

NEWS

Studying at the UCL Institute of Archaeology

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Ranked first, for the past four years, in *The Guardian* league table for studying archaeology.

For the past four years, 100% of Institute undergraduate finalists have expressed satisfaction with our teaching and support in the UK National Student Surveys.

'The support and guidance is second to none, the focus is always on you and making the most of your skills and development. Highly recommend.' (Sarah More, Finalist 2014, BA Archaeology)

No other university can offer the range and depth of global coverage that you will find at the Institute of Archaeology, UCL. Studying with us is a collaborative experience as staff and students at all levels (Undergraduate, Masters and PhD) explore ideas, discuss the most recent research, and work together on field projects or analysis. Exploring the wide diversity of societies from two million years ago to the most recent past is exciting, and requires a wide range of skills, as well as an open mind. Our students need to work hard to integrate the humanities and the sciences, using a range of approaches to collect, evaluate and interpret relevant evidence, but all students find topics that they particularly enjoy as they develop their own interests and expertise. At UCL, and during survey and excavation projects, students make life-long friends while developing teamwork,

management and leadership skills. Studying archaeology demands energy and enthusiasm, it challenges expectations while developing the problem-solving and transferable skills which all employers are looking for. Graduates from the Institute go on to make wide-ranging contributions to society, including in business, academia and archaeology. For stories from past alumni, see the 'Alumni Reflections' section towards the end of this issue of *Archaeology International*.

'I never thought I would enjoy learning as much as I did here. The staff are great and the degree programme allows you to be flexible with courses!' (Eve Hoon, Finalist 2014, BA Archaeology and Anthropology)

The eight floors of the Institute occupy the northern side of Gordon Square, next to the main UCL campus, within easy reach of the museums, cultural life and resources that lie at the heart of London. The building is home to all our staff, undergraduate, Masters and PhD students. It houses an outstanding archaeology library, world-renowned collections, numerous laboratories, computing and photographic facilities, and seminar rooms, allowing students at all levels to critically engage with – and contribute to – current research. Students at the Institute are part

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Fig. 1: Students tanning a deer hide during the Experimental Archaeology Course at West Dean, near Chichester, in 2013 (Photo: Charlotte Frearson).

of a thriving community, and central to this are the Society of Archaeological Students (SAS) and the Society of Archaeology Masters Students (SAMS) that run a range of social and academic events including student conferences. Students can also attend the lively range of seminars and conferences held at the Institute throughout the year, often involving distinguished visiting speakers.

'The most enjoyable, challenging and stimulating three years of my life - exceeded all my expectations.' (Jon Cogdale, mature student, Finalist 2014, BSc Archaeology)

Since its foundation the Institute has placed great emphasis on the importance of fieldwork. All our undergraduates undertake a minimum of 70 days fieldwork and UCL gives each student subsistence (currently £20.00 a day) and travel grants to help fund this. In their first week of study the 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 (**Fig. 1**). This event provides a great opportunity for the new students to get to know each

other, and the staff, in relaxed 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 (currently located in West Dean, West Sussex) to develop excavation and survey skills and to understand how individual sites relate to the wider landscape. For their subsequent 54 or more days of required fieldwork undergraduate students can select from a range of projects run by our staff or other colleagues working in the UK and around the world. We currently have students on excavation in North, South and Central America, Europe, Africa and Asia. 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 gives them experience of working in museums or heritage sites, and the chance to travel to parts of the world that they are learning about in their course work. Many students use fieldwork in their final year to collect data for their dissertation projects. See 'The Institute of Archaeology around the World' feature in this issue.

'I have thoroughly enjoyed my time at the Institute, and do not feel I would have been offered the same high standard of experiences and opportunities elsewhere!' (Hannah Button, Finalist 2014, BSc Archaeology)

We recently revised the curriculum for all our undergraduate degrees, which included designing new first year core-courses. Regular fortnightly small-group tutorials for all undergraduates, as well as a new third year seminar course encourage student participation in debates about the contribution archaeology makes (or should make) to social, economic, environmental and ethical issues in the UK and around the world. Other curriculum changes enhance development of transferable skills and prepare students for varied careers within and outside archaeology. Our six undergraduate degrees each have a distinct



Fig. 2: Masters students on the Forensic Archaeology course sort a mixed assemblage of plastic human skeleton parts; some of the Institute's extensive osteology collections are housed in drawers visible in the background (Photo: Carolyn Rando).

character, with renewed emphasis on use of our laboratories and reference collections, particularly for the BSc, and new partners for our four-year BA in Archaeology with a Year Abroad. All Institute degrees have structured core courses and a dissertation, but students also choose from around 70 optional courses, allowing them to develop their personal interests. For more details on the wide range of BA, BSc, MA and MSc degrees (including full handbooks for each course) see: <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/archaeology/studying>

'In a department with many specialists who respect and seek the input of their students, the possibilities to work and collaborate in current research are endless.' (Helen Himmelman, MA Archaeology of the Middle East, 2013/14)

UK students have access to Government loans to cover the £9,000 UCL undergraduate fees. Students start to pay off these loans after graduation, paying 9% of any income over £21,000 a year. All undergraduates receive grants to cover subsistence and travel for their 70 days fieldwork. UCL undergraduates from families with incomes lower than £42,000 a year also receive an annual cash bursary of £1,000.

A Semester or Junior Year Abroad at the Institute of Archaeology provides a unique opportunity for students enrolled at a university outside the UK. These 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: ioa-ugadmissions@ucl.ac.uk

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 one of our Masters degrees.

The Institute offers an unparalleled 20 Masters degrees (both MA and MSc) covering all aspects of the discipline, including the archaeology of different geographical regions, the archaeological sciences 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 very 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. We do not offer distance learning courses as we consider that wide-ranging discussion between staff and students, as well as hands-on work with collections, laboratory training,



Fig. 3: Undergraduates from the Institute help to teach other young people at Dig This! an archaeology taster day run in association with the Museum of London, at Headstone Manor in July 2014 (Photo: Charlotte Frearson).

field trips or museum visits are central to our Masters degrees.

'The enthusiasm of the staff for their subject is infectious, and the level of care, attention and support they give you throughout your studies couldn't be better.' (Emily Wright, MA Mediterranean Archaeology, 2013/14)

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 at least two personal supervisors 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>

If you wish to find out more about what we offer at graduate levels please visit our web pages: <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/archaeology/studying>

While it is the largest archaeology department in the world, students at the Institute are part of a friendly and close-knit community which values and encourages all its members. The close co-operation and interaction between staff and students is at the heart of what we do, so that everyone benefits from participation in an exciting research-led and teaching-focused institution. Something of the range and quality of our research can be seen in the 'Bookshelf' feature and the Research Up-dates and Research Articles sections in this issue. The quality of our teaching is reflected in our being awarded more Provost's Teaching Awards than any other UCL department, and that this year our students nominated over 20 Institute staff for the new UCL Student Choice Teaching Awards.

We welcome high achieving and committed students of all backgrounds, ages and nationalities. If you have questions about our undergraduate degrees, please contact Charlotte Frearson: c.frearson@ucl.ac.uk. Enquiries about the Graduate Diploma, Masters Programmes and PhD-level research can be addressed to Lisa Daniel: ioa-gradadmissions@ucl.ac.uk.

Undergraduate and Graduate Open Events at the Institute of Archaeology

Undergraduate Open Days

The opportunity to visit the Institute is available through our Undergraduate Open Days. These will take place in October, November and December 2014, and January, February and March 2015. The precise dates will be announced on our website – or email Charlotte Frearson c.frearson@ucl.ac.uk to be added to a mailing list.

These events are open to those interested in our undergraduate degrees (compulsory Open Days for those holding offers of a place will be held on different dates which will be communicated once offers are made). Staff and current students will be available throughout the day to answer questions about any aspect of undergraduate degrees at the Institute. The days will run from 10am-2pm and will include tours of the Institute given by current undergraduate students, a series of talks (about life at the Institute, details of the degrees, and information about fieldwork) will be given by current students and staff, including the Admissions Tutor, Dr Bill Sillar (or Deputy Tutor, Dr Andrew Garrard) and Admissions and Recruitment Officer Charlotte Frearson. Tours of the Institute's fascinating Collections will be given by our Collections Manager Ian Carroll. Refreshments will be available throughout the day.

'The connections that the Institute of Archaeology has with museums and institutions throughout London, the UK, and Europe are invaluable to students. I've had opportunities to work on projects and with objects that I would never have had elsewhere. As an American living and studying abroad, I've been able to rely on the IoA for support and guidance the whole time. Staff

and students alike are friendly and willing to help in any number of ways.'
(Louise Stewart, MSc Conservation for Archaeology and Museums, 2012–2014, MA Principles of Conservation 2011–12.)

Graduate Open Evenings

The opportunity to visit the Institute is available through our Graduate Open Evenings, which will take place in November 2014, and March and June 2015. The precise dates will be announced on our website.

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 will provide talks, tours and information on Masters and doctoral opportunities in the Institute. Staff and current students will be available from 5pm to discuss and advise on course content and the admissions process. At 5.30pm there will be an introduction and welcome to the Institute of Archaeology by Professor Andrew Reynolds, Graduate Admissions Tutor, and at 6pm there will be tours of the building to include the archaeology library, the archaeological collections, the Wolfson Archaeological Science Laboratories, conservation laboratories and archaeobotany laboratories. Refreshments will be available throughout the evening.

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