

How the Registered Organisation scheme works to maintain and improve standards in archaeology

Each year the Registration committee (Organisations) reviews the policies, procedures and standards of the organisations applying for registration. This review also looks at how these policies, procedures and standards are implemented across the organisations. Inspection panels take the time to discuss in detail with Responsible Post-holders how organisations operate and how they comply with the requirements of the Registered Organisations scheme and ClfA standards and guidance. A focus of the inspection is examination of one or more projects from inception to completion, complemented by discussion with the organisation's leaders. The panel will also speak with staff members, both in the office and on site, to discuss their roles within the organisation, their understanding of the project, training opportunities open to them, and how they are made aware of, and have access to, this information.



L – P: Archaeology excavation in London. Credit: Adam Stanford/Aerial Cam

Often because of regular issues raised by inspection panels, or changes to standards and guidance that have an impact on Registered Organisations, the Registrations Committee (Organisations) will introduce new benchmarks indicative of compliance with those standards' requirements. Recent examples relate to:

Archives

For organisations with a backlog list of archives, to have a fully developed strategy and action plan for deposition.

Publication

That documentation is published and disseminated appropriately and referring to Regional Frameworks, research objectives, compliance with ClfA *Standards and guidance*, etc.

For organisations with a backlog list of publications, to have a fully developed strategy and action plan for publication and dissemination.

Outreach

To have a clear provision for outreach and community engagement.

Disaster planning

For curatorial organisations, to have an HER disaster plan in place, in line with the *Standard and guidance for archaeological advice*.



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The moai called Hoa Hakananai'a at the British Museum. Credit: Adam Stanford/Aerial Cam

Policies and procedures

To have all appropriate policies and procedures in place, accessible by all staff, to guarantee good quality management.

Professionalism

To actively encourage ClfA accreditation of staff.

Training

To ensure that staff training is planned, managed and recorded, using the system of appraisal to identify needs and raise aspirations in line with our Professional Practice Paper: *An introduction to providing career entry training for your organisation.*

Pay and conditions and procurement

To meet the requirements of our employment package (www.archaeologists.net/practices/salary) in terms of salary minima, working hours, pension contributions, leave, etc. or to compensate staff accordingly.

To meet the requirements of our policy statement on the *Self-employment and use of self-employed subcontractors.*

Health and safety

To have in place health and safety advice, and for organisations with external advisors, to ensure that there is a clear relationship, with open communication and oversight.

Organisations failing to demonstrate that they meet these requirements, either through the inspection process or because of a complaint made against them, will have recommendations or conditions imposed upon them by the committee to ensure that standards are met. In the 2016–17 registration year the committee issued nine conditions of registration with an imposed time limit, 40 recommendations to undertake a specified improvement within a time limit, and 45 recommendations for the organisation to consider.

All conditions and recommendations are followed up. During this year, the committee discharged 14 conditions of registration, which indicates that through the operation of the scheme at least 14 material changes were made to improve professional practice in archaeology.

Why should you become accredited if you work for a Registered Organisation?

ClfA is not unique as a professional institute accrediting both practices and individuals. We're sometimes asked: why do we need both?

Professional institutes are vehicles by which a discipline's practitioners regulate themselves. They set, promote and measure compliance with standards, providing quality assurance for

Members of ClfA are professionally accredited and skilled in the study and care of the historic environment.

the profession. There need to be standards for person, process and product: the latter two are found in our 13 *Standards and guidance* documents, and our standards for person are the criteria for individual accreditation and for organisational registration.

Traditionally, professional institutes have accredited individuals. Substantially a 19th-century phenomenon, they are geared to envisage long-term, fiduciary relationships between professionals and clients – think of the basis of trust in a family lawyer or doctor. Nowadays there are more professions, and the relationship between professional and client is more likely to be short-term and

transactional – even for law or medicine. In archaeology, as elsewhere, the client's contract is usually with an organisation. IFA believed it should regulate professional responsibilities through a contract between the organisation and the Institute, complementing the contract for services between organisation and client.

Professionalism promotes trust and confidence. Registration helps customers have faith in the organisations they commission – and the organisations' project trustworthiness to clients and the public.

The other common question is: I work for a

Registered Organisation; why should I be accredited? The Registered Organisation is composed of skilled individuals making informed decisions. ClfA, the client and the organisation are more confident that the entity can consistently comply with ClfA standards if its employees have personally demonstrated competence and commitment to professionalism. Compare banking: the CEO of the Banking Standards Board recently wrote that to have high standards an organisation *needs employees who are able and ready to exercise professional judgement*. As ClfA-accredited archaeologists know, that means making valid technical decisions and secure ethical choices.

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SUMO Services building recording via UAV photogrammetric survey. Credit: Adam Stanford/Aerial Cam