

Completing the Oregon Qualified Archaeologist (OQA) Application

What is OQA?

- An Oregon Qualified Archaeologist (OQA) is someone who has been approved by the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office as meeting the definition in Oregon Revised statute 390.235 and is therefore able to hold an archaeological permit in the State of Oregon.

- An archaeological permit is needed:
 - On publicly owned, non-federal, lands for any subsurface archaeological investigation or collection of archaeological objects.
 - On privately owned lands to excavate an archaeological site or remove an archaeological object. Under OAR 736-051-0090(1):
 - (a) The department does not require permits for archaeologists to conduct exploratory excavation to determine the presence of an archaeological site on private lands;
 - (b) If an archaeological site is identified, all excavation must stop and the archaeologist shall record the site on a State of Oregon Archaeological Site Record and submit to SHPO.
 - (c) If additional investigation is necessary for an archaeologist to establish the boundary of the site, continue excavation of any exploratory probes, or conduct further archaeological excavations or collection of archaeological objects, it will require a permit that the department issues pursuant to this rule.

- OQAs who are employed by or sponsored by an organization such as an agency, Cultural Resource Management (CRM) firm, tribe, museum, or non-profit, can apply for and supervise archaeological work under an issued archaeological permit.

- A person is not required to be an OQA in order to access the Oregon Archaeological Records Remote Access system (OARRA), to create and submit archaeological site records, or to be employed as an archaeologist in the State of Oregon.

- A person who is not an OQA can still conduct fieldwork that is authorized by a permit, but they must be supervised by an OQA.

How to Apply to Become an OQA

- Download the most recent version of the OQA application from the SHPO [website](#)

- Save a copy of the application to your computer

- Fill out the application (it is a fillable pdf), remembering to save often

- Send the completed and signed application, along with the required supporting documentation as email attachments, to: arch.qualifications@opr.d.oregon.gov.

OQA Application Requirements

Under Oregon Revised Statute 390.235(6)(b), and defined in OAR 736-051-0070(23) a “Qualified Archaeologist” means someone who has the following qualifications:

(a) A post-graduate degree in archaeology, anthropology, history, classics or other germane discipline with a specialization in archaeology, or a documented equivalency of such a degree;

(A) Where “post-graduate degree” means a Master of Arts (MA), Master of Science (MS), or Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree from a recognized educational institution in archaeology, anthropology, history, classics or other germane discipline with a specialization in archaeology.

(B) Where “specialization in archaeology” means the program, coursework, and graduate faculty adhere to departmental requirements for the equivalency of a post-graduate degree in the discipline of archaeology.

(C) Where “archaeology” means the study of the past based on: archaeological method and theory, the analysis or patterning of any surviving archaeological objects, sites, or features, anthropogenic soils, ethnographic, historic, or oral traditions, and any associated contextual relationships documenting the use of a place or places by people individually or collectively for any amount of time. Archaeology is a subfield of Anthropology.

(D) Where “documented equivalency” means an official record of a post-graduate degree from a foreign educational institution deemed equivalent to that gained in conventional/accredited U.S. education programs comparable to a MA, MS, or PhD, with a specialization in archaeology

(b) Twelve weeks of supervised experience in basic archaeological field research, including both survey and excavation and four weeks of laboratory analysis or curating;

(A) Where supervised archaeological field research means at the professional level, as opposed to that obtained as a volunteer, or for undergraduate or graduate school credit.

(B) Where 480 hours of both survey and excavation means a minimum of 240 hours each.

(c) Has designed and executed an archaeological study, as evidenced by a Master of Arts or Master of Science thesis, or report equivalent in scope and quality, dealing with archaeological field research.

(A) Where “Master’s thesis or report equivalent in scope and quality” may include a PhD dissertation, peer reviewed publication, or report, where the document:

(i) Presents a major piece of research in preparation for the demands of professional research and writing;

(ii) Sets out a problem, clearly follows the theme or themes involved, includes review of relevant literature, and shows an ability to synthesize material in a way that brings it to bear on the chosen problem;

(iii) Involves a proposal that is reviewed by faculty and provides context to the research, why the topic is important, how the project will address the topic and the methods and materials required to conduct the project;

(iv) Explains how the work addresses archaeological theory, laboratory analysis, archival research, fieldwork, description of materials analyzed, and quantitative methods;

(v) Demonstrates the ability of the author to analyze and manipulate archaeological data to address the stated research questions; and

(vi) Must be in a finished and polished format of sufficient caliber that it is ready to submit to a professional publication.

(B) Where a Master's thesis or report equivalent in scope and quality dealing with "archaeological field research" supports experience with excavation or removal of archaeological or historical material, and;

(i) Where "archaeological field research" in this context means hands-on analysis of a professionally excavated archaeological collection or a portion of a collection from data recovery or test excavations in an archaeological site, prior to or after curation at an Oregon state designated curatorial facility, alternate curatorial facility, federally approved facility, or foreign institution.

(ii) Where the collection consists of archaeological objects and associated data, such as excavation level forms, field maps, catalogs of archaeological objects, archaeological object inventories, sample collections, and photographs, conveying overall provenience.

(C) Where being the "sole author" demonstrates that the qualified archaeologist designed and executed the archaeological study.

(D) Where a primary/lead author may demonstrate their specific contribution evidencing they were principally responsible for designing and executing the archaeological study.

These qualification requirements are addressed on the OQA application under Criteria 1-4.

By filling out the application, you are providing support to the State of Oregon that you:

- Have a post-graduate degree that **specializes in archaeology.**
- Possess the requisite amount of archaeological survey and excavation experience.
- Possess the requisite amount of archaeological lab/curation experience.
- Have produced a thesis or report equivalent in scope and quality of which you are the sole author that involves **archaeological field research.**

Criterion 1: Education

Table 1 – Post Graduate Qualifying Degree

Enter the name of the university, post-graduate degree, and year awarded in the table.

Table 1 – Post Graduate Qualifying Degree

University	Degree (e.g., Master of Arts in Archaeology)	Year
Washington State University	Master of Arts in Anthropology	2010

Tips for filling out this section:

- Include only one post-graduate degree, that specializes in archaeology
 - If an applicant has an Archaeology MA specializing in the field of archaeology, and a PhD in History that does not, only put the former in Table 1.
 - If an applicant has an MA and PhD both specializing in Archaeology, either may work, but only include one.
- Do not change the name of the degree
 - If your degree is in Environmental Science, do not change it to Archaeological Environmental Science. Falsifying information will result in immediate denial.
- Do not include a degree that has yet to be awarded

Box 1 – Supporting Statement

The applicant must use this box to present the burden of proof to reviewers that their post-graduate degree involved “a specialization in archaeology” per ORS 390.235.

“Specializes in archaeology” means that the focus of the degree must be in archaeology. In other words, while degrees in related disciplines (e.g. history, geology and anthropology) are acceptable, the focus of the coursework taken for the qualifying degree must be in archaeology.

This is defined under OAR 736-051-0070(23)(a):

- (B) Where “specialization in archaeology” means the program, coursework, and graduate faculty adhere to departmental requirements for the equivalency of a post-graduate degree in the discipline of archaeology.
- (C) Where “archaeology” means the study of the past based on: archaeological method and theory, the analysis or patterning of any surviving archaeological objects, sites, or features, anthropogenic soils, ethnographic, historic, or oral traditions, and any associated contextual relationships documenting the use of a place or places by people individually or collectively for any amount of time. Archaeology is a subfield of Anthropology.

Box 1 – Supporting Statement

Example: I received a Master of Arts in Anthropology in 2010. The program I followed at the university is designed for students interested in obtaining a graduate degree with an archaeology focus. The program offered a regional focus as well, based on research interests of archaeology faculty. The regional focus of my studies primarily involved the Plateau culture area, although I additionally took graduate level courses that focused on the Great Basin and Arctic. The attached transcripts provide support that my graduate coursework involved archaeology (e.g., Anth 513 Lithic Analysis; Anth 530 Archaeological Method and Theory; Anth 543 Prehistory of the Plateau and Basin; Anth 535 Cultural Resources Management; Anth 562 Evolutionary Method and Theory in Anthropology and Archaeology; Anth 570 Sediments in Geoarchaeology; Anth 573 Zooarchaeology). In addition, all three of my committee members (John Doe Ph.D, Jane Doe Ph.D, and Judy Smith Ph.D), are archaeology professors at the university. Each of them is listed as a reference, and their contact information is included in my attached resume.

Tips for filling out this section:

- Hover your cursor over the box in the application to see example text.
- The only intent of this box is to demonstrate that your degree specializes in archaeology.
- Focus on the program for the degree (e.g., required archaeology courses for the program, faculty and their titles).
- Avoid discussing your thesis or dissertation (those will be addressed in Criterion 4).
- Avoid copying and pasting text from your company bio.
- Do not make statements on:
 - The number of archaeological reports you have written
 - The number of years you have worked as a professional archaeologist
 - Other states where you have been permit approved
 - That you believe you are SOI qualified
 - The number of ARPA permits you have been issued
 - Publications in archaeology you have written
- Although providing transcripts is not required, they may be helpful in illustrating the specific coursework that was taken in support of the degree if this is not clear from your answer. Do not provide transcripts for coursework taken for an undergraduate degree or a degree other than the one used to qualify on the application.

SHPO Education Criteria Review

- Reviewers will check to see that the post-graduate degree exists, and is from the graduate program of the institution.
 - This type of review is typically for degrees and institutions that are unfamiliar.
- Reviewers look at whether it is clear that the degree is from a “recognized educational institution”.
- Under OAR 736-051-0070(24) a “Recognized educational institution” means:
 - (a) An accredited member of a state system of higher education; or
 - (b) An accredited academic or higher education institution, with a department comprising archaeology faculty, through a graduate school program, that offers graduate degrees with a specialization in archaeology.
- Accreditation is not required according to statute. However, with the increase in on-line for profit and bogus degrees, accreditation is looked at by reviewers. Whether by itself, or in combination with other issues, non-accredited institutions or programs may initiate a request for more information, or outright denial of an application.
- If the degree was obtained outside of the United States, a foreign degree equivalency document may be requested. This provides support that the foreign degree meets the standards expected of a post-graduate degree received in the U.S.
 - With the rise in for profit and bogus degrees, it is important to check that the institution has a graduate program, and that the awarded degree came from that program
 - Some institutions now have two graduate degrees where one is specific to archaeology and the other a more abbreviated version for active professionals.
 - For the latter, if it is unclear whether a specialization in archaeology is associated with the degree, or whether it is part of the graduate program, the application will likely be denied.

Criterion 2: Supervised Field Experience

Table 2 – Documentation of 12 Weeks (480 hours) of Supervised Field Experience

The applicant includes information in Table 2 to support the ORS 390.235 requirement that they possess at least “twelve weeks of supervised experience in basic archaeological field research, including both survey and excavation.”

These requirements are defined under OAR 736-051-0070(23)(b):

(A) Where supervised archaeological field research means at the professional level, as opposed to that obtained as a volunteer, or for undergraduate or graduate school credit.

(B) Where 480 hours of both survey and excavation means a minimum of 240 hours each.

Table 2 - Documentation of Twelve Weeks (480 Hours) of Supervised Field Experience

Date Range	Total Hours (in hours)	Supervisor	Company/Institution	Type of Experience (Survey or Excavation)
06/10/2008 - 08/05/2008	240	Mr. Green	One Point Four One CRM	Excavation
05/15/2010 - 09/22/2011	240	Ms. Blue	Really Good Archaeology Company	Survey

Tips for filling out this section:

- Take the time to make sure the information is accurate
- Only include experience up to 480 hours – 240 hours each for survey and excavation
- You must include a supervisor, other than yourself
- All fields in a row must be complete, and accurate
- Separate out Survey experience from Excavation Experience
- Hours and date ranges should match your CV/Resume
- “See attached Resume” is not acceptable
- Avoid using:
 - “Thousands of hours”
 - “Over 1000 hours”
 - “1000+ hours”

SHPO Supervised Field Experience Review

- Reviewers check to make sure that this section of the application has been filled out correctly, and that the requisite number of survey and excavation hours (240 each) are met.
- Reviewers will also check that the submitted CV/resume aligns with the dates and hours included in the application.

Criterion 3: Laboratory Analysis or Curating

Table 3 – Documentation of Four Weeks (160 Hours) of Laboratory Analysis or Curation

The applicant includes information in Table 3 to support the ORS 390.235 requirement that they possess at least “four weeks of laboratory analysis or curating.”

Table 3 - Documentation of Four Weeks (160 Hours) of Laboratory Analysis or Curation

Date Range	Total Hours (in hours)	Supervisor	Lab/Institution
08/10/2008 - 08/31/2008	120	Ms. Crimson	University Laboratory of Anthropology
07/6/2009 - 07/10/2009	40	Mr. Black	Tribal Museum

Tips for filling out this section:

- Take the time to make sure the information is accurate
- Only include experience up to 160 hours
- You must include a supervisor, other than yourself
- All fields in a row must be complete, and accurate
- Hours and date ranges should match your CV/Resume
- “See attached Resume” is not acceptable
- Avoid:
 - “Thousands of hours”
 - “Over 1000 hours”
 - “1000+ hours”

SHPO Laboratory Analysis or Curation Review

- Reviewers check to make sure that this section of the application has been filled out correctly, and that the requisite number of Laboratory Analysis or Curation is met.
- Reviewers check to make sure that the Laboratory Analysis or Curation relates to archaeological materials recovered during excavation.
- Reviewers will also check that the submitted CV/resume aligns with the dates and hours included in the application.

Criterion 4: Completion of an Archaeological Study

Box 2 – Explanation of Research

The applicant must support that they have “designed and executed an archaeological study, as evidenced by a Master of Arts or Master of Science thesis, or report equivalent in scope and quality, dealing with **archaeological field research**.”

The meaning of “archaeological field research” in this context has been clarified under the 2023 Oregon Administrative Rule governing the issuance of archaeological permits as meaning “hands-on analysis of a professionally excavated archaeological collection or a portion of a collection from data recovery or test excavations in an archaeological site, prior to or after curation at an Oregon state designated curatorial facility, alternate curatorial facility, federally approved facility, or foreign institution.”

According to OAR 736-051-0070(c), the applicant must:

- Have designed and executed an archaeological study, as evidenced by a Master’s thesis or report equivalent in scope and quality, dealing with archaeological field research, of which they are the sole, or primary/lead author.

(A) Where “Master’s thesis or report equivalent in scope and quality” may include a PhD dissertation, peer reviewed publication, or report, where the document:

(i) Presents a major piece of research in preparation for the demands of professional research and writing;

(ii) Sets out a problem, clearly follows the theme or themes involved, includes review of relevant literature, and shows an ability to synthesize material in a way that brings it to bear on the chosen problem;

(iii) Involves a proposal that is reviewed by faculty and provides context to the research, why the topic is important, how the project will address the topic and the methods and materials required to conduct the project; (iv) Explains how the work addresses archaeological theory, laboratory analysis, archival research, fieldwork, description of materials analyzed, and quantitative methods;

(v) Demonstrates the ability of the author to analyze and manipulate archaeological data to address the stated research questions; and

(vi) Must be in a finished and polished format of sufficient caliber that it is ready to submit to a professional publication.

(B) Where a Master’s thesis or report equivalent in scope and quality dealing with “archaeological field research” supports experience with excavation or removal of archaeological or historical material, and;

(i) Where “archaeological field research” in this context means hands-on analysis of a professionally excavated archaeological collection or a portion of a collection from data recovery or test excavations in an archaeological site, prior to or after curation at an Oregon

state designated curatorial facility, alternate curatorial facility, federally approved facility, or foreign institution.

(ii) Where the collection consists of archaeological objects and associated data, such as excavation level forms, field maps, catalogs of archaeological objects, archaeological object inventories, sample collections, and photographs, conveying overall provenience.

(C) Where being the “sole author” demonstrates that the qualified archaeologist designed and executed the archaeological study.

(D) Where a primary/lead author may demonstrate their specific contribution evidencing they were principally responsible for designing and executing the archaeological study.

Box 2 - Explanation of Research

Thesis example: My thesis consisted of the lithic analysis resulting from a controlled formal excavation of a housepit depression at 35WSXXXX in 2015. I was a member of the excavation crew that was headed by my thesis committee chair, Dr. John Doe. Fieldwork consisted of four 10-day sessions during the summer.

Report example: My report addresses the significance of an historic homestead site. Data was collected during controlled formal excavation at 35WSXXXX in 2015 as part of a mitigation project. I was a member of the Archaeology Company, LLC excavation crew headed by Jane Doe, M.S. Fieldwork consisted of eight 5-day workweeks during the summer.

Tips for filling out this section:

- Hover your cursor over the box in the application to see example text.
- Only provide one supporting research document consisting of a thesis or dissertation, report, or publication.
- Dissertation: While not in statute, a dissertation can be used to fulfill Criterion 4.
- Thesis/Dissertation: If it is unclear from your title page or abstract that your thesis/dissertation directly relates to “archaeological field research”, feel free to submit the entire document.
- Report: In addition to the above, it must be equivalent in scope and quality to a thesis.
 - Equivalent in scope and quality means that an archaeological faculty and the graduate program would accept it as a focus of study, and that the applicant has designed and executed the archaeological study.
 - Avoid providing reports that cover:

- Pedestrian Survey
- Presence Absence Survey/Probing
- Formal excavations with low data yield
- Monitoring
- Historic Property Management documents

SHPO Archaeological Study Review

- Reviewers will check to make sure the thesis/dissertation/report involves analysis of archaeological materials from an archaeological excavation.
- For reports, reviewers check that it is equivalent in scope and quality to a thesis.
 - The applicant is the “sole author” – meaning they have designed and executed the archaeological study.
 - The report contains all of the elements described in OAR 736-051-0070(c)(A), including:
 - (i) Presents a major piece of research in preparation for the demands of professional research and writing;
 - (ii) Sets out a problem, clearly follows the theme or themes involved, includes review of relevant literature, and shows an ability to synthesize material in a way that brings it to bear on the chosen problem;
 - (iii) Involves a proposal that is reviewed by faculty and provides context to the research, why the topic is important, how the project will address the topic and the methods and materials required to conduct the project; (iv) Explains how the work addresses archaeological theory, laboratory analysis, archival research, fieldwork, description of materials analyzed, and quantitative methods;
 - (v) Demonstrates the ability of the author to analyze and manipulate archaeological data to address the stated research questions; and
 - (vi) Must be in a finished and polished format of sufficient caliber that it is ready to submit to a professional publication.

Please Remember:

Oregon SHPO must adhere to ORS 390.235 and OAR 736-051-0000 to 0090.

There are no exceptions regardless of: years of experience and research, letters of support, contributions to the field, co-authored publications, title, approval in other states, or the Secretary of

the Interior (SOI) qualifications. The applicant must demonstrate that they meet the criteria in statute and rule, without exception.

Submission and Review Procedures

- Submit the completed and signed application form and required attachments (Resume/CV, Thesis/Dissertation title and abstract pages or entire copy of the report or publication, and optional transcripts) via email to: Arch.Qualifications@OPRD.Oregon.gov
- Please send the documents as attachments to the email. Do not send download links or .zip folders as these will be quarantined by the email server.
- A reviewer will check the submitted application and documents for completeness within 1-2 weeks of submittal. An email will be sent if the application is found to be deficient. If the application is found to be deficient, a reason will be provided. The applicant will have to resubmit their entire revised application when ready.
- OQA application reviews will be conducted by SHPO staff as time allows, but generally the timeframe between reviews will not exceed one month. Following the review, an email response will be sent stating whether the applicant has been accepted or denied as meeting the OQA qualifications. If the applicant is denied, the specific criterion under which the applicant did not meet the standards will be provided. Sometimes this is because the reviewer has questions about the applicant's answers or documents. The applicant is welcome to re-apply at any time by submitting an entire new application that addresses the identified deficiencies.

Dispute Resolution

- If an applicant disagrees with the SHPO's decision to deny their OQA status, then they can submit a signed [dispute form](#). The dispute form must address how the applicant meets the qualifications under which they were denied, with reference to what is in statute and the associated administrative rule (ORS 390.235 and OAR 736-051-0000 to 0090). SHPO staff will review the dispute form during the next OQA review session. A response will be provided via email.
 - If the original denial was for an unequivocal failure to comply with statute (e.g., applicant does not have a graduate degree, degree is not from a recognized educational institution, applicant does not possess the requisite number of survey and excavation hours, or lab/curation hours etc., a report is not equivalent in scope and quality to a thesis [has more than one author, does not involve or relate to archaeological field research]), the applicant will be informed that the denial stands and the dispute resolution process ends.

- If the response fails to address the applicable criterion or criteria from which the applicant was denied (e.g., applicant states that they disagree with the statute, applicant refers to another OQA as having an identical application, or offers more of a rant/manifesto), the applicant will be informed that the denial stands until they are able to specifically address how they meet the subject criterion or criteria

- If the dispute resolution form addresses the applicable criterion or criteria, then the applicant will either be informed that they have been approved as meeting the OQA qualifications or that a dispute resolution panel will be convened to review the OQA application and denial.

- The dispute resolution panel will consist of an external OQA, the State Archaeologist, and the Associate Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer. If the dispute is regarding a report submitted in lieu of a thesis, then a blind review of the report will also be conducted by three Pacific Northwest archaeology professors. A dispute resolution hearing will be scheduled and held within 60 days. The applicant is welcome to attend the hearing and present on their application and dispute resolution form, but the applicant's attendance is not required. The panel will review the OPAA application and determine if the applicant has met the qualifications by a consensus majority. A letter will be sent from the review panel to the applicant informing them of the decision. The results of the Review Panel will be for the specific case only, and will not affect past approvals or denials.