Application Guide

For professional accreditation

Practitioner, Associate and Member

PCIfA, ACIfA, MCIfA

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@Aerial-Cam Ltd

Contents

If you have any queries please contact the CIfA office and speak to the membership team.

Address: CIfA, Power Steele Building, Wessex Hall, Whiteknights Road, Earley, Reading, RG6 6DE

Phone: 0118 966 2841

Email: membership@archaeologists.net

All the relevant information and documentation can be found online.

1   Joining CIfA

1.1   Who can join?

To join CIfA as an accredited member, you need to be involved in the study and care of the historic environment, support CIfA's aims and agree to abide by CIfA'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; it includes those in paid employment and those who work on a voluntary basis. Your experience does not have to be in the UK to join, but you need to be able to **demonstrate** your knowledge and experience to the Validation committee.

This *Application Guide* will help you through your application. If you have any questions or need any help, please get in touch with us and we will be happy to help. Common questions and answers.

Students and those who do not yet meet the criteria may join as non-accredited members online.

1.2   How is my application assessed?

Being awarded a grade of professional accreditation is a significant achievement. Every application is assessed on its own merits and on **demonstrated** technical competence and ethical suitability.

The Validation Committee assesses applications using a scoring system based on the CIfA competence matrix and informed by the supporting evidence you provide (e.g. references, Statement of competence, examples of work).

The Validation committee consists of a group of at least five peers, who are accredited members of the Institute and consider all accredited applications to ensure consistency throughout. The process is designed to be transparent, if you provide enough evidence to **demonstrate** the grade you will be successful.

@Matthew Parker

1.3 CIfA grades of accredited membership

There are three accredited grades – Practitioner, Associate and Member. You can determine which grade you should apply for using the CIfA competence matrix (see Section 2.2) and deciding which grade you can **demonstrate** through your whole application and is most appropriate to your role and responsibilities. The information below is for guidance but if you are still unsure which grade to apply for please contact us.

Practitioner (PCIfA)

Practitioner level of professional accreditation is open to those who have undertaken skilled tasks within the historic environment sector under the guidance of others, have carried out some complex work under a level of supervision, and understands the context of their role. 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. You do not need to have any examples of work yet.

Associate (ACIfA)

Associate level of professional accreditation 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. You will have some complex examples of work and these can be co-authored.

Member (MCIfA)

Member level of professional accreditation is open to those with the highest level of responsibility within the historic environment sector with sole responsibility to initiate, negotiate, carry out and/or delegate, and bring to conclusion pieces of work. Members oversee complex projects from beginning to end, or are highly skilled specialists. You will have various examples of complex work that or project management or advice documents you are the sole author of. (See section 2.3)

2   Putting together your application

This section helps you to put together the required evidence and explains how to apply.
You can now apply online.

2.1 Understanding the competence matrix

The competence matrix, below, helps the Validation committee understand your role and experience. We recommend that you write about how your skills and experience in your current role **demonstrate** the four different areas and use these as headings in your statement of competence (see Section 2.3), with examples of specific projects you have worked on.

We also suggest you highlight within the statement the examples of work you have provided to support your application, which help **demonstrate** your competency where appropriate.

Special cases

Please note if you have a specialism and have moved to another area of work, specialism, taken a career break, or recently started your own business you will need to **demonstrate** the grade applied for across **all** areas to be granted membership at that grade. This may mean that you will need to wait until you have gained further experience to do this.

Specialist matrices

We have developed supporting matrices to specifically assist applicants who work in specialist areas and this can be used alongside the main competence matrix below. You will find the specialist competency matrices online.

CIfA competence matrix

	Knowledge	Autonomy	Coping with complexity	Perception of context
Practitioner (PCIfA)	Good working knowledge of key aspects relevant to area of historic environment practice and competence used to support the application	Some responsibility for achieving tasks using own judgement and autonomy, whilst working under general supervision. Collaboration with others is expected	Appreciates complex situations within the role held and able to achieve partial resolution alone. Some activities are complex and non-routine*	Sees actions as a series of steps and recognises the importance of each role in the team
Associate (ACIfA)	High level of working and background knowledge relevant to area of historic environment practice and a broad range of activities within that area	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	Copes with complex situations through deliberate analysis and planning. Most activities are complex and non-routine*	Sees actions at least partly in terms of longer-term or wider goals
Member (MCIfA)	Authoritative knowledge and depth of understanding of sector and a broad range of historic environment practices	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	Deals with complex situations holistically, demonstrates confident decision-making in a broad range of complex, technical or professional activities	High level of under-standing 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.

2.2 Education and/or Employed or voluntary work (Statement of competence and list of publications)

Applicants must provide evidence of their competence linked to the matrix above to **demonstrate** the grade applied for. The information you provide online or in a statement of competence template you upload is the **most important** document used to assess how you meet the requirements.

Download the template here

CVs can be included but you **MUST** include a statement written online or in the template provided.

Please list your degree qualification, title, University and date of completion and a brief outline of the areas covered. If you work in academia, please provide a more detailed outline. If you do not hold any qualifications you are still eligible to apply.

For each post you have held give the job title, company name, start and end dates, and a brief description of the role and the responsibilities held. This should include your entire career and experience.

For your current and most recent roles over the last 2 years, please give detailed information about your responsibilities using each heading of the competence matrix as a guide. This should cover how you **demonstrate** the four headings - knowledge, autonomy, coping with complexity and perception of context.

Remember the committee members do not know you or the experience you have, so please take time to write it carefully. If you are unsure of how to approach your application, contact us.

You can write this using the Statement template and upload this to the online application form or you can write directly into the online form, but you **cannot save** and return to it. If you are upgrading you can save but you must be logged in. Ensure you start with your **most recent** role and write in the first person e.g. I undertake.../ I carry out….

You can approach this in different ways

1) You could **write it like job application**, describing your responsibilities and how these fit into the four areas of the competence matrix.
E.g. when you deal with your work who do you refer to if you have any queries or are you left to handle things on your own a lot?

2) You could **use the four areas of the matrix as headings** and write something for each and see if you have an example of where you did this.
E.g. Knowledge – how do you use your knowledge to carry out your role and give an example of when you did this. Autonomy – who do you refer to and give an example of when you have made your own decisions without needing any assistance. Coping with complexity – think of a complex piece of work and describe why it was particularly complex and how you dealt with it. Perception of context – describe how you see your role fits into the wider team and contributes to the wider area.

3) You could **write about a specific piece of work or project** you have taken the lead on and the four areas can come across within this, as the committee can see your knowledge and understanding, responsibility level, how complex it is and how you see this within your work.

Areas you should provide information on are

− **Education (where relevant):** Please upload a copy of your certificates with the application and provide a brief summary. If you do not hold any qualifications, you can still apply.

− **Employed or voluntary work:** For each post complete the job title, company name, start and end dates, and for your current role over the last 2 years, **how this demonstrates** the four areas of the competence matrix. Include your whole career and give detailed information about your current and most recent roles.
Please upload the statement template or write into the online form directly (cannot save).

− **list of publications/grey literature:** List all relevant publications and/or grey literature from at least the last two years. If you wrote or collaborated on a specific section, please indicate the page numbers.
Please add this to your statement and upload or write into the online form.

− **Additional information:** please include any additional information that may be useful for the Validation committee to take into consideration when assessing your application. E.g. A job description or CV.
Please upload to the online form.

Overseas applicants

If your experience has been gained outside the UK it would be helpful if you can include some background information about how the profession operates in that country and how your role fits within the profession.

CIfA's official language is English; therefore we are not able to translate examples of work for assessment so please include any examples of work written in English.

2.3   Examples of work

Applicants are required to submit examples of work digitally to support their application and help **demonstrate** the areas of the competence matrix. If you have mentioned specific examples in your statement, please include those. They need to show how you interpret the archaeology and should ideally be the best, most complex examples you have co/authored.

- PCIfA applicants do not need to provide any examples of work but we encourage you to do so where possible.

- ACIfA applicants should provide **a minimum** of three examples of work, these can be co-authored, please indicate your contribution where relevant.

- MCIfA applicants should provide **a minimum** of five examples of work; these should be solely authored by you and can include grey literature or draft and pre-publication documents. If you do not undertake written work in your current role, please explain why you have not been able to do this in your Statement.

Your examples might be written work, such as published material and grey literature reports, but can also comprise illustrations, survey data, and project designs - essentially any form of written work you have contributed to.

The list below gives some examples of the different kinds of written evidence which can be used - but it is not exhaustive.

- project briefs and specifications

- HER audits

- environmental assessments

- condition surveys, management plans

- portfolios of graphics-based work

- survey data

- finds/environmental strategies or reports

- post-excavation assessments

- project designs or funding applications

- outlines of archaeological or other relevant courses which you have taught

- fieldwork reports (geophysics, landscape survey, building/survey recording, excavation, evaluation, characterisation)

- examples of edited work

- published works or journals

- presentations you have compiled and delivered, videos of toolbox talks and site meetings that you lead on, where appropriate

- displays created and the research behind it

- emails with advice to clients or members of the public

All material will be treated as confidential and with the strictest discretion under GDPR (May 2018).

You can upload your examples online or if they are larger than 6MB each, please send via a file sharing link (eg Google Docs or We Transfer) to membership@archaeologists.net.
Please **do not** send hard copies and **do not** put all your examples into one large document.

Choosing your referees
An important part of becoming an accredited professional is your ability to **demonstrate** both technical competence and ethical suitability. In order to help the Validation committee know more about your professionalism, your understanding of the *Code of conduct* and your determination and ability to comply with it, we ask for **two references** to support you application, but you can provide a third, where appropriate.

Think carefully about the referees you provide, to ensure they can comment on your work with specific examples to support your application. They are asked to comment on the four areas of the competence matrix which you base your application using a reference template. We advise discussing your application with your employer to ensure they can provide a supportive reference for your application.

Referees:

- **do not** have to be CIfA accredited, although individual members or those working for Registered Organisations are preferable, and it helps if they understand our work and grades of accreditation.

- **do** need to be familiar with your work and the roles you are using as evidence in your statement and be able to comment on the quality of your current work in the historic environment, and on your professionalism.

- are given 2 weeks to return their reference, missing or late references are the most common reason for delaying applications - please contact your referees **in advance** to ensure that they can provide you with a reference and have time to do so.
  You can provide contact details in the online form and in line with CIfA's Data Protection Policy (www.archaeologists.net/codes/cifa).

- can send them in directly or with the application to speed up the process and allows time to request additional referees if needed. References are treated as confidential and it is up to the referee if they wish to share this with the applicant.
  You can upload the forms online.

It is the **applicant's responsibility** to ensure the references are returned in time, however we will chase them and inform you as soon as possible if we haven't received them.

To help you decide who to provide as a referee we suggest:

PCIfA applicants should

- use your current or most recent employer.

- a second referee should be aware of your knowledge and skills e.g. a recent supervisor or someone who directed a training excavation you attended

- you may also decide to use both your current and most recent employer or if you have only worked in one organisation you can provide two referees from the same workplace.

ACIfA applicants should

- use your current or most recent employer.

- a second referee should have had the opportunity to work more closely with you and can comment on your current work. They can be from your current employer if you have only worked in one organisation or a previous employer.

- You may also decide you can use someone external to your employer e.g. a local planning archaeologist, a funding body such as HLF, someone in a volunteer capacity, such as a community group or a CIfA special interest group.

MCIfA applicants should

- use your current employer. If you are in the senior role, you can choose someone who works alongside you and can comment on your work. If you are self-employed this can be a senior colleague from another company you have worked with, but **not** a client.

- a second referee from someone who can comment on your work, who is external to your employer and quality assures your work in an independent capacity, but **not** a client. Eg a curator, local authority/planning archaeologist, funding provider, Historic England, Historic Environment Scotland or Cadw etc.

The Validation committee reserves the right to request additional references, if required, to reach a decision about your application. This is usually in cases where a reference is not current or does not include enough information to assist the committee in making a decision in full.

2.4   CPD log and PDP – Upgrading members only

All professionally 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. Non-accredited upgrading applicants are asked to submit a CPD log and PDP where possible. You can upload this online or write in the boxes.

Find out more about our mandatory CPD scheme, how you can meet these requirements and for templates and examples to use.

2.5   Application fees

An application fee is required to process all applications, just select the type of payment at the end of the online application form. Payment of annual subscription fees is not required until your application has been successful and concessionary rates are available.

3   Submitting your application

3.1   Application checklist

When you are happy with the details you need to provide with your application, **check** you have the following information or documents to upload

- ☐ Education and/or Employed or Voluntary work details to write into the boxes or Statement of competence to upload

- ☐ Bibliography of grey literature or publications (where relevant) or template to upload

- ☐ Examples of work to upload or sharing link to email to membership@archaeologists.net

- ☐ CPD log and PDP (compulsory for upgrades) documents to upload or tick box for online submission

- ☐ Copies of certificates (where relevant) to upload

Once you are in the online form, you will need to add

- ☐ Your personal and contact details (upgrades should populate)

- ☐ Two appropriate referees contact details and your relationship to them e.g. line manager and/or completed references to upload.

- ☐ Documents from above or information typed directly into the online form

- ☐ Pay the application fee online via PayPal or select Invoice to your employer

- ☐ Tick to agree the information you have given is not false and if you have been subject to a disciplinary investigation.

3.2 **What happens next?**

We will email to confirm your application has been received and processed and request any additional information, if required. If you have not heard from us within two weeks of the application deadline, please contact us to check.

Application assessment

Once an application is complete and references received, accredited grades will be assessed by the Validation committee. If you are applying at PCIfA you do not need to wait for each meeting and will be assessed monthly, as soon as we have both references and any additional information.

CIfA's Validation committee reserves the right to make its own enquiries and take up other references and may choose to invite an applicant to interview.

CIfA's Validation committee can make many different decisions about an application

- to grant professional accreditation at the level applied for

- to grant professional accreditation pending an additional reference/information/specialist assessment

- to offer a grade of professional accreditation or non-accreditation other than that applied for (this is because the application has not **demonstrated** the grade applied for)

- to defer (normally for further references, information, or to allow a relevant specialist to assess the examples of work in the application)

- to refuse professional accreditation (this is because the application has not **demonstrated** the grade applied for)

Withdrawn applications

If we have not received additional information requested, appropriate referees or not heard from an applicant within 6 months of applying, we reserve the right to withdraw the application and you will have to reapply and pay the application fee again.

Application decision

We will email you as soon as possible to confirm the committee's decision. If your application has been successful, an email will follow with details of how to complete your membership and pay the subscription fee. Once payment is received, we will send out your Welcome pack with membership card.

If you are offered an alternative grade or refused accreditation the Validation committee will provide some information about how they reached their decision and make recommendations. The applicant can request further detailed feedback from the committee and/or appeal (please see the membership regulations).

4   Useful links

Common questions and answers

Specialist matrices

Pathways guidance for PCIfA applicants

Online application form

We look forward to receiving your application!
CIfA Membership Team
Email: membership@archaeologists.net