The Toolkit

The purpose of this Toolkit is to provide a set of useful and flexible resources to assist archaeological practitioners during the creation of project-specific Selection Strategies for the Working Project Archive.

This toolkit builds upon existing guidance on best practice in the curation and management of archaeological archives (ADS (1), ADS (4), Brown 2011a, CIfA 2014b, Perrin *et al.* 2014, SMA 1993).

This toolkit is not intended to be used in the creation of a Selection Policy and it does not provide advice on what Selection decisions should be made. The toolkit instead provides advice, guidance and resources to aid the management of the Selection process, and tools to help archaeological practitioners record their project-specific Selections decisions.

This toolkit is not intended to be used in the Selection of Human Remains or in the rationalisation of an archaeology collection within a repository. For guidance on Human Remains refer to the Historic England Human Remains Advice page (https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/technical-advice/archaeological-science/human-remains-advice/). For guidance on the rationalisation of museum archaeology collections see Baxter *et al.* (2018) and SMA (1993).

Who is the Toolkit for?

This Toolkit is applicable to all archaeological practitioners who create, work with and care for Archaeological Archives. This encompasses: all archaeological practitioners who undertake projects that produce Archaeological Archives, individuals who work with specific aspects of an Archaeological Archive, and organisations that curate Archaeological Archives in the long-term. Examples include but are not limited to:

- Staff within commercial units, including Project Managers and project personnel engaged in survey, excavation, post-excavation, assessment, specialist activities, and the compilation of the Working Project Archive.
- Local authority archaeologists, planning archaeologists, and other national and local authority staff.
- Collecting Institution personnel, such as Collections Curators, other repository representatives, administrative staff, and archivists.
- Archaeological Conservators.
- Specialists.
- Researchers (academic, student, and independent).
- Community groups.

How to create a selection strategy using this Toolkit

A Selection Strategy should always be applied on a project-by-project basis and must take into account:

- The aims and objectives of the project.
- Local Authority guidance (including the brief and/or Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI)).
- The Collecting Institution's collection policy and/or deposition guidelines.
- Local and regional research frameworks.
- Relevant thematic or period specific research frameworks.
- The project's Data Management Plan (DMP).
- Internal recording and reporting policies.
- Material-specific guidance documents.

At the end of each stage of the project the Selection Strategy should be reviewed, and amended if required.

Project Planning

A Selection Strategy must be outlined at the planning (project initiation) stage of a project to be included in the detailed project design. A Selection Strategy Template is included in this Toolkit.

The rationale behind the Selection Strategy and any amendments to the Selection Strategy throughout the course of the project should be detailed, as well as the strategic approach to the selection of the differing archive components.

The methodology for recording Uncollected Material should be agreed with the relevant specialists and detailed in the Selection Strategy. The manner of dispersal of material not selected for inclusion in the Archaeological Archive should be detailed within the Selection Strategy in agreement with the landowner, Collecting Institution and other stakeholders.

The Selection Strategy should be included with all pre-project documentation (i.e. WSI, Project Design) along with all supporting documentation (e.g. the DMP), and be provided to all stakeholders (local authority archaeologist, field staff, collections curators, specialists, landowners etc.).

Data Gathering

The Selection Strategy should be made available to all project personnel (management, field staff, post excavation staff and specialists) at all times, and should be flexible and open to amendment during all stages of the project.

The Selection Strategy should be implemented, monitored and revised as necessary. All revisions to the Selection Strategy should be agreed with the relevant Stakeholders. Uncollected material should be recorded and dispersed as agreed in the Selection Strategy.

Analysis and Report Writing

Any Materials recovered during the project, and documentation created, including digital data, should be assessed specifically for Selection, taking into account specialist advice. The Project Lead and Collecting Institution should be consulted as to any changes to the agreed Selection Strategy.

Archive Compilation

The final Selection Strategy should be applied to the Working Project Archive, and the De-selected material dispersed as detailed in the Selection Strategy.

A copy of the Selection Strategy (including all amendments and revisions) should be included in the project report as an appendix and should accompany the Archaeological Archive to the Collecting Institution.

What's in this toolkit

This Toolkit contains:

- A Selection Strategy Template that can be used to help structure a project-specific Selection Strategy and which provides appropriate prompts on what a Selection Strategy should include. The template is divided into three sections; 1. Digital Data, 2. Documents and 3. Materials. If necessary, the Materials page can be repeated and sub-numbered for each material component of the archaeological archive (e.g. 3.1 Animal Bone, 3.2 Flint, 3.3 Roman Pottery, 3.4 Samples from contexts etc.). The Selection Strategy Template contains sections where the methodology for recording uncollected material can be detailed. The Selection Strategy Template contains sections where the agreed dispersal strategy for de-selected material can be detailed.

- A list of Further Guidance detailing existing guidance on best practice in the curation and management of Archaeological Archives as well as links to regional and national research agendas and material standards.

- A list of contact details where further advice can be sought.

- A checklist for the Selection process.

- A glossary of terms used in this toolkit.

- Several real world examples of projects where a Selection Strategy has been devised, and how the process developed through the course of the project.

When to use the Selection Strategy Toolkit

This Toolkit is relevant to all Archaeological Projects, and all such projects should have a Selection Strategy outlined at the planning stage. The detail and input required from relevant stakeholders will vary depending on the size of the project.

For comparable Archaeological Projects undertaken in similar areas (e.g. two evaluations neighbouring the same rural village, or two watching briefs on services schemes in the same town centre) it is likely that the Selection Strategy can be re-used with minor amendments (in agreement with relevant Stakeholders). For smaller Archaeological Projects it may be possible to include the Selection Strategy within the WSI (in agreement with relevant Stakeholders), however the prompts within the Selection Strategy Template will still be relevant.