CCSAPAD3
Identify and describe archaeological items

Overview

This standard is for archaeologists who are required to have knowledge of a class of items or specific groups of items, e.g. curators, conservators, finds officers. It includes people who have to identify and describe items either in their own organisation or in the collections of others.

This standard covers describing the items, which involves examining them in an appropriate fashion, and then describing their features and how they relate to other items as well as identifying items, i.e. stating what they are (as far as is possible), and providing a rationale for how the identification has been made.

Performance criteria

You must be able to:

Provide a description of an item

P1   Identify and apply relevant technical and ethical standards appropriate to your work

P2   Examine the item without putting it at risk

P3   Summarise accurately the history, significance, age and provenance of the item in sufficient detail to meet the requirements of users

P4   Describe accurately any unusual and distinctive features of the item

P5   Describe clearly the item's relationship to other relevant items

P6   Describe accurately the item's condition and the care it needs

P7   Record descriptions in formats that are suitable for users

P8   Comply at all times with health and safety procedures

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P9   Collect all available information relevant to the identification of the item, and assess the information for its reliability

P10 Assess any deficiencies or discrepancies in the information and seeking reasons for them

P11 Identify accurately any unusual and distinctive features of the item

P12 Identify clearly the item's relationship and significance to other relevant items

P13 Use all relevant information to identify the item

P14 Identify the item clearly and provide a justification for the identification

P15 Record the results of the identification process accurately and clearly in an appropriate format

Describe the potential significance of an item as an archaeological resource

P16 Collect all available information relevant to the identification of the item and assess its reliability

P17 Assess discrepancies in the information and seek explanations

P18 Accurately identify complex features of the item

P19 Clearly identify the item's relationship and significance to other items in its group

P20 Use all available information to identify the item

P21 Clearly identify the item wherever possible and providing a rationale for the identification

P22 Accurately and clearly record the results of the identification process in an appropriate format

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Knowledge and understanding

You need to know and understand:

K1   Relevant technical and ethical standards

K2   How to research further relevant information e.g. on previous owners ; on other similar items

K3   How to access information on conservation needs, including interpreting conservation reports

K4   How to describe the item for different people and purposes

K5   How to use and combine description formats, e.g. photographs and text

K6   The normal and specific risks to the item

K7   The examination processes that cause the least risk to the item

K8   Where to locate data, how to access it

K9   How to present complimentary research information

K10 The normal features of the class of item

K11 What people wish to know about the item

K12 The problems involved with identifying incomplete items

K13 Health and Safety regulations and requirements

K14 How to assess the reliability of information, and to identify discrepancies

K15 How to provide a justification for an identification, and what people need to assure them of its accuracy

K16 How to record the results of the identification

K17 The supplementary information sources that must be explored including: previous owners/holders, libraries and archives, databases, people such as colleagues, publications and other similar sources

K18 Where to find the main sources of information on types of item

K19 What information is normally required to identify an item

K20 The level of accuracy that is likely from the sources investigated

K21 How to synthesise information

K22 The contribution to research, understanding and knowledge base

K23 The contribution to reputation and profile of the organisation

K24 The contribution to organisational/local/national archive collections, inventories and databases

K25 Developments in information :technology/capabilities of IT systems - such as the national collections database

K26 Sources: organisations, experts, previous item holders, publications, the organisation's collection, catalogues, reference works and written reports

K27 Access and availability of resources: recording, and storage procedures, classification systems

K28 Purposes of research: research strategy, methodology, techniques, and body of research

K29 Methods for analysing information

K30 The items' history and significance

K31 The scope and content of classified collection

K32 The history of class of item

K33 The features and qualities of class of item

Developed by

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Relevant occupations

Suite

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