

Unit AA3 Propose and plan a research project

Elements

AA3.1 Propose a research project

AA3.2 Develop and plan a research project

Unit Commentary

This unit is for archaeologists who propose and develop research projects. It is relevant to archaeologists in a wide variety of organisations including heritage agencies, academic research institutions, commercial organisations and the voluntary sector. Research projects may involve the collection and analysis of new data (including new field data) and the re-analysis or synthetic analysis of existing data. This unit does not cover purely descriptive exercises such as the compilation of catalogues.

Individuals may carry out research projects alone or as part of a team. The principal researcher usually proposes the research topic and takes the lead in formulating the research proposal. This includes identifying the research aims and objectives within the context of relevant research strategies; and identifying appropriate methodologies for the research and the resources and timescale required. The format of the research proposal will be determined primarily by the requirements of the organisation providing the funding.

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AA3.1 Propose a research project

Performance Required

This will involve:

- a) identifying a topic for original research
- b) reviewing existing and current research in the field for its relevance to the proposed project
- c) defining the aims, objectives and relevance of the project and reviewing these with potential stakeholders
- d) establishing how the research fits into any relevant research policies and strategies
- e) identifying potential funding bodies for the proposed research and establishing the criteria they will apply to providing support
- f) identifying potential and necessary partners and collaborators in the research and canvassing their support
- g) formulating a research proposal that is agreed with stakeholders, partners and collaborators and is compliant with funding body criteria
- h) estimating resource requirements
- i) formulating and submitting the **research proposal** in accordance with organisational procedures and the requirements of funding body (or bodies)

Occupational Context

1 The research proposal (will include):

- aims and objectives of the project
- the current state of research in the field
- the methodology to be used
- the resources and timetable, including the main stages and tasks of the research
- the possible scope and nature of the research outcomes and how they are to be communicated to relevant audiences

Knowledge Requirements

You need to know and understand how to:

- Present the aims and objectives of the project
- Write a proposal, and what components should be in it

You need to know about:

- What constitutes original research
- Which organisations fund the type of project proposed
- To whom the proposal should be addressed and presented
- Relevant research strategies and policies
- What other research is being undertaken by organisations and individuals in this field
- The state of existing research in the field
- The normal project management methods for monitoring projects
- Procedures for peer review and refereeing

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AA3.1 Propose a research project

Required Skills

You should demonstrate:

- How to communicate with other professionals
- How to present information in the proposal to make it appear as exciting and novel as possible
- How to make a convincing argument that the project objectives can be achieved with the proposed methodology

Evidence Required

You must provide evidence proving that you can propose a research project. The project may include the investigation of primary or secondary sources or be a combination of both. The research could be for any reason, including exhibitions, interpretations, publications or academic awards. The evidence would be normally in the form of completed, refereed projects.

The candidate should be questioned, based upon the documentation provided, to explore the following:

- presenting the aims and objectives of the project
- specifying the value and significance of the project
- the relationship between the project and the research policy and strategy of the organisation
- review both primary and secondary sources
- identify potential uses for project results
- the main stages and tasks of the project
- the contributions of the various participants
- procedures for reporting progress

Evidence Rules

- The candidate should have been involved in at least 2 research projects that have successfully been submitted to peer review.

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AA3.2 Develop and plan a research project

Performance Required

This will involve:

- a) verifying the research aims and deliverables of the project
- b) accurately describing the nature, quantity and quality of data to be collected and analysed
- c) identifying and evaluating factors that might benefit or obstruct the achievement of research aims
- d) selecting the **methods** best suited to realising the research aims and deliverables
- e) preparing a work breakdown and critical path analysis that optimises the use of resources within constraints on timescale
- f) estimating the **resource requirements** of the project, including contingencies, and reconciling costs against constraints on funding
- g) identifying a team with the necessary skills to achieve the project tasks within projected qualitative, timescale and funding parameters
- h) identifying and agreeing targets and milestones with stakeholders where required
- i) proposing and agreeing project management and evaluation procedures, including an appropriate programme of peer review, with stakeholders

Occupational Context

1 Methods

- documentary
- statistical
- comparative
- experimental
- investigative
- bibliographic

2 Resource requirements

- data
- personnel
- finance
- equipment
- accommodation
- time

Knowledge Requirements

You need to know and understand how to:

- Estimate the time and resources needed to complete each task
- Cost resource requirements, allowing for inflation and other pressures

You need to know about:

- The research aims and deliverables of the project
- What data are needed to achieve the research aims
- What factors are likely to benefit or obstruct the project
- The range of methods available and the best methods for achieving the research aims and deliverables
- How to identify project tasks, and to show their relationship to each other
- What factors to include in estimating the timescale of the project
- How to identify significant milestones and useful targets
- How to identify an appropriate programme of peer review

AA3 Propose and plan a research project

AA3.2 Develop and plan a research project

Required Skills

You should demonstrate:

- Critical path analysis
- Data analysis

Evidence Required

You must provide evidence proving that you can identify the methodology to achieve the aims and objectives of a project as part of a collaborative team and as an individual. The methodology must include the investigation of primary or secondary sources or a combination of both. The research could be for any reason, including exhibitions, interpretations or publications or academic awards. The evidence would be normally in the form of actual project proposals.

The candidate should be questioned, based upon the documentation provided, to explore the following:

- the research aims and outputs of the project
- data needed
- impact of factors that might obstruct the project
- the feasibility of various methods
- evaluation criteria and methods to assess the success of the project

Evidence Rules

- The candidate should have been involved in at least 2 substantive projects submitted for approval.