibly a small contribution for board and lodging. These costs, with an indication of the expected amount, must be communicated to prospective participants before the application phase.
- The FdA also advises students to think carefully about the suitability, including the financial aspects, of field schools outside the FdA before applying for them, and to discuss this with the internship coordinator of the specific research area.
- To make it possible to conduct fieldwork and research, FdA fieldwork activities are highly reliant on local communities and government authorities for both the required official permits and the community's consent for working in the area; at the same time, it is important to avoid becoming complicit with oppressive regimes. FdA field school organisers must have due regard

for the well-being of the local workers and must pay them a fair wage, based on the usual local salary, according to local legal standards, and must give them correct training and good advice.

- FdA field school organisers must comply with the [Leiden University Guidelines on the Acceptance of Gifts](#).

IV After the fieldwork

In the concluding phase of the fieldwork project, an assessment must be made of the damage caused (particularly to the landscape) and the consequences of this.

- The site should be left in a neat and tidy condition; you should fill in the excavation, if necessary, and also ascertain that looting has been made completely impossible.
- As far as possible, you should restore any damage to the landscape, or reduce it to a minimum.
- You should be selective in exporting samples and non-unique, incomplete artefacts. (This is only permitted for specific analyses that cannot be performed in the country on which the research is focused, and you must act in accordance with local laws and export procedures.) You should also ensure that collections resulting from archaeological research are carefully stored and archived.

ⁱ This code of conduct relates to archaeological fieldwork. The framework that it creates and the guidelines for a good, safe and stimulating work environment within the Faculty of Archaeology (FdA) also apply for other types of FdA fieldwork, for instance in the area of Museum Studies.

ⁱⁱ Fieldwork staff: permanent and/or temporary FdA staff member who initiates, organises and implements the fieldwork project concerned and is responsible for this as an FdA teacher, researcher and/or contact person.

ⁱⁱⁱ Fieldwork organisers: FdA staff and external parties who initiate, organise and implement the fieldwork project concerned.

^{iv} Unacceptable behaviour: see [Regulation on Complaints Relating to Unacceptable Behaviour](#) (Article 1: Definitions, paragraph 2).

^v FdA field school: a fieldwork project that is initiated, organised and implemented by a staff member of the FdA and in which Leiden University and/or external students participate.