

Creating, promoting and enforcing professional standards

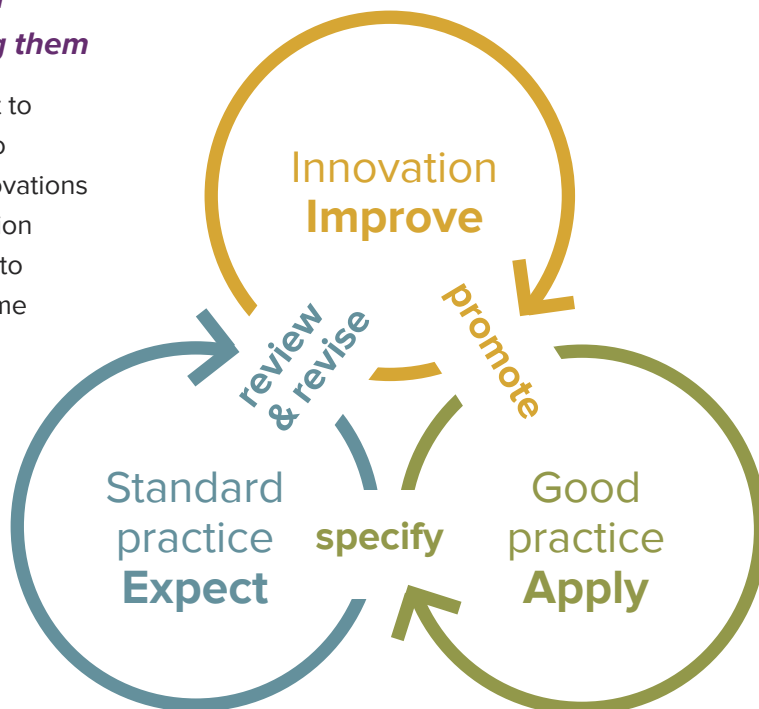
Defining and promoting professional standards of practice is key to the role of the Institute. We provide a mechanism for our profession to be self-regulated by setting standards of practice. Under the *Code of conduct* all accredited professionals have committed to not only comply with these standards themselves but to promote adherence to standards to others.



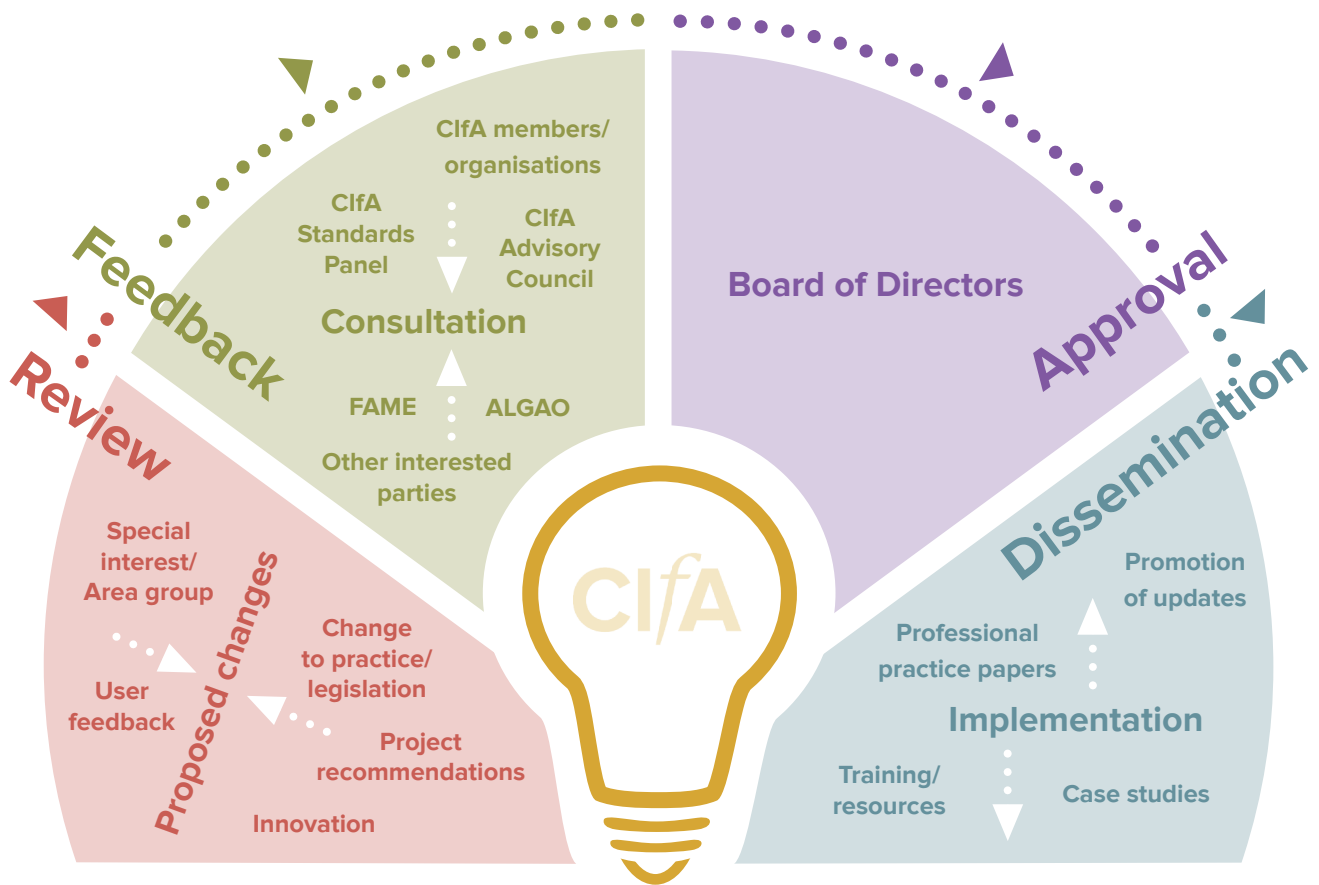
The Standards and guidance documents cover a wide range of professional archaeological practice, and are supported by professional practice papers, online toolkits/e-learning and CPD resources.

Continuous development: professional standards and the process of updating them

Standard and guidance documents are subject to continual development and need to respond to changes and expectations stemming from innovations or changes in policy or legislation. The promotion of new and *improved* methods or approaches to archaeology, once tried and tested, may become increasingly *applied* as good practice across the sector before evolving into what is *expected* as standard practice.



There are four main stages in the process of making changes to the ClfA Standards and guidance; they focus on review, feedback, approval, and dissemination.



Recent updates to the Standards and guidance

In June 2020, changes to the wording of the text of the *Standards* for evaluations and watching briefs and the text of the *guidance sections* for archives and archaeological advice were published. These derived from projects focusing on archaeological archives and archaeological reporting with the objective of improving quality and providing good practice guidance.

A pivotal part of the continual development of Standards and guidance involves project and research collaborations that help to identify changes in working practices. Over the last year, ClfA has collaborated with Historic England, Historic Environment Scotland and sector partners on projects including *Digital archives in archaeology*, *Revisiting 21st Century challenges for archaeology*, *Building capacity through innovation*, *Developing a finds reporting standards toolkit for grey literature*, *Mapping the sector* and *Re-imagining Scottish archaeology: structures, delivery and funding*. Similarly, CPD events, such as the *What's going wrong with desk-based assessments?* series provide key feedback directly from practitioners allowing for a better understanding of how well the Standards and guidance are being utilised and implemented on a day-to-day basis.

Project outcomes include the production of good practice resources to support professional archaeologists. This year an online *Toolkit for selecting archaeological archives* was published and a further two focusing on finds reporting and the management of digital data will follow. The publication of templates aimed at evaluation and watching brief reports are also currently in development (the *Write Here! Write Now!* project) and will provide guidance on what should be included to enable field evaluation findings to be used as a research resource.

Promoting, enforcing and celebrating compliance with standards

Alongside the introduction to Standards and guidance, and specific training in desk-based assessments, we have been running a series of workshops on professional ethics. These workshops look at the relationship between morals, the law, and our ethical obligations set out in the *Code of conduct* and Standards and guidance. Using everyday ethical dilemmas facing archaeologists, the workshops consider how we can use these documents to guide our decisions and to take the best course of action.



The Institute's **Registered Organisation scheme** is a mechanism for us to measure compliance with standards. The scheme highlights the importance of quality assurance and demonstrating that a Registered Organisation can be trusted to work to all relevant ClfA standards. The benefits of working with Registered Organisations is promoted through our external relations programme, client guide, Yearbook, website and other ClfA material.

Over the past year ClfA has carried out 34 inspections of organisations and 33 organisations were registered.

The inspections resulted in 10 conditions of registration and 122 recommendations for improvement. These conditions and recommendations covered a range of issues including

- reports should be subject to robust quality assurance procedures, be compliant with Standards and give due regard to guidance. Areas highlighted included the assessment of significance of heritage assets and the impact of development upon this significance, employing coherent terminology, referencing and interpreting the research context, and reviewing templates and targeting training for key staff.
- producing and implementing a robust action plan for archive deposition
- ensuring adequate welfare for staff and endeavouring to meet or exceed ClfA minimum salary recommendations, to be able to recruit, retain and motivate skilled staff
- training and development are planned, facilitated and implemented
- outreach activities are enshrined in policy and written into Written Schemes of Investigation
- greater advocacy for staff at all levels to gain ClfA accreditation. Via the Annual update form this year, over 50 Registered Organisations have requested further support and resources in achieving this aim.

As well as identifying areas of quality improvement, every inspection highlights the many strengths already demonstrated by Registered Organisations. This year there were several common themes

- high quality of reports and publications
- strong volunteer, student and outreach opportunities
- excellent culture of health and safety
- good programmes of recruitment, retention and reward
- investment and commitment to training, planned and tailored through appraisals and delivered in a variety of ways, producing knowledgeable and competent staff. Additional opportunities to meet personal research and career development objectives
- strong teams with enthusiasm, passion and commitment for their work and profession
- some notable examples of initiatives to promote a good work/life balance and opportunities for autonomy and involvement in deciding strategy and policy
- a high proportion of ClfA accredited members, subsidised ClfA subscriptions, time allowed for applications and active encouragement and support for engagement with ClfA activities

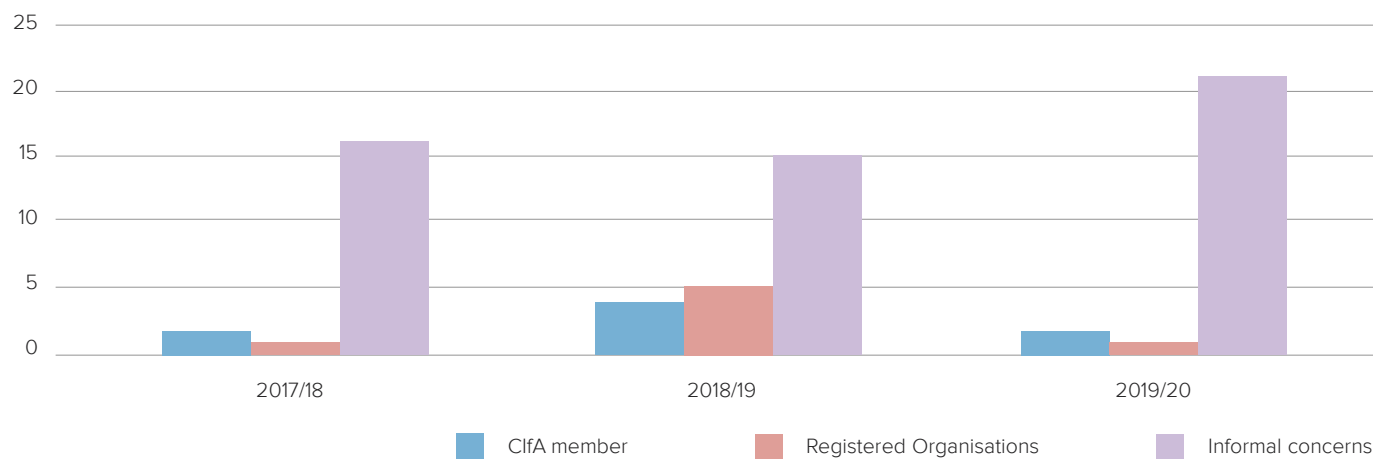
- good change management, keeping staff engaged throughout
- staying focused and working within both the capacity and expertise of the organisation



“ ClfA champions professionalism in archaeology by setting standards, measuring compliance, promoting good practice and sharing knowledge”



All accredited individuals and Registered Organisations agree to abide by the Institute’s *Code of conduct* and can be held to account by their peers through the professional conduct process if their professional behaviour is in question. Over the last twelve months we have dealt with 24 concerns raised against individuals (9) and organisations (14). Three were submitted as formal allegations. One case was dismissed as there was no case to answer, and one case has been withdrawn and one case is still ongoing. Details of completed cases are published in *The Archaeologist* when applicable.



Number of formal and informal allegations received in the last three years



For more information about professional standards in archaeology visit the ClfA website at www.archaeologists.net/codes/cifa

For more information about professional practice advice visit the ClfA website at www.archaeologists.net/members/downloadpapers

For more information about ClfA projects visit the ClfA website at www.archaeologists.net/profession/projects