

CHARTERED ARCHAEOLOGIST: WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR BUILDINGS ARCHAEOLOGISTS?

For the past year, Cifa has been developing and promoting its proposals to create a new 'Chartered' membership grade. This follows on from the granting of the Institute's Royal Charter and is a positive progression which will capitalise upon many of the potential advantages of the Charter.

Hopefully many BAG members will have been following this development through wider Cifa communications. We are keen to know what people are thinking and feeling about the framework proposals, their continued development, perceived challenges, and personal reflections on the idea of Chartership in their lives and careers.

In this article, I'd like to invite those thoughts from BAG members: How might Chartership apply to your work? It would be great to get everyone talking about Chartership and their specialism, and BAG is a group who I expect will have particularly interesting viewpoints, given the closeness with which buildings archaeologists often work with other chartered professions. The rest of this article covers a little background, and gives some consideration to questions affecting archaeological specialisms.

"The word Chartered objectively means something"

Why Chartership?

In general terms, we think that Chartership for individuals will benefit both individual practitioners and the profession in a range of important ways. Essentially, these boil down to:

- ⇒ Improving recognition and parity of esteem on an individual basis for Chartered archaeologists,
- ⇒ Improving clarity and external understanding of what Cifa accreditation means, and inspiring greater confidence in a person's abilities and professionalism,
- ⇒ Inspiring a higher standing for the profession and improving wider perceptions of the profession as a skilled industry and a good career choice,

On recognition/parity, we know that the badge of Chartership is a real key to this long term sector goal. Research from other Professional Institutes has shown that the word 'Chartered' carries the greatest weight with public and client audiences. It is also an objectively assessed title, meaning that one Chartered professional necessarily has a certain level of equivalence with another, as both have been passed

This is an improvement on the current situation, as for those not familiar with CIfA membership or the archaeology sector, MCIfA may mean very little. The word Chartered objectively means something, whereas ‘Member’ does not necessarily, as there are many professions where you can achieve Member status with relatively little experience or assessment.

For buildings archaeologists, we think that this is likely to be particularly helpful, as when working alongside Chartered Surveyors or Architects doing similar skilled work, it is easy for a client to underestimate or undervalue the role of the archaeologist – both with vastly differing levels of recognition and remuneration.

Of course, Chartership is not a magic bullet for any of these issues, but it is part of the process of development of the Institute and its efforts to improve the perceptions of archaeology, the performance of archaeologists, and the attractiveness of the profession to new entrants – all in the attempt to create a sustainable future.

How will Chartership be different?

Where we are with the development of these proposals is, essentially, at outline stage. Information about where we are heading can be found at the [Chartered Archaeologist pages](#) of the website. We, are, however, currently consulting on the professional competences for the envisioned grade.

Specialist parts of CIfA will want to reflect on these ‘general’ criteria and assess whether they think that they apply to them, are relevant to their work, and what they may miss.

It is also likely that CIfA staff and the SIGs will work to adapt specialist competency matrices to reflect the new landscape for the Chartered Grade, including its inclusion of wider professional competences and assessed ethical competences.

[To view and respond to the current consultation \(open until 24 June\) click here.](#)

How might you fit in?

I would like to believe that there are many reasons why CIfA members (and current non-members) may wish to be Chartered. For example, it represents a way to distinguish oneself within the marketplace of professionals and sends a clearer signal to clients who may utilise other Chartered professions, it will be a clear goal for career entrants to aim for and design professional development around, and its relationship to the Institute’s Royal Charter (which is only given to sectors which exist to deliver services which are in the public interest) will allow archaeologists a clear locus on public value and benefit.

We would love to hear what you think. You can get in touch with me, Kate, or Anna, via the email chartered@archaeologists.net.

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