



## CAREER DEVELOPMENT

## Preparing for Work in the Billion-Dollar CRM Industry

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From humble and relatively recent beginnings, cultural resources management (CRM) has become a big industry. A recent estimate compiled by Jeffrey Altschul and Tom Patterson indicates that in the United States, CRM already is, or soon will be, operating at the scale of one-billion dollars per year. Roughly 14,000 persons are estimated to be employed as CRM professionals across the nation, and presently about 70% of them are trained as archaeologists. In contrast, there are about 1,500 archaeologists employed in traditional professor/researcher roles, a number that has not grown for the last generation. Although more than 85% of all archaeologists in the US now work in the growing CRM industry, most undergraduate and graduate programs continue to produce graduates for an ever-shrinking number of academic positions.

What is CRM? This term refers to a range of disciplines and specialties that assist in compliance with legal statutes, mandates and regulations affecting historical or cultural properties or resources. CRM encompasses the fields of historic preservation, archaeology, anthropology, history, historic architecture, architectural history and landscape architecture. It is not restricted to the United States, as most nations have laws that protect cultural resources and also abide by international charters and conventions. Interestingly, there are more CRM professionals in Europe than there are in the United States. As CRM continues

Jobs exist at all levels within CRM. A bachelor's degree provides entry into crew or lab technician positions. These jobs are project-specific; they last as long as the project, from a few weeks to many months. Crew positions are a great way to find out if the field is the right place for you, and to see different parts of the world. For the career-minded, however, a graduate degree is a must. When evaluating graduate programs, students should consider the benefits of PhD versus MA degrees and how programs meet their specific career goals, such as through providing internship opportunities. We also encourage our academic colleagues to keep in mind these factors when designing CRM programs.

- Carefully consider PhD versus MA programs. There are many roles for a strong MA in CRM and the pay differential between the two degrees is not very significant, particularly in consideration of the time investment necessary for completing a PhD.
- Find the right program. Few programs at present are tailored to training in CRM, which means that students must take an active role in pursuing departments that meet their needs and that encourage a two-way flow of communication. If a program is laden with inflexible curriculum requirements that don't match your interests, or if key faculty express a traditional view that a PhD is the only acceptable path for an anthropologist to pursue, you may wish to keep searching. Also, teamwork plays a central role in CRM; this means that finding a student cohort that shares your career goals is highly beneficial.

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to expand internationally, there will be increased opportunities on a global scale for individuals and organizations that have the drive and expertise.

CRM has developed in response to laws and regulations that have been modified and refined over time. As such, it involves a somewhat eclectic blend of disciplines and it does not necessarily fit neatly into an academic framework. Teams of different specialists generally work with a client and one or more enforcement agencies. Although there are general rules and guidelines, the CRM consultation process operates in a fluid, negotiated environment. There is a premium on the ability to communicate effectively and to mediate between groups.

- Prioritize internships. Identifying a program that encourages internships can be key to your success. At a minimum, the program should allow internships for credit. A diversity of practical experience is one of the most important things to put on your résumé when you are looking for a job, and a productive internship or two are great ways to get real world experience.
- Find a high-intensity program. If you decide to go for a master's degree, find a program that will really challenge you. If it is a two-year program, it should be a year-round program. Or consider a three-year program and make sure that you get exposed to a great deal of course diversity.

CRM is an exciting field with tremendous opportunities. Long considered a domain of archaeologists, the industry now employs anthropologists of all stripes. Getting a job and being successful in a CRM career requires a good foundation. Students bound for a CRM career must take charge of their educational paths and search for innovative and flexible academic programs. Find a mentor, spend time working together, and make it happen.

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