

Frequently Asked Questions

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General Questions#

What is the timetable for the OASIS redevelopment project?#

The OASIS form was launched in its current form in April 2004 after a programme of regional training days. The redevelopment project, starting with a comprehensive user needs survey and detailed specification development, will run until March 2015.

How should I configure my web browser to make the most of the new OASIS form?#

Your browser will need to have javascript enabled in order to take full advantage of the error checking mechanisms within the OASIS form. If you do not have javascript enabled a warning will appear on the login page.

When should I use the OASIS form?#

The OASIS form is available for use at any time of the day or night. However, we occasionally have to carry out bug fixing or maintenance work on the form. As far as possible this **maintenance work will occur on Tuesday mornings before 10.00am**. The OASIS form will normally be available for use during this period but stability and reliability can not be assured.

What happens to an OASIS record once it has been signed off?#

The information that is entered into OASIS can be downloaded by the relevant contractor, HER and NMR and imported into their own database. In the case of the NMR the information will form a new Excavation Index record. This Excavation Index record will eventually be submitted back to the Archaeology Data Service at which point it will become fully accessible on line through ArchSearch and will link through to a digital version of the grey literature report where this has been supplied.

If there is a digital copy of the grey literature report attached to the OASIS record and the relevant contractor has signed a licence agreement with the Archaeology Data Service giving permission for dissemination of their reports, the grey literature report will be made available via the ADS Library of Unpublished Fieldwork Reports. This will happen approximately 1 month after the OASIS record is signed off by the NMR unless a report release delay has been specified by the contractor. The detailed metadata entered through the OASIS form will sit alongside this report within the library of unpublished fieldwork reports, allowing advanced search and retrieval of these reports.

How can I keep up with developments and enhancements to the OASIS form?#

We have two OASIS mailing lists that you are welcome to join.

OASIS-ANNOUNCE: We automatically register all OASIS users to this mailing list (using the main registered e-mail address for your organisation - this is the address you can see when you click on the 'change your details' link on the OASIS form). The purpose of this mailing list is as a means by which the ADS, Historic England and the Royal Commissions of Scotland and Wales can keep you informed about any major developments in OASIS and also to inform you of any scheduled downtime. It is not a discussion list. **OASIS-USERS:** When you register for OASIS you can choose whether or not you want to be added to this mailing list. It is not compulsory but is recommended. It is intended for general discussion about OASIS but is usually fairly low in traffic. Where users simply want help or advice on using the OASIS form it is best to e-mail the ADS, Historic England or the RCAHMS/W directly.

If you would like to join either or both of these e-mail lists, send an e-mail to LISTSERV@jiscmail.ac.uk with the message body "SUBSCRIBE OASIS-USERS" or "SUBSCRIBE OASIS-ANNOUNCE" followed by your forename and your surname. For example "SUBSCRIBE OASIS-USERS Jenny Mitcham". Your message should not contain any other text (delete your e-mail signature if you have one!).

There is also the [OASIS blog](#) which is regularly updated

What do I do if I discover a duplicate record in OASIS?#

Duplicate records are sometimes accidentally created within OASIS. Where you discover what you think is a duplicate record, please contact the ADS with details of the two records. We will then be able to remove one of them from the system. Please do try and tell us about duplicates before the records are validated or signed off. We are reluctant to delete records which have already worked their way through the system.

How do I use a spell checker within OASIS?#

You may find it helpful to spell check text that you enter into the OASIS form. It is particularly easy for typos and misspellings to creep into the 'Short description of the project' field of the OASIS form and hard to correct these once the OASIS record has been signed off and the data is being replicated in other systems and interfaces.

Some web browsers such as recent versions of Mozilla Firefox and Google Chrome have a built-in spell checker. To enable Firefox's spell-check option, click Tools, Options, Advanced and select "Check my spelling as I type" under Browsing (if this isn't working, try downloading a dictionary file. For Internet Explorer users, a free extension called ieSpell is available.

The Google Toolbar is also worth mentioning. It is available for Internet Explorer and Mozilla Firefox, and spell checking is just one of its many features. Once installed, the toolbar will appear on your web browser and allows you to click a button to spell check the fields of your form before you submit.

How can I create hyperlinks to reports once they are in the ADS Grey Literature Library?#

Once digital reports attached to OASIS records are transferred to the ADS Library of Unpublished Fieldwork Reports, you may want to create links to them from your website or HER. This can be achieved in a number of ways.

The most reliable way of creating a link would be to use the Digital Object Identifier (doi) which has been allocated to each report. A doi is a persistent identifier which you can use to consistently and accurately reference digital objects and/or content. The good thing about these identifiers is that they will never change, so even if the url of a report changes, the doi will still resolve to the right place.

Each report in the Grey Literature Library should have unique DOI in the sidebar under 'Resource identifiers'. This DOI will look a little like this 'doi:10.5284/1008885' (though the number at the end of this string will vary for each report). In order to turn this doi into a link, you simply need to prefix it with 'http://dx.doi.org/' as shown below:

<http://dx.doi.org/10.5284/1008885>

However, for many of you, your preferred option for linking to grey literature reports may be to use the OASIS ID. If you already store the OASIS ID in your databases the creation of links would be relatively straightforward. Simply append the full OASIS ID of the report you wish to link to to the end of the following url: http://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archives/view/greylit/query.cfm?assoc_id=

for example:

http://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archives/view/greylit/query.cfm?assoc_id=suffolkc1-116445

Not all OASIS records will have a grey literature report in the library. This may be because a report wasn't uploaded, or because we do not have permission to make the report available. For those records that don't have a corresponding report in the library, the above link will just resolve to a 'No records found' page.

Questions from contractors#

I thought I had created an OASIS record and made a note of the OASIS ID but now I cannot find it#

When you login to OASIS it will automatically show you a list of all of your projects which are not yet complete. If you can not see one of your records it might be that it is now 'Signed off and Complete', in which case you will only see it if you click on the 'All records' or 'Completed records' link at the top of the list of projects table.

If you still can not see your record, it may be that you didn't finish saving it to the database. When creating a new record, clicking 'Store details' on each section of the form does not save the record to the OASIS servers, it temporarily stores the details you have entered in its memory. This information is only saved in the database when you enter your name and e-mail address at the bottom of the main form and click the 'Save record' button at the bottom of the page.

You may save your record in this way as many times as you like when using the OASIS form to ensure that you do not lose the data you have entered.

Why am I having problems uploading my grey literature report?#

You may experience problems attaching grey literature to an OASIS record if the file is open. Make sure your grey literature report is not currently in use before you upload it into OASIS. If you are getting a time out error, it may be because the file is too big (see next question).

My grey literature report is too big - what should I do?#

Grey literature reports are transferred to the OASIS server via FTP. There is currently no limit on the size of file that will upload, but if your report is very large and your internet connection slow, you may find that the time taken to upload the file renders the operation impractical. The report upload times out after 3 minutes which is sufficient for files around 25MB for most bandwidths. If the file size is larger than this, or if your connection is around 1.5Mbps or slower, then the file may be too big to upload in the time allowed and it might be better to try and reduce the file size.

Large file sizes can be created when very high resolution images are included within a report. You may find you can reduce the resolution of any large images included within the report without adversely affecting the user experience. This may significantly reduce the size of your files. Please try doing this before you try to upload. Remember that if you are struggling to upload a file, it is likely that others may struggle to download it from the form or the grey literature library at a later date.

If all else fails it may be helpful to know that the OASIS form allows the upload of multiple files. If your grey literature report is very large, you may find you need to split it down into smaller chunks before upload.

Uploading a digital report within OASIS is not compulsory. If neither of the above options is feasible, a button is provided on the OASIS form for those who wish to send a copy of their report to the HER

by other means. If you are not able to attach a digital copy, simply click on this button and put a hard copy into the post to the HER.

What format should I upload my grey literature report as?#

Since April 2006 the OASIS form enabled contractors to upload their grey literature report as multiple files. This decision was made after requests from a number of contractors who either produced files that were too big to upload in one chunk, or who were not able to combine all the elements of their grey literature report into a single file for upload. **Please be aware though that we prefer the report to consist of a single file where possible.** Grey literature reports that consist of single files are easier for us to deal with and are therefore likely to be prioritised when we carry out transfers to the grey literature library and the ADS archive.

A survey of contractors using OASIS was carried out in February 2006 to assess which types of files commonly make up a final grey literature report. The list of file types that are accepted for upload is based on the results of this survey. If you have other files that make up your report that aren't currently accepted through the OASIS form please let us know.

Files currently accepted for report upload include standard word processing/document formats such as Microsoft Word documents (doc), Portable document format (including the archival pdf format 'pdf/a') (pdf), rich text format (rtf) and Open Document Text (odt). Additional files may include graphics and image formats such as JPEG images (jpg), TIFF images (tif), CorelDraw format (cdr), Adobe Illustrator (ai), AutoCAD drawings (dwg) and Open Document Graphics (odg); or spreadsheet data from Microsoft Excel (xls), Lotus 1-2-3 (wk*) and Open Document Spreadsheet (ods).

Users should also be aware that standard PDF files, while ideal as a means of disseminating formatted text, are not easily converted to a stable archival format and we can only do so on a 'best efforts' basis.

An archival format of the PDF standard is now available. This is called 'PDF/Archive' or PDF/A. PDF/A files are more suitable for long-term preservation than normal PDF files so if you wish to use PDF to upload your grey literature, we would prefer that you try to create them as PDF/A instead. We can then be sure that your reports will be accessible for the long term.

The PDF/A format is supported by many different software packages, making it a format that is relatively easy to create and work with. You may already have software that will allow you to create PDF/A files, but if you do not, there is software freely available to download that should help (for example at <http://www.freepdfcreator.org/>).

If you wish to continue to create standard PDF files, there are a few guidelines that should be followed in order to make these files as easy to preserve as possible:

PDF files should be created / saved as PDF version 1.4 (Adobe Acrobat 5 compatibility). The following settings should be used: Embed and subset all fonts Embed all colour information Embed all images Do not link to/reference external files Use standards-based metadata where appropriate Add PDF tags to the document to provide structure Do not include: Audio and video content (or other multimedia) PDF transparency Encryption or security measures e.g passwords or printing/opening/editing restrictions LZW compression Javascript Executable file launches

Please note: The ADS are unable to carry out preservation work and migrations on PDF files that have been 'secured', so will be unable to include these in the grey literature library and archive.

Why do my report filenames keep changing?#

All filenames will be changed as files are uploaded into the OASIS form. Each file will be renamed with a character string that consists of the OASIS ID for the record plus a numeric suffix. This is so

that your report files are easily associated with the OASIS record they relate to. If you are uploading multiple files we recommend you do not make reference to other files within your upload by their original filename. Where your files should appear in a certain order please upload them in this order so that this order is reflected in the new filenames that are created by the OASIS form.

My record status says 'Waiting for Contractor to send report' but I have already uploaded my report. What do I do?#

Occasionally OASIS records end up in limbo with the status 'Waiting for Contractor to send report' even though a report has been attached to the record. This can be frustrating because it is stopping the information and the report itself from making its way through the system. There may be a perfectly valid reason for this situation, for example you may be waiting for some last minute illustrations or appendices to upload to accompany your grey literature report. On the other hand it may just be that you have finished uploading files but didn't click the check box to say this was the case. If the later is true, you need to follow the steps below:

Go to the summary page for the OASIS record in question Click the 'Grey Literature' button Check the file/s that are already uploaded to ensure that they are complete and no more file need to be attached If all is well, click the checkbox that says 'If this section is complete, please tick this box' Then click the 'Upload file' button (even though no file is being uploaded) On the next screen you need to select a release date delay for the report. Select an option and click 'Submit' When you next look at your record the status should have changed

Once you have carried out these steps, these records should then become available to the HER for validation and then move through the system and into the on-line grey literature library where appropriate.

What happens to my digital grey literature report once the OASIS record is signed off?#

Grey literature reports that are attached to an OASIS record will be moved into the Library of Unpublished Fieldwork Reports on the Archaeology Data Service website. This will happen after your record is signed off by both the HER and Historic England (subject to completion of an ADS licence agreement and any delays specified for the report release). Within this digital library, data created through the OASIS form will be used to aid search and retrieval of individual reports.

In order to mount the report on the ADS website you will have to sign a standard licence agreement. An e-licence will be sent to you when you first start to upload grey literature reports into OASIS. If you did not agree to sign the ADS deposit licence when originally contacted but now wish to do so, please (contact us).

Once grey literature reports have been uploaded to the Library of Unpublished Fieldwork Reports, they will no longer be available to download direct from OASIS. Users of the OASIS form will still be able to access these files quickly and easily through a link to the Library which has been provided on the form in place of the old links to the files.

Archiving of the text of the grey literature reports will be carried out by the ADS to ensure their preservation into the future. It should be noted that where image files or data sheets from the report are uploaded into OASIS as separate files, the preservation of all elements of the grey literature can not be assured. Priority will be given to those reports that have been made available as single files.

Can I host my grey literature report on my own web site instead of uploading it to OASIS?#

If you want your grey literature report to appear in the Library of Unpublished Fieldwork Reports but would rather host the actual file on your own web site then that is not a problem. Instead of uploading a file into the OASIS form for a particular project simply click the 'sent by other means' option in the

grey literature section of the form. To ensure we can link to your report you will need to enter the correct web address into the 'url' field of the bibliography section for your unpublished report. When your OASIS record has been signed off by the HER and Historic England the details of your report will be copied into the Library of Unpublished Fieldwork Reports and we will use the url you have entered to link to the report that is held externally.

There are two points to remember if you decide to go down this route:

The url you enter into the OASIS form for your report must be a stable or permanent url and point to specific report **NOT** simply point to your general website. You need to ensure that the files remain in the same place on your web server otherwise we will end up with broken links to your reports in the grey literature library Please note that the ADS will not carry out any preservation or archiving work on files that are held externally. We would strongly recommend that you have a strategy in place to ensure that your files will continue to be available in the long term

What happens to my digital boundary file once the OASIS record is signed off?#

Since September 2006, the OASIS form has allowed users to attach a file displaying their site boundary. Files should have been created in a Geographic Information System or CAD package and georeferenced to the British National Grid and should have been zipped into a single file prior to upload.

This facility has been provided within OASIS purely as a means to facilitate the flow of data from the contractor to the HER. The Archaeology Data Service will not archive or preserve files that are uploaded in this way. It is assumed that the HER and Historic England will take copies of any files they wish to keep at the point at which they validate and sign off the record as a whole. The Archaeology Data Service reserve the right to delete these files 6 months after the associated record has been signed off by English Heritage.

How do I create a ZIP file?#

- On Windows 7 machines:
 - Start Windows Explorer. Usually, you will find a yellow folder icon on the toolbar on the bottom of your screen. Click on this icon. If you don't see a yellow folder icon, then click on the Start icon at the bottom left of your screen, and then type "Windows Explorer" (don't type the double quotes) into the textbox that says "Search programs and files".
 - Navigate to the folder that contains the files you want to place into your zip file.
 - Point your cursor to a position in the Windows Explorer windows so that the cursor is not pointing to anything
 - Right-click your mouse. Select New... and then "Compressed (zip) file". A new zip icon or file will appear, depending on how you are viewing your folder
 - Select a file by left-clicking your mouse, then drag it into the zip file. Repeat this process for each file that you want to include in the zip file.

- On (older) Windows XP machines:
 - Start Windows Explorer (right-click the Start menu, then choose Explore).
 - Navigate to the folder in which you want to create a .zip file.
 - On the File menu, point to New, and then click Compressed (zipped) Folder. Type a name for the new folder, and then press ENTER.
 - Using Windows Explorer, drag any files you wish to place into the .zip file.

Taken from <http://condor.depaul.edu/slytinen/instructions/zip.html>

- On a Mac
 - Right-click on a file, folder, or files you want to zip
 - Select ?Compress Items?
 - Find the newly created .zip archive in the same directory

My computer crashed - have I lost my OASIS record for good?#

Data entered into the OASIS form is not securely stored on to our servers until you click the 'Save record' button on the bottom of the main form. Storing each section of the form is not sufficient to be able to rescue your data in the event of a crash. To avoid serious data loss should a crash or network problem occur we recommend that you save your record midway through the data entry process.

Are there any copyright problems with including OS maps in our reports?#

Anyone using Ordnance Survey maps in their reports should already hold an OS licence of their own, and the licence details should be clearly displayed in accordance with [Ordnance Survey Style Guidance](#) in all reports. The ADS is hosted by the University of York and as an educational establishment we have been advised that we can disseminate on-line parts of OS maps under certain [criteria](#) regardless of scale without licensing problems.

However, your own licence may already cover you to disseminate maps online. A list of the licences that cover display of map data on the internet can be found here: <https://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/business-and-government/licensing/direct-customers/internet-use.html> and information on publishing maps on the internet here: <https://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/business-and-government/licensing/licences/publishing.html>

As you are not making any financial gain from disseminating your reports via OASIS, you should be covered by the terms of most current OS licence types. If you are at all concerned about the terms of your licence, you may wish to clarify with Ordnance Survey directly.

Information correct as of 6th July 2017.

I want to go back into a record to make some changes but have already marked it as complete - what do I do?#

Contractors should only click the check-boxes to say a record is complete if the record is finished with. However, in some circumstances you may notice errors in your record after the record has been marked as complete. In these circumstances you may want to ask the relevant HER to re-open the record for editing. When you look at the summary page for your record there will be a button you can click which will enable you to inform the HER of the problem with the record and ask them to re-open specific sections for editing. Once the HER re-opens this record, a further e-mail will be generated informing you of this action and giving you the opportunity to go back into the record and make any necessary changes.

It is also possible to request that the grey literature section of the form is re-opened by the HER if you discover that the wrong file has been uploaded to OASIS.

Please note, this facility is only available for records that have not been validated by Historic England or the RCAHMS/W. Once a record has been validated by English Heritage or the RCAHMS/W, the record can not be re-opened.

What happens if I have a project that extends into more than one country?#

Contractors will be able to access English, Scottish and Welsh OASIS forms with their username and password. Projects that cross the border will need 2 separate OASIS records, one in each country. This will ensure all of the relevant validating bodies will get to see the results of your work.

What happens if I have a project that extends over several different counties?#

Some archaeological projects (such as a road scheme or pipeline) may extend over several different counties. It is not always immediately obvious how best to record these within the location section of OASIS. If your pipeline crosses 3 counties then you would want each of the 3 HERs to know about and see the results of your work. The best way to achieve this is to create a single OASIS entry and fill in as much detail as you can. When you get to the location section of the OASIS form you can enter 3 different locations, one for each county (you will just have to select one of the district/parishes that the pipeline goes through - maybe a central one). For each of these locations that you set, you need to select the relevant HER that should be notified about this record.

When you save this record for the first time, it will split itself into 3 separate records (with separate oasis ids that reference each other in the associated identifiers section of the project details form). Each HER will then be notified by e-mail and have their own record to check and validate.

Once you have saved this record, you can then refine each of the 3 resulting records. So for example if a Anglo Saxon cemetery was found in one county and nothing was found in another county, you can edit the monument/finds fields in the project details section of the form to make it relevant to each individual HER. You will then need to upload a copy of the grey literature report on to each record.

I have subcontracted some work to a geophysicist or other specialist. How do I fill in the OASIS form for the project when I don't have all the information to hand?#

If for example you subcontract some work to a geophysicist who is producing a separate grey literature report for the geophysics, you only need to fill in the OASIS form for the work that your organisation has actually carried out. You may not have enough information or knowledge to fill out the detailed geophysics section of the OASIS form. The geophysics specialist should therefore complete a separate OASIS entry for the work they have done. If you would like these 2 OASIS entries to be linked together in the future, you should include the relevant OASIS id in the 'associated reference codes' section of your form.

Which projects should I be entering into the OASIS form?#

The OASIS form is designed to be used to facilitate the flow of current data from the contractor to the HER to Historic England. It is therefore important that the form should only be used to record archaeological projects that are ongoing or have been recently completed. OASIS should not be used as a means to record information about old projects. If you are interested in making copies of backlog grey literature reports available on-line in the Library of Unpublished Fieldwork Reports please contact us for further information.

Do I use OASIS to record events with negative outcomes?#

HERs will record negative outcomes of field work events. HERs will therefore use the information recorded in the OASIS form to populate their HER database. You may wish to check with the relevant HER or DC Officer about their requirements for the submission of a grey literature report or summary of the negative outcome. Contracting units who do not wish the grey literature report of the negative

outcome to be included in the ADS grey literature library can tick the 'no release button within the OASIS form when they upload their grey literature report.

Questions from HERs#

How do I remove a monument type and period from the OASIS form?#

Simply delete the text from the monument type box and within the period drop-down box, reset to the top entry 'Select from list'. Once you have stored the data and saved the record this will remove this data from the form. Follow the same process to remove significant finds data.

I have an OASIS record which is outside the area my HER covers. What do I do?#

You may find occasionally that an OASIS record that appears in your list of projects does not relate to a site or location that is covered by your HER. If you come across a record like this, please do not carry out any validation of the record. If you know which HER the record should have gone to, follow the steps below to move the record to the correct HER:

In the list of projects click on the record you want to move Then click the 'validate project entry' button Click the 'edit and validate entries' button under the Project location section Click the radio button next to the correct HER name Click 'Store details' at the bottom of the form Scroll down to bottom of form and enter your name and e-mail address and then click 'save validated record'

Once this record is saved it will no longer appear in your list of projects and it will be immediately available to the correct HER. If you do not know which HER the record belongs to please contact Historic England and ask them to investigate further.

How can I help contractors select the correct HER for their projects?#

When a contractor enters a record into OASIS they must select a location and a HER for their project. The OASIS form will try and help them to select the correct HER based on the county and district they have selected. Only HER's that have coverage in the selected district and parish will be displayed as options for the contractor to select. However, the OASIS form can only do this if the HER has the correct area specified within the system. You may alter or fine-tune the area that your HER covers at any point. Once you are logged in to OASIS, just select the 'Change your details' option on the top menu bar. Then click the 'change the areas covered by your her' option and you will see a form listing all the counties and districts in England. You may tick the boxes on this form to specify which counties and districts you cover. If your HER covers the whole of a single county then you only need to ensure the county is selected. If it covers specific districts of one or more counties, you can tick boxes for each individual district. Once you have made any necessary changes, click 'Store selected areas' and then 'Save new details'.

How do I enter a record of my own fieldwork into OASIS?#

Some SMR/HERs occasionally carry out their own fieldwork activities. We would encourage you to enter these projects into OASIS. You will not be able to do so using your existing login as this does not give you the necessary privileges to create a new OASIS record. In order to enter new projects you will need to create a new login for yourself or your organisation. You can do this from the login screen of OASIS by clicking on the 'register' link. Once you have filled in all the necessary details, a new 'contractor level' login will be created for you. Please note that we recommend that only one contractor level login is held by each organisation.

How can I stop myself from drowning in OASIS e-mails?#

E-mails are key to the working of OASIS, but this does mean that quite a large number of mails can be generated before a project within OASIS is signed off. This is particularly true if a contractor re-visits the form on several occasions before completing the record. It is acknowledged that although some HER's may wish to keep track of their records as they are created and reach completion, others may only want to know about a record once it is ready to be validated. Although it is not possible to reduce the volume of e-mails sent through the OASIS form, it may be possible to use filtering within your individual e-mail software to filter out any e-mails that you do not want to see. If for example you did not want to learn of new OASIS records in your area you could set up a rule that filters out all messages that contain the text "New OASIS record". If you didn't want to be informed every time a contractor working in your area makes an edit to a record, you would need to filter out e-mails with the text "OASIS record version". Please set up any filters with care - it would not be a good idea to filter out all e-mails generated by OASIS!

Questions from users in university departments#

How do I go about recording my fieldwork within OASIS?#

Users from university departments may wish to consider how they will use the form. It may be that it is appropriate to have a department wide login (i.e. a shared username and password) and a single OASIS account; this would be especially appropriate if departments were going to encourage a number research students to fill in the OASIS forms or have a number of staff undertaking a range of fieldwork in England, Scotland and Wales. If there are only a very small number of staff in the department undertaking fieldwork it may be more appropriate for the individual researcher to register and keep a personal OASIS account. These decisions are important should you wish any associated grey literature reports to be deposited in the ADS Grey Literature Library; a standard ADS deposit licence would need to be signed to cover each OASIS account.

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