Professional Master's Degree

The Professional Master's Degree is a graduate degree aimed at practicing professionals and students on career paths in the public sector of archaeology. It features an abbreviated course of study, a focus on archaeological practice, and a practice-based thesis tailored to the student's interests and career path.

UNIVERSITY OF South Carolina

Master's Degree in Archaeological Practice

Geoarchaeological interpretation of stratigraphy using photogrammetry.

For additional information, contact:

Terrance Weik
Department of Anthropology
University of South Carolina
Weik@mailbox.sc.edu
(803) 777-6789

Adam King
SC Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology
University of South Carolina
aking@mailbox.sc.edu
(803) 409-9777

Department of Anthropology

University of South Carolina
Columbia, South Carolina 29208

(803) 777-6500

A Professional Master's Degree in Archaeological Practice

Public or applied archaeology, working in the public sector or for private consulting firms, is the fastest growing field of employment for archaeologists in the US. At the University of South Carolina this degree track is designated to meet that demand. It is structured as a professional degree program with a streamlined course of study, and a focus on experimental learning and building practicle knowledge.

What:

- A 30-credit (3-semesters and one summer) professional anthropology degree program
- Focused on the practice of archaeology and its application in private consulting, historic preservation, and the public sector.
- Emphasizing practical knowledge through a focused curriculum with various applied tracks and a practice-based thesis
- The thesis is a hands-on research project focused on some aspects of archaeological inquiry. Faculty mentors help identify research opportunities offered by university faculty, private firms, and other public entities. Thesis research is designed in the first and second semester, and reported in the final semester.

Who:

- Practicing CRM professionals who want to further their career
- Students whose aim is to obtain a professional position in private consulting, historic preservation, government, or museum settings.
- Employees and members of Native American Nations looking to expand their qualifications.

Where:

- The University of South Carolina Department of Anthropology in conjunction with the South Carolina Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology.

Associated Faculty:

- Adam King, Terrance Weik, Kelly Goldberg, Steven Smith, Chelsea Fisher

Program of Study:

Students are required to complete a minimum of 24 hours of course work and a master's thesis (6 hours of ANTH 799) for a total of 30 hours. Of these, at least 12 hours must be courses at the 700 level, excluding ANTH 799. Students must successfully pass a comprehensive exam and complete a master's thesis.

Specific requirements for the Professional MA Track in Archaeology are listed below:

1. Required Core Courses (12 hours):

- ANTH 720 - the Development of Anthropological Archaeology or ANTH 745 – Seminar in Historical Archaeology
- ANTH 750 – Archaeological Laboratory Analysis
- ANTH 751 – Archaeological Research Design and Analysis
- ANTH 742 – Public Archaeology

2. Concentration or Breadth Requirements (12 hours):

Students must choose at least 12 graduate credits in a discipline or disciplines that complement archaeology inquiry. Possibilities include, but are not limited to, geoarchaeology, geophysical prospecting, geographic information systems, historic preservation, museum studies, materials science.

3. Comprehensive Examination

Students must take and pass a comprehensive examination administered by the department.

4. Master's Thesis

Students must complete a master's thesis and six hours of thesis preparation: ANTH 799 – Thesis Preparation.

Admission:

- BA degree from an approved college or university
- Personal statement, writing sample, at least two letters of recommendation
- Demonstrate completion of a field school or 6 months supervised fieldwork
- Accepting applications for Fall of 2025 - deadline January 1, 2025

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