

NEWS

Studying at UCL Institute of Archaeology

Charlotte Frearson* and Carolyn Rando*

Ranked first in the UK for archaeology, for the fifth year in a row, in *The Guardian University Guide* League Tables, with a top score of 100/100.

Ranked in the top five for student satisfaction in *The Complete University Guide* 2016 League Table of UK archaeology departments (published in May 2015).

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Research-led Teaching

Studying at UCL Institute of Archaeology (IoA) is an experience like no other. Consistently rated the best Archaeology department in the UK, the IoA offers a unique experience for each of its students, at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. Students at all stages in their academic career are encouraged to engage with current archaeological research – guided by a 70-strong academic staff who are amongst the leaders in their field. To all those considering embarking on the adventure of a lifetime, here's how students at the Institute connect and engage with the very best archaeological research the UK has to offer!

Undergraduate Degrees

The Institute of Archaeology offers six degree programmes with a huge variety of course options, covering a vast range of archaeological topics in both a theoretical and a practical manner. A degree at the Institute aims to challenge student expectations and develop a wide range of transferable skills so demands

time and commitment. Each degree has a distinct character, and is structured around specified core courses and a dissertation. In addition students choose from the range of optional courses which enables them to build a degree tailored to their individual interests, whether they have a background in the arts, the sciences, or a mixture of both.

Since its foundation in 1937, the Institute has placed great emphasis on the importance of fieldwork, with all students undertaking a minimum of 70 days fieldwork. During their first week, new students camp for four days during the Experimental Archaeology Course, which gives them a hands-on introduction to early technologies (flint knapping, pottery making, bronze casting, building structures, crop processing etc.) and discusses the complexity of interpreting archaeological remains. This event provides a great opportunity for the new students to get to know each other, and the staff, in relaxed

"Undertaking fieldwork has enabled me to actively contribute to world leading research, and by extension, the discipline of archaeology" (Leon Veal BSc Archaeology 3rd year 2015–2016)

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surroundings prior to the start of more formal class teaching.

At the end of their first year all students attend the 12-day summer Training Course to develop excavation and survey skills and to understand how individual sites relate to the wider landscape. For the remainder of their fieldwork days undergraduate students can select from a range of projects run by our staff (**Fig. 1**), or by other colleagues working in the UK and around the world (see our Global Map feature). We currently have students on excavation in North, South and Central America, Europe, Africa and Asia (**Fig. 2**). Working in the field helps students to gain a better understanding of the quality and range of data that can be collected from excavation and survey, or offers them the experience of working at heritage sites or in museums, and the chance to travel to parts of the world that they have been learning about in their course work.

To find out more about what we offer at undergraduate level (including full handbooks for each programme) please visit our web pages: <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/archaeology/studying>

Masters Degrees

The Institute offers an unparalleled 19 Masters degrees (both MA and MSc) covering all aspects of the discipline, including the archaeology of different geographical regions, the archaeological sciences, conservation, and heritage studies. Each Masters degree normally lasts a full calendar year (12 months) and has its own structured core courses; in addition, students can choose from a very wide range of optional courses. With support from an academic supervisor, each Masters student undertakes an individual research project leading to a dissertation which is submitted in mid-September. Our Masters degrees attract a diverse student group with over 50% coming from outside the UK. While most students study full-time, part-time study is also possible and welcomed. However, we do not offer distance learning courses as we consider that wide-ranging discussion between staff and students, as well as



Figure 1: The Studies in African Field Archaeology Class, ARCL2040, crossing the equator (for the 6th time!), February 2015. Photo: Andrew Reid.



Figure 2: Mortuary archaeology field school at Zamartze, Spain. Excavation of an early to late medieval cemetery, showing excavation of three of the five skeletons. Photo: Jazmin Sexton.

hands-on work with collections, laboratory training, field trips or museum visits are central to our Masters degrees (**Fig. 3**).

Graduate Diplomas

Our Graduate Diploma provides an academic qualification in archaeology for students who already hold a first degree in a

non-archaeology subject, or serves as a foundation year in preparation for many of our Masters degrees.

Research Degrees

The Institute also has the largest and most diverse community of archaeology research students of any university in the World. Our academic staff offer PhD supervision across a wide topical, geographical and chronological range, and with the support of a personal supervisor students research an individual topic over three years. Information on PhD and staff research interests can be found at: <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/archaeology/people>

To find out more about what we offer at post-graduate levels (including full handbooks for each Master's programme) please visit our web pages: <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/archaeology/studying>

Semester or Junior Year Abroad

A Semester or Junior Year Abroad at the Institute of Archaeology provides a unique opportunity for students enrolled at a university outside the UK. Affiliate students attend the same classes as the Institute's regular degree students, and have access to the

wide range of seminars and events held at the Institute and nearby institutions. For further information contact Charlotte Frearson: c.frearson@ucl.ac.uk

"The Institute boasts a wide range of specialisms covered by the academic staff, and links to numerous institutions in the UK and worldwide – having the British Museum around the corner is very useful for my study, as well as the resources available to PhD students which make it a really exciting place to undertake research" (Rob Kaleta UG 2010–2013 / Masters 2013–2014 / PhD 2014–)

Life at the Institute of Archaeology

Located in the heart of Central London, UCL's campus puts students within easy walking distance of museums, theatres, cultural life and even on-going archaeological excavations. The Institute itself sits on the northern side of Gordon Square, and is home to all our staff, undergraduates, Master's and PhD students. Amongst its many charms, the Institute houses: an exceptional archaeological library, world-renowned collections, laboratories, computing and photographic facilities, and much, much more. All of our students are encouraged to participate in Institute life, with the Society of Archaeological Students (SAS) and the Society of Archaeology Masters Students (SAMS) running a wide range of social and academic events throughout the year.

Careers Advice

We work closely with the UCL Careers office offering students support, guidance and opportunities regarding careers in Archaeology and Heritage and other fields. We run annual careers days (open to both undergraduate and postgraduate students) and maintain strong links with London Museums and Heritage Bodies in order to aid students in securing volunteer positions in their spare time.



Figure 3: MSc Conservation for Archaeology and Museums students teaching children (and adults!) the basics of conservation at the Institute's World Archaeology Day in June 2015. Photo: Lisa Daniel.

Undergraduate and Graduate Open Events at the Institute of Archaeology

Undergraduate Open Days

The opportunity to visit the Institute is available through the year by contacting Charlotte Frearson (c.frearson@ucl.ac.uk) for an informal tour. We run two Open Days, one in June and one in October, for prospective students, and a further five Post Application Open Days, which form a compulsory element of the application process (precise dates are announced on our website). Staff and current students are on hand to answer questions about the Institute, and taster lectures, tours and object handling sessions are incorporated to make these open days informative and fun!

Graduate Open Evenings

The opportunity to visit the Institute is available through our Graduate Open Evenings. These will be held on 9th December 2015, 2nd March 2016 and 1st June 2016, 5–7pm. These events are open to those interested in our Masters courses or research degrees as well as to those already accepted onto a graduate degree programme. Staff and current students provide talks, tours and information on Masters and research opportunities in the Institute.

If you have any queries about undergraduate degrees please contact Charlotte Frearson, Undergraduate Programmes Administrator (c.frearson@ucl.ac.uk). If you have queries about Masters or research degrees please contact Lisa Daniel, Graduate Programmes Administrator (l.daniel@ucl.ac.uk).

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