

Reflecting on your current working practice, describe your working routine for a day, showing how you prioritise, delegate, and deliver tasks, and how you ensure that they meet the required standards within the time available. How do you manage the need to communicate effectively with different audiences? (20%, 1,500 words or equivalent)

Introduction

I have been an employee of the Colchester Archaeological Trust since October 2021. Prior to this I worked at Pre-Construct Archaeology in Cambridge for a year. During my time as a field archaeologist I have developed a varied skillset, aided by two things: my working environment and my educational pathway.

My working environment has impacted my working practice in terms of career progression and networking. At my former company career progression was incredibly swift and I made assistant supervisor in one year. However, the opportunity to dig complex archaeology was limited and my understanding of post-excavation was minimal. At my current company, which is smaller, I have been able to undertake more tasks leading to a larger skillset. My educational pathway of my MA and apprenticeship at my current employer has provided me training time and one-on-one mentorship (National Apprenticeship Service, 2018). I have engaged weekly with modules on management, governance and specialisms.

Employed role

A typical day will start with an 8am start for an archaeological monitoring and recording (AMR). As I currently don't have a car, I walk to all my AMRs, most of which are within a 40-minute walk. Therefore, for an 8am start I would leave the house around 7:20am. Prior to the site I would have received the project folder from the contracts manager, which contains the written scheme of investigation and site contact. When I arrive on site, I prioritise tasks based on experience and what is required on the site groundworks. Sometimes it will only be a soakaway strip, which requires a different methodology compared to a full strip of multiple foundation trenches across a larger area. Whilst monitoring the groundworks visually looking for archaeology, I will record with photos and section drawings throughout the day. Multi-tasking is an important skill to make use of the time available which can vary between a few hours to a few days. There is a finality with an AMR and often once completed they are not returned to again so it important all measurements, recording and excavation is done prior to leaving.

If completed early, I will contact the contracts manager to let him know I am returning, and leave the site once satisfied I have done all recording necessary. AMRs have required ADS standards (2022) which necessitates the reuse of the data produced by them. Given the fast nature of AMRs some are not completed to a high standard (for example, unclear site photographs). However, through one of my office skillsets of digital archiving I am aware of the requirements as I help process the data produced for

the ADS and OASIS. Therefore, my office skills have directly boosted my excavation and recording skills.

Upon returning for the afternoon, my priority will always be the follow up to an AMR. This will include uploading and writing photo captions, writing site notes, or starting the basic CAD work. CAD is something I enjoy the least and is one I require the most assistance for to reach the required standards. I will then restart tasks which I have previously stopped due to fieldwork. These tasks will normally revolve around my lithics specialism (lithics analysis, data input and report creation) or archiving tasks (metadata forms, bagging and labelling for finds for deposition, moving archive boxes).

The completion of finds reports is something I have found difficult in relation to time management. I believe I have very good time management. However, there is little support about deadlines and what takes priority out of the portfolio of sites we run each week. I have started emailing my post-excavation manager directly asking for updates as we have no system or spreadsheet telling us the current deadlines. The underlying assumption is the quicker the report is completed, the better.

My work standards are consistently influenced by the current lithics specialist Adam, who is also Director of Archaeology. The latter role is all encompassing and takes a significant amount of time and energy. Therefore, our relationship has changed and what we can analyse together is adapting. Adam will still read many of my reports, but often I have submitted reports for one to two pieces of lithics without his prior knowledge at the request of the post-excavation manager or report writer. I still believe this is the correct choice, as I have gained a confident proficiency in my analysis and report creation as supported by my Master's. This work will continue until 4pm each day.

All my paid work requires daily timesheet entries (figure 1). These timesheets are submitted digitally via an app and allow for careful budget management from the senior staff. However, tasks change quickly for me each day and I can often end up with at least nine to twelve separate entries for different budgets, some at only five minutes long. Filling these timesheets out is a huge priority but also requires a careful approach, which I choose to be writing all my entries down in a notepad before transferring them online.

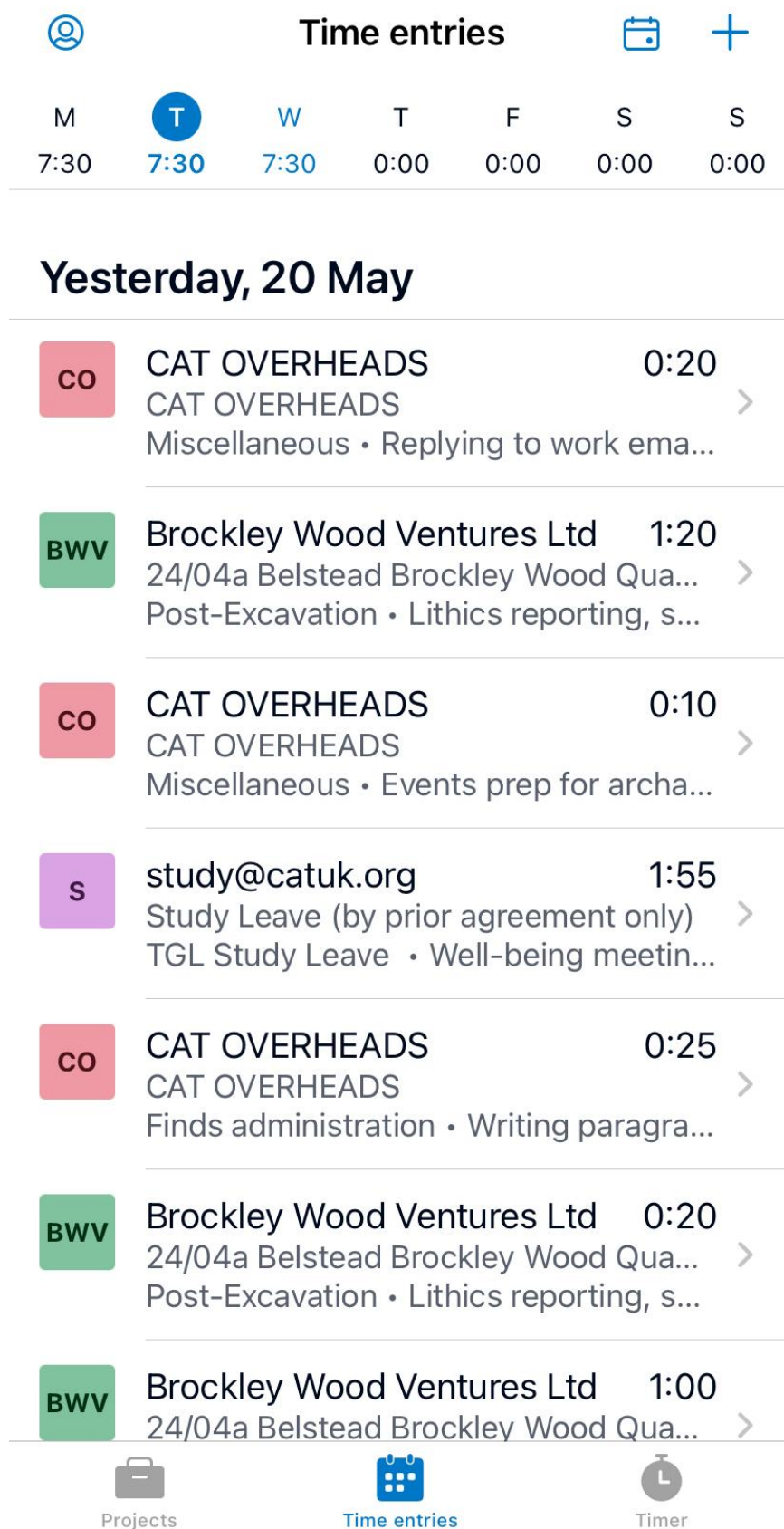


Figure 1: a screenshot of half a Xero timesheet entry on a typical office based day.

Voluntary role

Outside work I have volunteered extensively, with organisations including ClfA, the Lithic Studies Society (LSS), the Council for British Archaeology, and the Heritage Trust Network. This digital and in-person volunteering takes place in the weekday evenings, and during weekends. This analysis will only focus on two aspects of this.

The LSS: Since November 2022 I have volunteered as the LSS Publicity Officer. The LSS was founded in 1979 to aid international lithic studies. The society was always traditionally an academic leaning society. However, there has been a resurgence of a new committee and social media has played a role in this. My social media volunteering involves content creation, social media management, data input and publication of these assets across 4 channels (Caspari, 2022). These channels have over two thousand followers per channel and has grown significantly since I took over the role. This role's time delegation is purely governed by me and can often be one to two hours a day. It is consistent and full-on and can include weekly or monthly meetings with other committee members about events and administration. The standard of this work is technically overseen by the committee chair and vice-chair. But required standards of the social media are ones I have created in my role, as previously very little had been done beyond Facebook. It is an independent role as I have more prior experience within social media creation than the other individuals. There is also an element of trust with my role, which I have cultivated in my time. Prioritizing tasks is based solely on what the committee's next plans are, such as promoting a call for papers. Therefore, although an independent role it relies on feedback from a larger group.

ClfA SIGs: In August 2021 I was elected Secretary of the Early Careers Special Interest Group (SIG) for ClfA. This SIG supports the presence of early careers people within ClfA at a senior level, holds careers talks, has an online blog and collaborates with the CBA at our early careers conference. The role involves coordinating our monthly meetings, writing minutes and co-chairing the meetings of between eight to twelve people, and then finalising minutes for upload to a shared Google Drive. I also write the group's annual report and organise the group's AGM (ClfA, 2025).

Shared with me > ClfA Early Careers SIG > Meetings ▾ 👤

Type ▾	People ▾	Modified ▾	Source ▾
Name	↑		Own
	2021		
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	Meet the Members pp 👤		

Figure 2: a screenshot of the *Google Drive* where all my EC SIG volunteering is focused. Each year folder contains multiple minutes.

The role is intensive, as ClfA is a small, employed group therefore an enormous number of volunteers support the organisation. The role is overseen by a member engagement coordinator (Cara Burton) who oversees group's deadlines and work, and ensures their management is running smoothly. We hold regular meetings to do this, reflect ideas with actions and check if these actions are fulfilled each month. The EC SIG was more structured, having a full-time chair, vice-chair, and treasurer. However, due to my length of experience in the role I was often more of a vice-chair than the present individual. More recently, I have also joined the Diggers' Forum as an ordinary committee member which involves less delegation and management than my EC SIG officer role. The standards are once again more linear, as we have only just elected a chair and vice-chair. Prioritizing tasks for both SIGs is a collective approach, set out by our minutes and the group's upcoming plans (normally ClfA events which might require our presence).

My delivery of tasks can often coincide with work, in the form of continuing professional development therefore the allowance for work time to be allocated to them. An example was when I helped organise the LSS conference to take place in my workplace in Colchester in 2023.

Concluding remarks

Overall, I have built up good time management and delegation mainly influenced by my volunteer work. I have more experience supervising individuals in voluntary work than paid work. I think this has given me a more empathetic nature, and an approach which is shaped by reality and collaboration. It is clear every day is varied for me, meaning I have a skillset which covers a range of tasks. Standards are judged by individuals, but also by myself as sometimes these are standards I have helped create (e.g. the LSS). The prioritising of my work could be improved by senior support in my workplace, as currently I follow no set methodologies towards time management.

References

ADS. (2022) *Instructions for Depositors*. Available at: [Instructions for Depositors – Archaeology Data Service](#) (Accessed: 21/05/2025)

Caspari, G. (2022). 'Instagram as a tool for archaeological science communication', *Digital Applications in Archaeology and Cultural Heritage*, 24. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.daach.2022.e00219> (Accessed: 20/05/2025)

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National Apprenticeship Service. (2018) *Achieving the benefits of apprenticeships A guide for employers*. Available at: [Achieving_the_benefits_of_apprenticeships.pdf](#) (Accessed: 21/05/2025)