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James Brink Field School in Pleistocene Archaeology & Palaeontology (Florisbad Quaternary Research Station, South Africa)

The Department of Archaeology and Anthropology at the National Museum, Bloemfontein (South Africa) invites applications for the James Brink Field School in Pleistocene Archaeology and Palaeontology, to be held at the Florisbad Quaternary Research Station (Soutpan, Free State Province) from 22 June to 3 July 2026.

The field school will be jointly directed by Dr Michael Toffolo (Director of Research, Archéosciences Bordeaux, CNRS, France) and Dr Will Archer (Head of Archaeology and Anthropology, Head of Florisbad Quaternary Research Station, National Museum Bloemfontein).

This training programme is designed for graduate students who have been accepted into a postgraduate program, and postgraduate students based at sub-Saharan African institutions who are working in Pleistocene archaeology, palaeontology, and related disciplines. The field school will emphasise inclusive, active, and research-led learning, with students working alongside senior scientists to develop practical excavation skills, critical field thinking and problem-solving, and confidence in field-based archaeological research.

Participants will gain hands-on experience excavating the Middle Stone Age occupation horizon at Florisbad, a key hominin site with dense archaeology dating to Marine Isotope Stage 5e. In addition to excavation and artefact and fossil recording, the programme includes basic training in total station-based digital recording, infrared spectroscopy, magnetic susceptibility, phytolith analysis, along with daily lectures and practicals led by specialists in Stone Age technologies, geoarchaeology, geochronology, and palaeoecology.

The field school is offered to six fully funded participants. The awards cover tuition, accommodation, meals, and travel to Florisbad, including flights to Bloemfontein (within South Africa and internationally). Funding is provided by the European Research Council (Starting Grant PEOPLE – “PalaeoEcology and OPEn-LandscapE adaptations of Pleistocene humans in South Africa”, Grant No. 101039711), the CNRS, and the National Museum, Bloemfontein.

Application deadline: 6 February 2026

Applicants should submit to will.archer@nasmus.co.za and michael.toffolo@u-bordeaux-montaigne.fr:

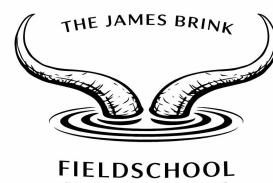
- A one-page motivation letter
- A one-page CV
- Proof of student status
- The names and email addresses of two referees

Successful applicants will also be required to provide proof of health insurance and vaccination records (including yellow fever where applicable, and tetanus).

For further information, please contact:

Dr. Will Archer – will.archer@nasmus.co.za

Dr. Michael Toffolo – michael.toffolo@u-bordeaux-montaigne.fr



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