**Reference template for professional accreditation (PCIfA, ACIfA, MCIfA)**

**(Revised March 2025)**

Your reference is an essential part of an application for professional accreditation. It provides a valuable insight into the applicant’s competence (knowledge and abilities), which the Validation committee requires to assess their skills, responsibilities and ethical approach fully.

If you are the applicant’s employer and your reference **does not** support their application, we would encourage you to discuss this with the applicant before submitting your reference, as this can impact the outcome of their application.

The reference template is on the third page. Please send it back to us as soon as possible. Late references can cause applications to be deferred, and applicants will have to wait a further two months or more until the next committee meeting.

When writing your reference, please give detailed information about the applicant using **specific examples of work** for each area of the competence matrix below and the [Code of conduct](http://www.archaeologists.net/codes/cifa) for the relevant grade.

If you need any help completing a reference please get in touch at membership@archaeologists.net.

This is a summary of the key areas you need to write about in your reference, for the more detailed competence matrices for each grade please go to our [competence matrices](https://www.archaeologists.net/join/individuals/pathway/matrices) webpage.

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|  | **Knowledge** | **Autonomy** | **Coping with complexity** | **Perception of professional context** |
| **Practitioner (PCIfA)** | Good working knowledge of key aspects relevant to area of historic environment practice, and competence in its application, in accordance with relevant professional standards. | 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.Demonstrates understanding of the ethical requirements of the Code of conduct and able to apply to own work. Upholds the values of the Institute to work in the public interest. |
| **Associate (ACIfA)** | High level of working and background knowledge relevant to area of historic environment practice. Demonstrates competence in a broad range of activities within that area, in accordance with relevant professional standards. | Considerable responsibility for own work using own judgement and autonomy, in a wide variety of contexts, but within an established framework. Where relevant, may take responsibility for the work of others and/or the allocation of resources | Copes with complex situations through deliberate analysis and planning. Most activities are complex and non-routine.Able to recognise and resolve potential conflicts of interest within an established framework | Sees actions at least partly in terms of longer-term or wider goals.Understands the ethical requirements of the Code of conduct and uses them to guide and review own practice and, where applicable, that of others.Upholds and promotes the values of the Institute to work in the public interest. |
| **Member (MCIfA)** | Substantial working and background knowledge relevant to area(s) of historic environment practice. Demonstrates a depth of understanding of sector and competence within a broad range of historic environment practices. Understands, contextualises, and applies professional standards to own work and, where appropriate, that of others. | Substantial autonomy, takes full responsibility for own work. Where applicable, will also have significant personal accountability for others and/or the allocation of resources, 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. Able to anticipate, recognise and resolve potential conflicts of interest. | High level of understanding of overall ‘picture’, sees alternative approaches and how they might be tackledDemonstrates professional judgement and ethical behaviour across a wide variety of complex situations, supporting and encouraging others to do the same. Promotes the values of the Institute to work in the public interest with colleagues, clients, and stakeholders. |

Please note as part of the application process we collect your name and email address from the applicant and will only contact you regarding your reference unless otherwise specified by you. Please see CIfA’s [Data Protection Policy](http://www.archaeologists.net/codes/cifa).

**Reference for CIfA Professional accreditation**

**Name of applicant:**

**Grade applied for (please indicate):** **PCIfA ACIfA MCIfA**

**Name of referee and CIfA accreditation:**

**Referee job title and organisation:**

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| **How long have you known the applicant and in what capacity?** |
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**Technical and ethical competence**

Please refer to CIfA’s competence matrix above (page 1-2) and provide specific work examples that show how the applicant meets the four areas of the criteria.

You may also wish to use the examples from the applicant’s statement of competence.

**NB:** This can be written in prose or bullet points but must cover how they demonstrate the criteria.

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| **Knowledge** |
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| **Autonomy** |
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| **Coping with complexity**  |
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| **Perception of professional context** (Please note this requires information about an applicant’s ethical competence, see matrix above and [Code of conduct](http://www.archaeologists.net/codes/cifa)) |
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Please add any other relevant comments

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**Signed:**………………………………………...………… **Date:**

**CIfA accreditation (where applicable, please indicate) PCIfA ACIfA MCIfA**