

Applicants' Guide

For accredited member grades

Practitioner, Associate and Member

PCIfA, ACIfA, MCIfA

Revised November 2014

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If you have any queries regarding this guide or the application process please contact the Cifa office and speak to our membership team

Phone: 0118 378 6446

Email: membership@archaeologists.net

All the relevant documentation can be found online at

www.archaeologists.net/join/individual

1 What is the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists?

The Chartered Institute for Archaeologists is the leading professional body for archaeologists working in the UK and overseas. IfA was created in 1983 (as the Institute for Field Archaeologists) and achieved a Royal Charter in 2014, at which time it had over 3200 individual members. The Institute administers a Register of Organisations, which are run by accredited members and adhere to the same professional standards as individual members. In 2014 there were nearly 80 registered organisations with CfA.

1.1 What does CfA do?

CfA champions professionalism in archaeology, promoting high professional standards and strong ethics in archaeological practice, to maximise the benefits that archaeologists bring to society. Members of CfA are professionally accredited and skilled in the study and care of the historic environment. They are committed to offering high quality service to clients and to the public. CfA's *Code of conduct* provides a framework which underpins the professional lives of archaeologists. If an accredited archaeologist does not meet the standards set, CfA can take action against them.

To achieve this we

- develop standards and guidance for professional practice and encourages their use
- represents the interests of the historic environment and disseminates authoritative views on professional matters
- promotes the benefits and need for Continuing Professional Development for professional archaeologists
- facilitate the exchange of information and ideas about professional practice
- provide a wide range of services for members
- regulates the profession
- promotes a unique quality assurance 'kite mark' through our Registered Organisations (RO) scheme

1.2 Why is being an accredited member of CfA important?

Members of CfA are professionally accredited and skilled in the study and care of the historic environment. Membership shows that you subscribe to a high standard of conduct, and that your competence has been validated by detailed peer scrutiny. It also offers you the opportunity to help shape the profession, financially through your annual subscription fee and more directly by becoming involved with CfA's committees, Board of Directors, Advisory Council and Area and Special Interest Groups.

By joining your fellow professionals you increase the membership, strengthen the profession and so ensure that our voice is more representative and more clearly heard.

As an accredited member you have the right to use your respective post-nominals (PCfA, ACfA or MCfA) in recognition of your accreditation. In addition, accredited members have the opportunity to be listed in the annual *CfA Yearbook and directory*, a publication circulated to all members and over 2000 potential clients, heritage bodies and other relevant organisations.

Please see www.archaeologists.net/membershipservs for the most up to date information.

Additional membership benefits include:

- a membership card and certificate
- the opportunity to be at the heart of developing your profession by putting yourself forward for election to ClfA Board of Directors or Advisory Council, or by volunteering on one of our committees
- free monthly eBulletin, providing updates on your profession, the ClfA and training opportunities
- free weekly Jobs Information Service and Training (JIST) bulletin by e-mail
- free publications
- *The Archaeologist* magazine (four times a year)
- *Yearbook and directory of members* (annually)
- ClfA Professional Practice Papers
- ClfA Standards and guidance
- Discounted rate of £24 for the peer reviewed journal *The Historic Environment, Policy and Practice*
- free fortnightly e-newsletter, *Heritage Update*
- discounted entry to the annual ClfA conference, the premier archaeological conference in the UK, and events run by the Special Interest Groups
- free membership to any (or all) of our Area and Special Interest Groups providing access to specialist professional networks
- discounts on a range of services and products, including insurance, legal advice, arbitration, health insurance, aerial photography, and a 15% discount at Cotswold Outdoor
- use of the Society of Antiquaries of London library

2 Joining ClfA

2.1 Who can join?

To join ClfA as an accredited member, you need to be involved in the study and care of the historic environment, support ClfA's aims and agree to abide by ClfA's rules. The *Code of conduct*, other regulations and standards and guidance are binding on all accredited members, and emphasise the duty to adhere to the professional and ethical standards.

Our members represent the full diversity of the discipline, from field archaeologists to object conservators, University lecturers to heritage managers and including those specialising in public engagement. Our membership also includes people who regularly volunteer in archaeology or people whose work is undertaken on a voluntary basis. You do not to be based in the UK or have had training within the UK to join, but you do need to be able to demonstrate your knowledge and experience to our Validation committee.

This *Applicants Guide* will help you through your application and address some of the questions you may have. If you find anything unclear or have a question we have not addressed in this guide, please get in touch with a member of our team. There is a Q&A section at the end of this document.

Students and those who do not yet meet the criteria may join as non-accredited members at www.archaeologists.net/join/individual/onlineapp.

2.2 Upgrading your current membership status

If you are already a member of IfA you can apply to upgrade to a higher level. The process is very similar to an accredited application as outlined in Section 3 below. You will need to include information to demonstrate competence meeting the criteria of the grade you are now applying for including a statement of competence, portfolio of work and two referees.

If you are already an accredited grade member you must also include an up to date CPD log and PDP from at least the last two years. (It is a requirement of accredited membership to undertake at least 50 hours of CPD over two years.) Other information sent with your original application (for example qualification certificates) need not be resubmitted.

2.3 Rejoining ClfA

Individuals who have previously been accredited members but whose membership has lapsed can re-apply by completing a re-joiner application form. You will also need to supply an up to date CV, CPD log and PDP (see Section 3.6), along with any new qualification certificates and a list of publications or other work (especially for ACIfA and MClfA). There is no application fee to rejoin.

Provided that you were validated by IfA after 1986 and that the length of time since your membership lapsed does not require more detailed scrutiny, you can automatically be reinstated at the grade you left at.

Those who originally joined before 1986, or whose membership requires further validation, will need to apply as if they were a new applicant.

2.4 Qualification in Archaeological Practice (NVQ)

The NVQ in Archaeological Practice demonstrates on-the-job learning and competence following the National Occupational Standards (NOS, See Section 3.2). Holding this qualification acts as a 'fast-track' to our accredited membership grades. Equivalent NVQ levels to grades are

NVQ level 3 = PCIfA NVQ level 4 = ACIfA NVQ level 5 = MCIfA

Applicants for CfA membership who hold this qualification must submit the normal application form, include two referees and a copy of their certificate. You will not need to submit a portfolio of work (as described in Section 3.4 below) as your technical competence has already been assessed as part of the NVQ process. This assumes that the grade you are applying for is the same as the NVQ equivalent shown above. Applicants who have the qualification at level 3 or 4, but would like to apply for a higher grade of CfA membership can fast track to PCIfA or ACIfA and then upgrade by submitting a portfolio of work and provide sufficient evidence of their competence at this higher level.

For information on how to enrol for the Qualification, please see www.archaeologists.net/learning/nvq

3 Putting together your application

Being awarded a grade of accredited membership is a significant achievement. Every application is assessed on its own merits and on demonstrated technical and ethical competence. The Validation Committee assesses applications using a scoring system based on the ClfA competence matrix and informed by supporting evidence (eg references, Statement of competence, portfolio of work). This section begins with how you define which grade you are applying for and will guide you through how you compile and submit supporting evidence.

3.1 ClfA grades of accredited membership

There are three accredited membership grades you can apply for Practitioner, Associate and Member. You can determine which grade you should apply for using the ClfA competence matrix (see Section 3.2).

Practitioner (PClFA)

Our Practitioner level of accredited membership is open to those who have undertaken skilled tasks within the historic environment sector under the guidance of others, and have carried out responsible work under a level of supervision. This is usually the grade to apply for if you are upgrading your membership from our non-accredited grades (Student or Affiliate) and are in the early stages of your career in the historic environment.

Associate (AClFA)

This grade of accredited membership is open to those who have carried out, delegated or brought to conclusion pieces of work within the historic environment sector, with some autonomy but without holding ultimate responsibility.

Member (MClFA)

Our highest level of accredited membership, MClFA, is open to those with the greatest level of responsibility and competence within the historic environment sector with sole responsibility to initiate, negotiate, carry out and/or delegate, and bring to conclusion pieces of work. Members are in charge of organising and running large, complex projects from beginning to end, or in highly skilled, specialist work.

3.2 Understanding the competence matrix

We use an adapted competence matrix (below) which has been aligned with the National Occupational Standards in Archaeological Practice (NOS). A searchable database of National Occupational Standards is available on the UK Commission for Education and Skills website at <http://nos.ukces.org.uk/Pages/index.aspx>. To find the ones specifically developed for archaeology practitioners, search for 'archaeology' and then select those developed by 'Creative & Cultural Skills' on the left hand column.

The matrix provides a framework which can help the Validation committee understand your role and experience. We recommend that you try to match your skills and experience with the description of the four different areas and demonstrate this in your statement of competence (see Section 3.3). This makes it very clear to Validation Committee members how you believe your experience fits

within the matrix. We also suggest you highlight within the your statement the evidence you have provided which demonstrates your competency at that level.

Two of our Special Interest Groups (Forensics and Graphics) have developed supporting matrices to specifically assist applicants who work in these areas. Other groups are also developing new supporting matrices and these will be added to our website as soon as they become available.

You will find the specialist competency matrices online at www.archaeologists.net/matrices.

CifA competence matrix

	Practitioner (PCIfA)	Associate (ACIfA)	Member (MCIfA)
Knowledge	Good working knowledge of key aspects relevant to area of historic environment practice and competence used to support the application	High level of working and background knowledge relevant to area of historic environment practice and a broad range of activities within that area	Authoritative knowledge and depth of understanding of sector and a broad range o historic environment practices
Autonomy	Some responsibility for achieving tasks using own judgement and autonomy, whilst working under general supervision. Collaboration with others is expected	Considerable responsibility for own work using own judgement and autonomy, in a wide variety of contexts, but within an established framework. Control or guidance of others may often be required	Substantial autonomy, takes full responsibility for own work. Where applicable, will also have significant personal accountability for others and/or the allocation of re-sources, in a wide variety of contexts
Coping with complexity	Appreciates complex situations within the role held and able to achieve partial resolution alone. Some activities are complex and non-routine*	Copes with complex situations through deliberate analysis and planning. Most activities are complex and non-routine*	Deals with complex situations holistically, demonstrates confident decision-making in a broad range of complex, technical or professional activities
Perception of context	Sees actions as a series of steps and recognises the importance of each role in the team	Sees actions at least partly in terms of longer-term or wider goals	High level of understanding of overall 'picture', sees alternative approaches and how they might be tackled

**We recognise that evaluations, desk-based assessments, watching briefs, conservation plans, environmental assessments, etc, can be complex pieces of work.*

3.3 Statement of competence

Applicants must provide evidence of their competence as laid out in the matrix in Section 3.2. Your statement of competence is one of the most important documents used to assess your eligibility for the level of membership you are applying for, so please take time to write it carefully.

Using the competency matrix above will help you determine how you fulfil the level of knowledge, autonomy, ability to cope with complexity and perception of context for the grade you would like to apply for. You may want to approach it in a similar way to a job application; demonstrating how you meet the person specification in the job description. There is a template to complete at www.archaeologists.net/join/individual.

Please note that CVs are not accepted as substitutes for the statement of competence. Members applying for an upgrade must ensure their statement of competence covers their entire career and experience. The committee do not know you or what you do so you need to be clear about your roles and responsibilities.

A job description can be useful to include if you work in a more specialist area as your role may need clarification.

Areas that you should provide information on include

- education: explain how your academic qualifications demonstrate competence relevant to your application and include any relevant certificates
- employment or voluntary work experience: for each post or major project give the job title, the name of the organisation, dates of commencement and completion, a description of the role and responsibilities held and the competence they have given you (particularly specific skills, training and qualifications).

If you have worked in several short-term projects they need not be individually itemised, but please indicate the total time you spent in that role.

- societies or other professional institutes you are a member of: describe your involvement in their activities and how this contributes to your technical competence and the development of your skills

CIfA welcomes applications from archaeologists anywhere in the world. If your experience has been gained outside the UK it would be very helpful, especially at ACIfA and MCIfA level, if you can include some background information on how the profession operates in that country and how your role fits within the profession.

3.4 Portfolio of work

Applicants are required to submit a portfolio of work which supports their application and demonstrates their areas of competence. ACIfA and MCIfA applicants are expected to provide at least three examples of work and PCIfA grade applicants are encouraged to do so where possible.

Your portfolio can include any type of work which you have produced or which you have contributed to the production of. This might be written work (such as published material and grey literature reports), but can also comprise graphics, survey data, project designs - essentially any form of work which you contributed to (see the list below for some examples).

Examples of work should be selected carefully in order to demonstrate the most significant activities or complex work that you are involved with and what sort of job you do. This will also help to avoid your application being deferred for more evidence.

You should provide a list of work included in your portfolio at the end of your statement of competence. Where a piece of work is collaborative or jointly authored, or where authors are not listed on the work itself, please indicate which part(s) you were responsible for.

If you are finding it difficult to decide on the best way to demonstrate your knowledge and skills, please get in touch with us and we can help find the best route into membership for you. The list below gives some examples of the different kinds of evidence which can be used - but it is not exhaustive

- project briefs and specifications
- HER audit
- environmental assessments
- condition surveys, management plans
- portfolios of graphics based work
- survey data
- finds/environmental strategies
- post-excavation assessments
- finds reports
- service plans
- project design and/ or funding application
- outlines of archaeological or other relevant courses which you have taught
- fieldwork reports (geophysics, landscape survey, building/survey recording, excavation, evaluation, characterisation)
- PhD thesis (or extracts of), where applicable to your level of competence
- examples of work you have edited
- published works

All confidential material will be treated with the strictest discretion under the Data Protection Act (1998).

The Validation committee appreciates hard copies of your supporting documents, but you may send a digital file if that is easier. Please send digital information on a disc (not returned) with your application or via a file sharing link (eg yousendit, Dropbox or Google docs) to membership@archaeologists.net.

Please do not send irreplaceable documentation in support of your application as this will only be returned by ordinary post once your membership has been confirmed.

3.5 Referees

An important part of becoming an accredited member is your ability to demonstrate both technical and ethical competence. In order to help our Validation committee know more about your professionalism, your understanding of the *Code of conduct* and your determination and ability to comply with it (see 5.5), we ask for two references to support your application.

Your referees

- do not have to be ClfA members, but it helps if they understand our work and grading system
- do need to be familiar with the roles you are using as evidence of your competence
- be able to comment on the quality of your work, and on your professionalism
- you can use referees who work within the same organisation (for example if you have only worked for one organisation and cannot nominate anyone else), although we do encourage you to try and link referees to different areas of your career and/ or professional development
- for MCIfA applications, we would expect to see at least one referee from someone who can provide a perspective on the quality of your work (see below)
- cannot be from those who may have a conflicted interest (eg they may be your spouse or partner, someone for whom you are directly managerially responsible, or who you employ as a sub-contractor)

Missing or late references are the most common reason for the deferral of applications - please contact your referees in advance of your application being submitted, to ensure that they are willing and able to provide you with a reference.

Choosing your referees

Think carefully about the referees you are using, to ensure they can provide the Validation Committee with the additional and supporting information they will need to consider your application. The key is that it is clear to the Validation Committee (and the referee) how the reference supports your application.

To help with this we recommend that

PCIfA grade applicants should

- use a current or recent employer as a principle reference
- a second reference may be provided by someone who is aware of your knowledge and skills eg a recent supervisor, someone who directed a training excavation you attended, or a lecturer at University
- you may also decide to use both your current and a recent employer but if you have only worked in one organisation, it would be fine for you to provide two referees from the same place of work

ACIfA applicants could

- use referees with similar roles as outlined for PCIfA
- someone you have had the opportunity to work more closely eg a local planning archaeologist, a funding body such as HLF, someone in a volunteer capacity, such as a community group or perhaps even an IfA special interest group.

MCIfA applicants are expected to provide

- referees with similar roles as outlined for PCIfA
- a reference from someone who is not an employer. This is to help us understand the quality of your work from the perspective of an external archaeologist or historic environment professional who can comment on both your ethical and technical competence. E.g. a curator, local authority/planning archaeologist, funding provider, English Heritage, Historic Scotland or Cadw etc.

The Validation committee reserves the right to request additional references, if required, to reach a decision about your application.

3.6 CPD log and PDP

All accredited upgrading applicants need to submit their Continuing Professional Development (CPD) log and Personal Development Plan (PDP) from at least the last two years with their application. New applicants and non-accredited upgrading applicants are asked to submit a CPD log and PDP where possible.

CPD is the process by which individuals can develop their skills throughout their working lives. Most professional institutions operate a CPD scheme. Accredited members of CfA must undertake at least 50 hours of CPD over a two-year period and is based on a CPD log and a PDP; templates can be found at www.archaeologists.net/development/cpd.

Accredited members not only demonstrate their technical and ethical competence as practitioners on joining CfA, but also sign up to undertaking 50 hours of CPD over two years. We take CPD seriously at CfA and, like many other professional bodies, expect our accredited members to continue to learn as they progress in their careers. By making a commitment to undertaking CPD, you are demonstrating to your peers, colleagues and the others you work alongside, that you are a professional who takes your work seriously.

To find out more about our mandatory CPD scheme and how you can meet these requirements, you can go to our website at www.archaeologists.net/development/cpd.

4 Once you have completed your application

4.1 Application checklist

When you are happy with your application, make sure you have a through look over all the difference aspects of it and check you have included the following

- ✓ application form (with two appropriate referees)
- ✓ application fee (new applicants only)
- ✓ statement of competence (using template)
- ✓ bibliography of grey literature or publications (where relevant)
- ✓ portfolio of work (at least three examples at AlfA and MifA)
- ✓ CPD log and PDP (compulsory for upgrades)
- ✓ certificates (relevant to application)

The provision of false information in relation to an application may lead to rejection, rescission of membership and/or disciplinary action.

4.2 Submitting your application

Our Validation committee meetings take place every eight weeks, so it is worth looking at the dates of the meetings and the cycle of application deadlines (which fall two weeks in advance of the meeting date). You can find the meeting dates online at www.archaeologists.net/join/individual.

You will receive a letter from ClfA to confirm your application has been processed and requesting any additional information required. If you have not heard from us within one week of the application deadline, please call the office to check as applications can go missing.

4.3 Administration fees

Unless applying as an upgrade or re-joiner, an administration fee is required to process an application. This can be paid by yourself or your employer by cheque, invoice or Paypal request.

Payment of membership subscription fees is not required until your application has been accepted.

5 Validation and assessment

Once an application is complete and references received, those for accredited grades will be assessed by the Validation committee at meetings that take place every eight weeks (see website for dates).

CifA can make a number of different decisions about an application

- to grant membership at the level applied for
- to grant membership pending an additional reference
- to offer a class of membership other than that applied for
- to defer (normally for further references, information, or to allow a relevant specialist to assess the application)
- to refuse admission

CifA reserves the right to make its own enquiries and take up other references and may choose to invite an applicant to interview, although this is rare.

Once your application has been considered you should receive a letter within two weeks; this will confirm if your application has been accepted, rejected, deferred, if the committee requires further information or offered a different grade to that applied for.

If your application has been delayed due to not receiving two references or full information you will be informed within two weeks of the meeting date. Due to the volume of applications, we may not be able to inform you that any references are missing until after the committee meeting, therefore please ensure they can provide these within three weeks of the application deadline, otherwise your application may be delayed.

6 Next steps

6.1 Declaration

On being granted your membership you must undertake to abide by the *Code of conduct*, and other regulations and standards and guidance (www.archaeologists.net/codes/ifa). This is done by signing our Declaration, with a witness. Breaches of the Code may result in disciplinary action.

Whatever their level of responsibility all our members are expected to work to a standard appropriate to their role and not to take on work beyond their present competence without appropriate support.

We must therefore feel confident that you are capable of understanding and abiding by our regulations. Your referee(s) will be asked to comment on this.

6.2 Appealing against a decision

An applicant may appeal against a decision by writing to ClfA's registered office within 30 days of receipt of the decision. Please address appeals to the Standards Compliance Manager. You may not submit additional evidence that the Validation committee did not see, but you are allowed to make any comments regarding the decision. This will be considered by the Membership Appeals committee shortly after appeal.

6.3 Payment of fees

You are not asked to pay your membership subscription fee until your application has been fully processed and the outcome finalised.

Subscription bands are currently based on grade of membership. This structure allows accredited members (PCIfA, ACIfA and MCIfA) on lower incomes to apply for a reduced subscription rate and to ensure a fair subscription for those who earn less than the recommended minimum salary for their grade of membership. You can download current subscription categories and rates from our website at www.archaeologists.net/membership.

If you are an accredited member (PCIfA, ACIfA and MCIfA) and your income is below the recommended minimum salary for your grade of membership you can apply for a concessionary rate.

7 Common questions and answers

We have included below the answers to some of the more common queries our applicants have. If you have any other queries, or would like to know more about the process, please contact the office and we would be happy to help.

Am I eligible to join?

Anyone who is prepared to subscribe to our *Code of conduct* and meets the relevant criteria may apply to become an accredited member meaning that you would have the right to make decisions about the Institute's future. This can include anyone who works with archaeological material, whether as paid employment or in a voluntary capacity.

In addition, you do not have to be a field-based archaeologist or have had substantial site experience. ClfA recognises that archaeologists work in many areas of research and heritage management, and can undertake archaeological work within a very broad definition of the historic environment.

What does membership mean and what are its benefits?

Membership of ClfA gives you formal recognition as someone who subscribes to high standards of professionalism and at accredited grades demonstrates that your technical competence has been validated. Membership benefits are listed in Section 1.2.

What does it cost?

Accredited members pay a yearly subscription fee determined by income. Concessionary rates are available (see www.archaeologists.net/membership).

There is an application fee to process your application for all grades. At present upgrades and re-joiners do not need to pay this.

At what level should I apply to join?

There are grades suitable for those competent at any level or responsibility. See Section 3 for a breakdown of all the different grades (accreditations). Using the ClfA competence matrix in Section 3 you will need to determine which grade you can demonstrate through a statement of competence and portfolio of work. We appreciate that sometimes it is difficult to map your experience against the matrix, and also provide evidence which you feel demonstrates that experience. If you need to discuss your application, please get in touch with us directly.

Students and those who do not yet meet the criteria may join as non-accredited members at www.archaeologists.net/join/individual/onlineapp.

How do I apply?

All applicants need to fill out an application form and nominate two appropriate referees. You also need to send in supporting documentation, including a statement of competence and at least three examples of work at ACIfA and MCIfA, unless you have the NVQ Level 3 (Section 2.4). Section 3 explains the process of application.

What happens if I am unhappy with the decision?

There is an appeals process if you do not agree with the decision. See Section 6.2.

Can I subsequently upgrade my membership status?

Yes. Members can apply for a higher grade by sending in an application the same way as a new applicant. See Section 2.2.

If my membership has lapsed can I rejoin?

Yes. Former members can usually re-join by sending in a re-joiners application form and up to date CV. See Section 2.3.