

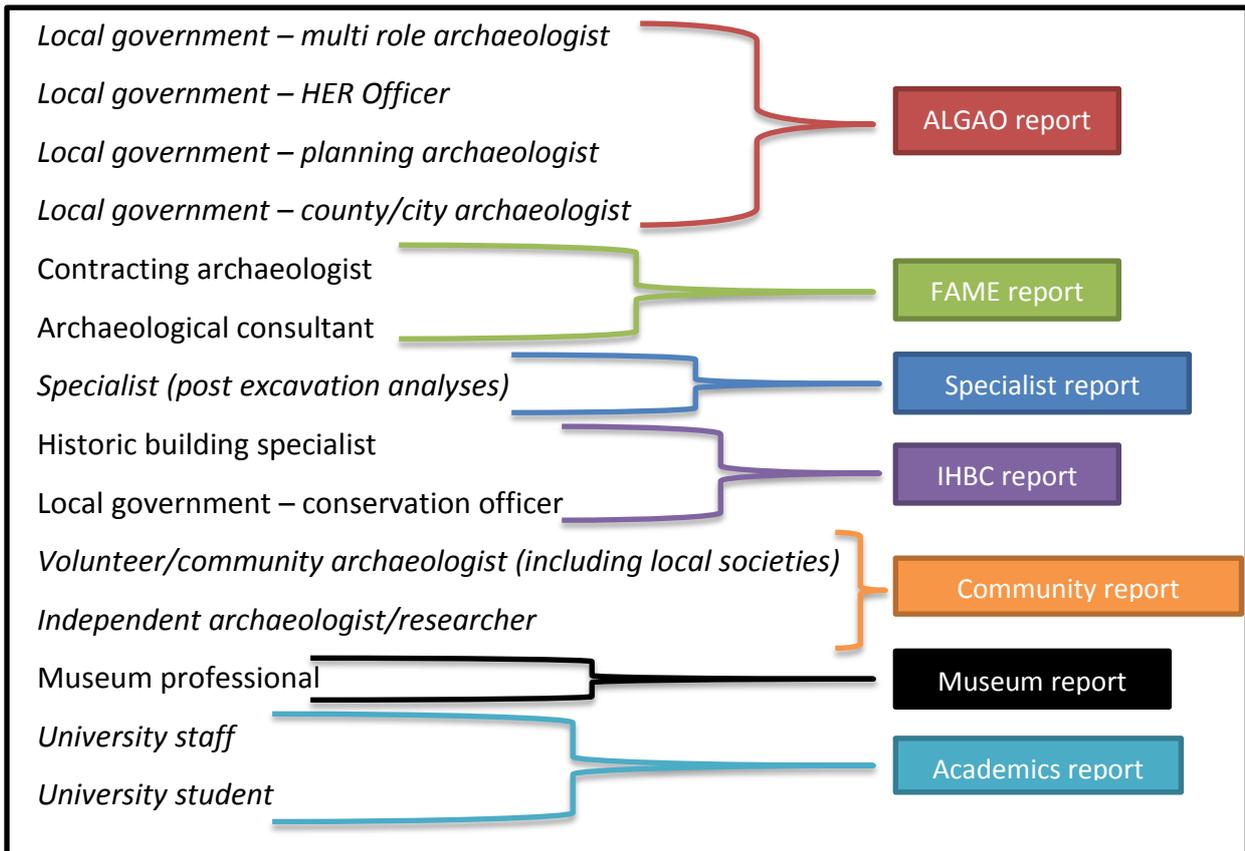


Title:	HERALD: Historic Environment Research Archives, Links and Data (6752) HERALD – Executive Summary of results and recommendations
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This document explains the landscape of the surveys and interviews, and also highlights the main points of note that came out of the surveys and the recommendations that we make as a result of the survey returns.

1. How the surveys were undertaken (who answered what!)

The survey results have been broken up into user groups according to how people described themselves from the following options:



The survey was distributed to a number of websites, email lists, blog posts, via Twitter, Facebook and online newsletters:

- OASIS website and blog
- OASIS-users email list
- HER-forum email list
- FAME members email
- IFA registered organisations email list and Twitter and Facebook
- IFA Buildings Archaeology Group email
- SMA members email
- CBA – Twitter, Facebook, CBA groups, LHEN, CBA Comm Arch placements

- VAG – Facebook, Twitter and newsletter
- IHBC – entry in online news (there was a charge for a direct email)
- Heritage alliance – online newsletter
- Internet Archaeology – Twitter
- ADS website, email, Twitter, Facebook, newsletter, University department contact list
- Subject committee for archaeology (SCFA) email list
- York academics staff email list

2. Executive Summary of key points

2.1 KEY POINT 1: Training and promotion: a poor understanding about OASIS functions and purpose.

Generally there is a variable level of understanding about OASIS, it's function, purpose, products and outputs and their potential reuse case. While this is most notable, understandably within parts of the sector not yet using OASIS fully (the built environment and specialists) more worryingly the lack of understanding extends to English Heritage staff, some contracting staff (where there is a high staff turnover) and the academic community. The results of both the survey, the telephone interviews and an initial workshop with EH leads to the conclusion that many in the sector feel that OASIS 'isn't really to do with them' or that it is something that is specifically to be used in the development control process.

In addition to confusion about who should use the system and what it does, the most common misconception is that OASIS and the ADS grey literature library are one and the same system. This may be due to the sector closely identifying OASIS with the ADS. However, important archaeological research and investigation is being undertaken by community archaeology groups (including local societies) and independent archaeologists/researchers and it is important that they are encouraged to upload material to OASIS in the future.

Promotion needs to be tailored to both groups and individuals (particularly how to make contact with individuals or maybe encourage them to be affiliated with regional groups). OASIS should be integrated into existing modes of communication to all sectors and should be integrated into other historic environment information portals so that existing users can seamlessly move between resources.

2.2 KEY POINT 2: Engagement with digital technologies.

There is still a large proportion of archaeologists in the sector who do not use OASIS at all; in this group, which is cross sectorial, there is a general lack of engagement with digital technologies, as

well as OASIS, this group do not engage with the Heritage Gateway, the FISH Toolkit and other online services.

2.3 KEY POINT 3: *The Grey Literature Library.*

The ADS grey literature library is seen as an excellent resource. The long term archiving and dissemination of these reports is seen as a primary purpose of the OASIS system by the majority of those currently engaged in the system. The exception is in the academic community who while appreciating access to the GLL, tend not to contribute as they focus on traditional means of publication. However, a major barrier to report upload and completion of the OASIS record by producers occurs when the contractors find that the records they do complete are not validated by HERs (and there is no agreement with EH for them to undertake validation on the HERs behalf). In these cases the reports are not archived or made available online as they have not been 'signed off'.

It was also thought that an extension of the OASIS form to enable the upload of specialist reports, and thereby the inclusion of these reports in the ADS Library, would be a positive step. This is for two main reasons: the entire reports they produce are not always included in the main project report and it would make it easier to locate artefact or eco-fact specific reports which not usually in the public domain.

2.4 KEY POINT 4a: *Form Redevelopment -Workflow disconnect.*

The current OASIS system doesn't fit well into curators workflows. For example, in some cases, the OASIS record is created by contractors once the HER has already received the report and have created their own HER record, leading to duplication of effort and disengagement from the contractors who do not see their records and reports validated and disseminated via the ADS grey literature library. There is a high proportion of HERs who would like to upload their own data from the HER to start or update an OASIS record. The reason for this appears to be the perceived high levels of inaccuracies in records uploaded by some contractors. By allowing the HER to upload directly it may remove the duplication in recording and the burden on contractors who could just make additions to the OASIS record started by the HER if required, and then upload the report if appropriate

2.5 KEY POINT 4b: *Form Redevelopment - Import/Export functions.*

A major omission of the current OASIS system is the inability to transfer data with ease from OASIS to HERs and vice versa. Many of the workflow problems and duplication issues could be alleviated if there was a simple yet intelligent data synchronisation system between HERs and OASIS. This would allow HERs to start OASIS records at the click of a button, it would allow the exchange of id numbers to link HER record with OASIS record and report DOI and it would allow the HERs to import OASIS fields such as intervention dates which are often difficult to obtain through other means. It could also mean that large datasets created or updated by other projects (such as HLF projects) could be reintegrated into HERs via OASIS.

2.6 KEY POINT 4c: *Form Redevelopment - OASIS as an information hub and project tracking tool.*

Museum and archive collections policies and deposition information are currently available in different forms and different locations depending on the geographic area. The survey responses showed the museums would like to have this information available to OASIS users through the OASIS system to improve access to the information and reduce problems associated with unfamiliarity of local procedures as these can differ greatly across the country. Deposition of archaeological archives does not always follow a uniform route and can take a long time. Museum respondents felt that a system which tracked fieldwork work projects and the final deposition of archives would enable archives to plan for and accommodate archive deposition better as well as creating a link to the HER and report through the inclusion of accession codes. It would also give a quantified picture of the state of archive deposition across participating areas.

2.7 KEY POINT 4d: Form Redevelopment - Expansion of the remit/scope of the form.

Most respondents tend to agree that 'more data' should be recorded, but there is little clear idea about why, by whom and how more detailed outputs could be used. OASIS is currently used for some building recording but its take up is not high as is reflected by the low response of building recording specialists to the survey. There was a good response from conservation officers from England. Conservation officers were generally positive about the theory behind the OASIS system, but many had not heard of it before the survey. They thought it should be better publicised. In general, there seems to be a greater link between planning departments and conservation officers than there is with HER officers. Conservation officers would also appear to have less obvious relationship to the receipt of reports and so it is unclear what their role would be in the OASIS system and they just need more publicity about the GLL.

3. Recommendations

3.1 Recommendation 1: Increased communication, publicity and training.

The responses throughout the survey highlighted the need for more communication, publicity and training on the OASIS system for all areas of the sector from English Heritage staff to academics, community groups and, and certainly for those working in the built historic environment. The survey (as in the Pye Tait survey) highlights that misunderstandings about the purpose and function of the system remains high. The training would need to cover all aspects of the system: training for the data producers completing the form, training for data consumers and general publicity for end users who mostly access the information collected by OASIS through the public facing outlets: i.e. HERs, the ADS Grey literature library, the EH Excavation Index etc.

- a. Training for data producers – how to fill in the form, how to find information on what is required by the local HER
- b. Training for data consumers – how to use OASIS, how to get the most out of the system, what to include in briefs, how to encourage data producers to complete records and upload reports, what to include in local guidance documentation. Locations and frequency of group training sessions. Access to online training resources and videos.

- c. Publicity – where OASIS data goes, what it is used for, why it is collected, how people can access it, exemplars of what HERs are able to do with the data, functionality available to HBSMR users and non-users, how to access help and guidance from EH, what other support is available.

The **training, communication and publicity role is one that needs to be ongoing and consistent i.e. extending through out and beyond the period of the redevelopment project.**

3.2 Recommendation 2: Design of OASIS to include grey literature only options and backlog upload options

The OASIS survey responses support the development of different levels of interaction with OASIS by and HER. There is a significant minority of HERs who, while they do not wish to interact with OASIS they do value access to the Grey Literature online with the added benefit of an archiving solution. If the HER for an area does not require data from OASIS, as it may not fit into their workflow, they could choose to be part of a very minimal version of the OASIS form. This would allow the upload of a Grey Literature report and an enhanced bibliographic record. This record would aid resource discovery (i.e. allow users to find the report more easily) whilst omitting much of the information needed for a full event record in OASIS. The report and record would go into the ADS grey literature library for dissemination and archiving. This record could either be submitted by the fieldworker or by the receiving HER on an area by area basis. Other HERs who do use OASIS in their workflows could continue to collect and use the full event record. Another strong recommendation that came out of the survey was to allow for the facility to upload 'backlog' grey literature; this is grey literature that reports non-current archaeological work or may be digitised (scanned) reports.

3.3 Recommendation 3: Importance of import export functions

HERs need to be able to transfer data automatically between HER and OASIS to allow for HERs to contribute to or benefit from the data which is in OASIS at the point in the workflow that fits with them. The ability to transfer data with ease between systems is core to the 'COPE' Capture Once Publish Everywhere ethos which underpins the vision of the redeveloped OASIS system. This import / export functionality will need to differ according to the systems used by HERs and the recommendation is to provide a funding source available to help HERs develop the necessary systems to interact with and OASIS API or suite of web services.

3.4 Recommendation 4: The inclusion of the museums community

It is recommended that the project develop a 'museums view' in the new OASIS allowing museums to access OASIS records which fall within their collections area. Museum and archive managers would be able to log in to the OASIS system and see the fieldwork projects which have happened in their collection area. This could include information on the expected archive contents and the expected date of deposition which would allow museums to plan for future space requirements.

Allow museums to communicate with contractors in OASIS and provide accession numbers and notification of archive section completion, if appropriate. This communication could be recorded through the OASIS system giving a project centred view of the archive deposition and accommodating issues which can arise through delays and staff changes. The notification of archive completion can also be fed through the OASIS system to planning departments and HERs, if required.

Investigate integration of SMA collections areas map with the new OASIS system and include links to collections policies within OASIS. This could work in a similar way to how HERs currently claim administrative areas in OASIS and would make the SMA collections areas map and database into a live and integrated system giving up to date information on the archive deposition possibilities for areas around the country.

3.5 Recommendation 5: Redevelopment of the system to widen scope of recording

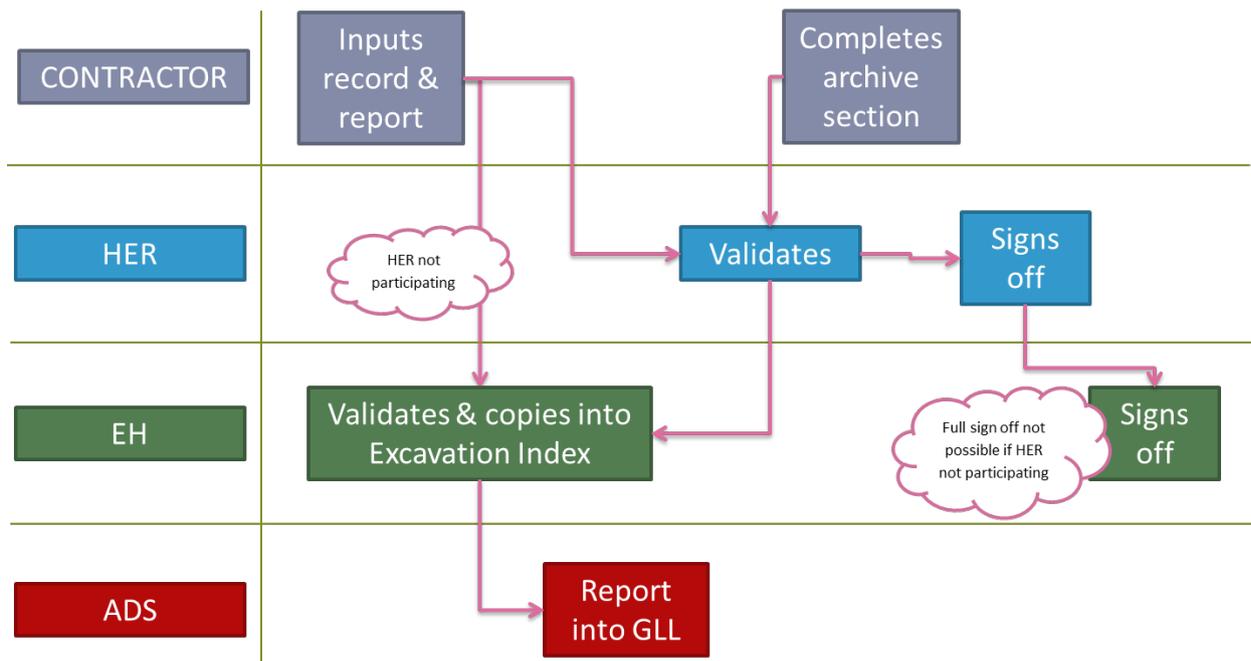
The redevelopment of the system should enhance the current facility to record building survey work to include better links to terminology and a more detailed metadata schema. The workflow for this element of the record creation and delivery should remain very flexible until the wide variation in the elements of the sector involved with historic buildings recording can be better identified and a more tailored enhancement be created.

4 Current redevelopment options and workflow proposal

Here is the OASIS 'as is' business process model (BPM) diagram followed by some possible redevelopment BPMs.

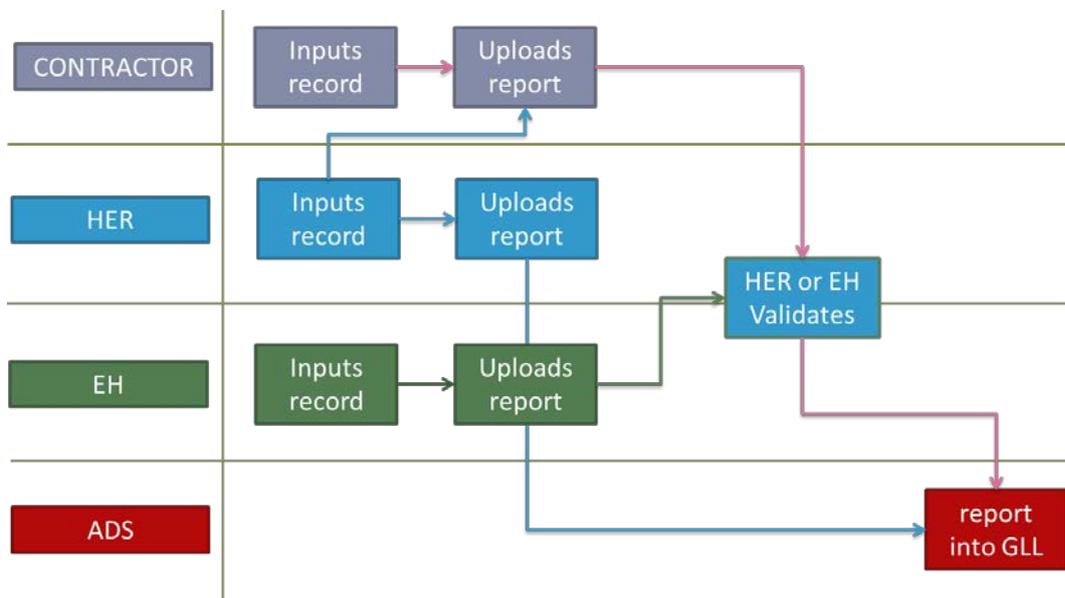
4.1 OASIS 'as is'

This is current workflow for the OASIS system which has been modified from the original to allow for where HERs were not participating and contractors still wanted to have their reports available through the Grey Literature Library.



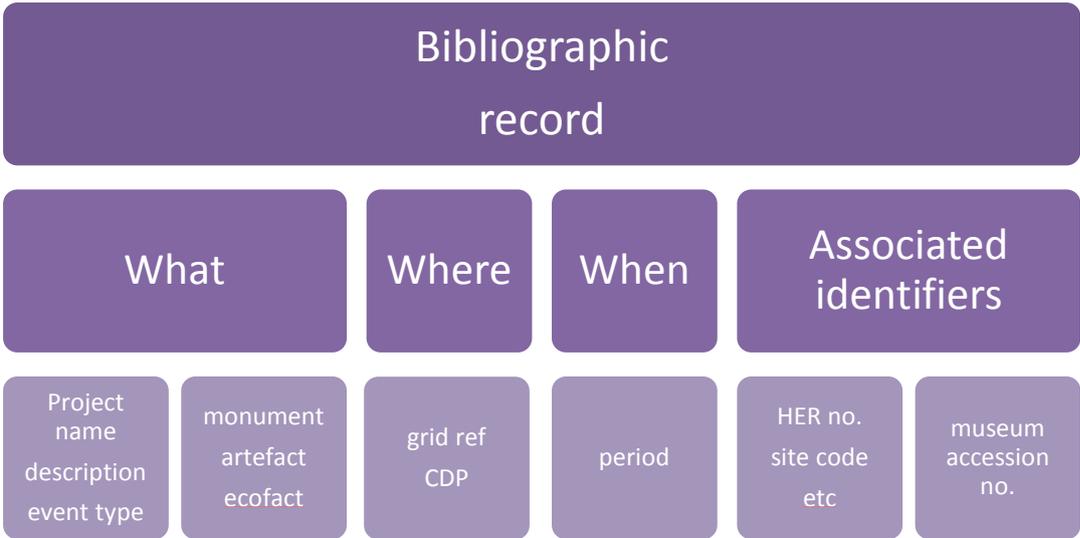
4.2 OASIS Lite

This is a model that would allow for the upload of the report to the Grey literature library without duplicating a record which already exists in the HER.



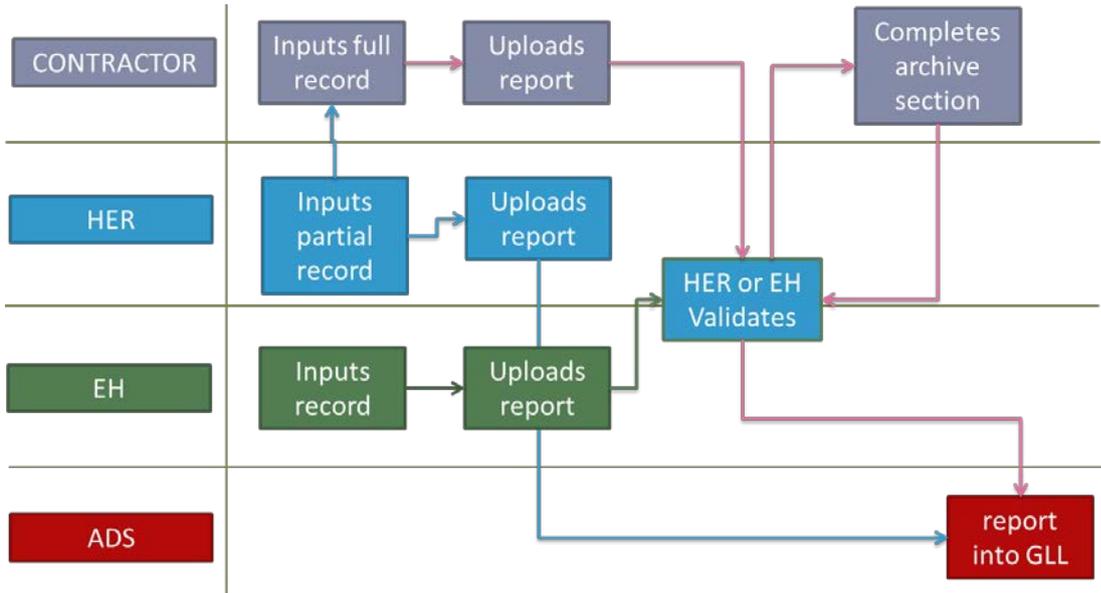
4.3 Enhanced bibliographic record collected as part of OASIS Lite.

This is the data needed to describe the report and make it discoverable in the Grey literature library. The rest of the event data would be held by the HER and should be retrievable via the HER number.



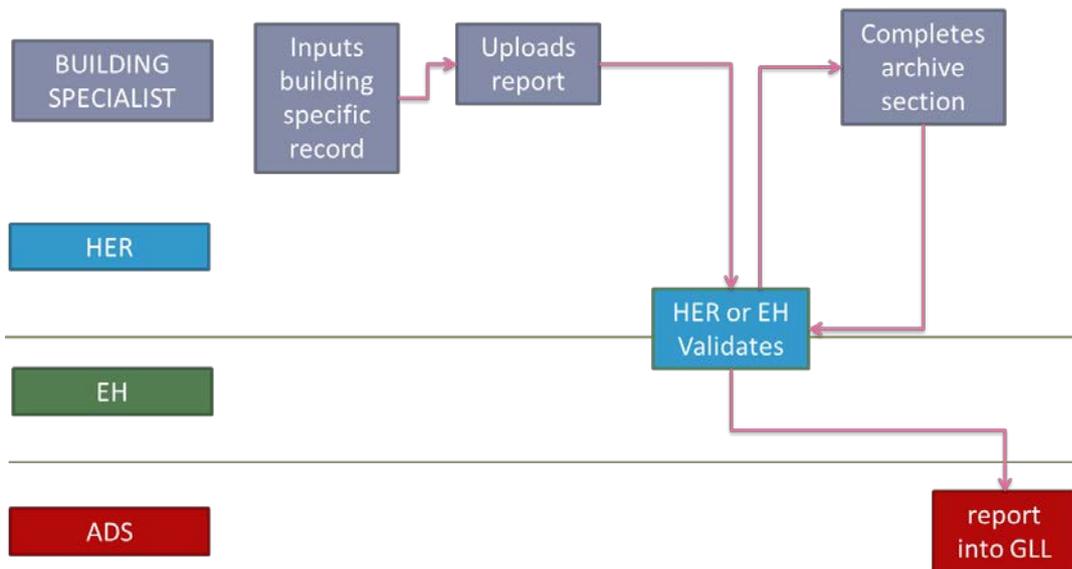
4.4 OASIS Basic (status quo)

The level of record recorded where the HER was participating.



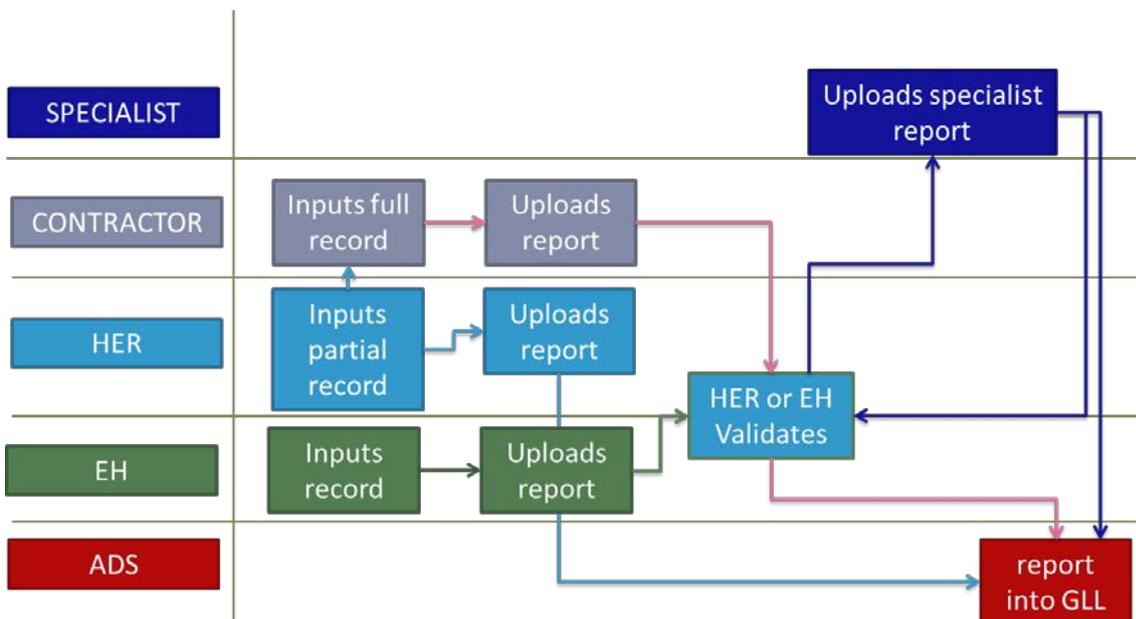
4.5 OASIS Basic / Lite (building specialists example)

This example shows how a building survey could be recorded as a Lite or Basic record but would allow for event specific fields to be included in the record.



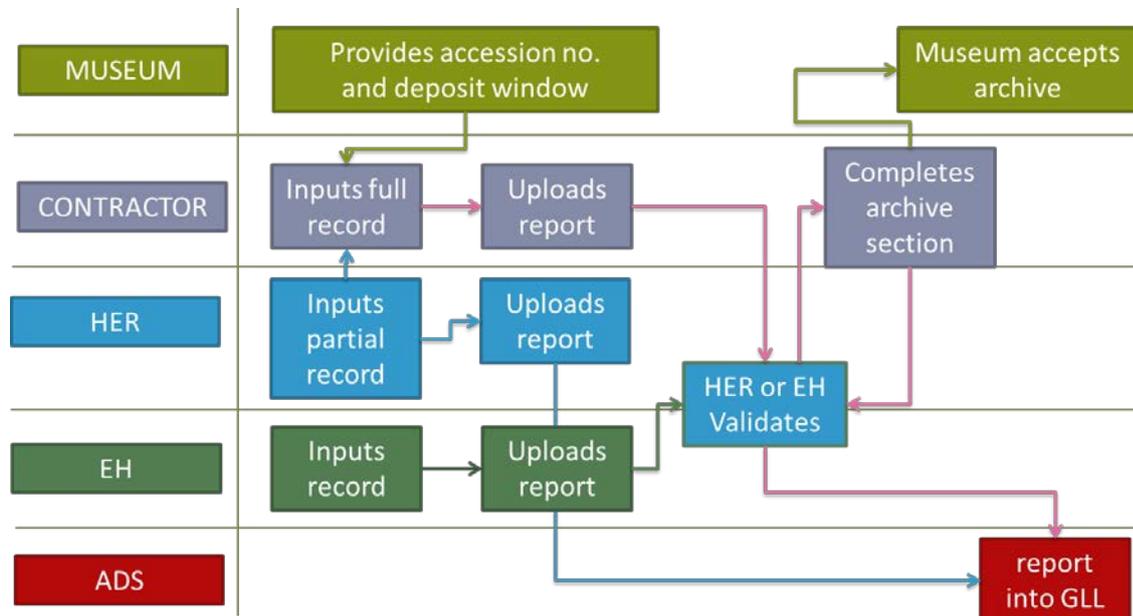
4.6 OASIS Plus (specialists example)

This shows how an OASIS Plus record is a normal record with extra information attached – in this case a post excavation specialist report.



4.7 How museums could be involved

Museums could also be added to the workflow in participating areas which would allow another leave of project tracking.



5 Next Steps

Working on the basis of the survey results and subsequent recommendations we intend to release a range of form 'mock-ups' after the Christmas break in January to allow potential and current users to comment on the different flow lines.