



Chartered Archaeologist: a consultation

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1 Introduction

The Institute for Archaeologists was awarded a Royal Charter of Incorporation in the summer of 2014 and the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (ClfA) was launched in December of that year.

Investigating the options for achieving Chartered status is a key objective in the Institute's Strategic Plan (<http://www.archaeologists.net/mission>). Advice from the Privy Council Office, which advises the sovereign on the granting of Royal Charters, was that ClfA should follow a two-stage process, petitioning in the first instance for chartered status for the organisation and then, if successful, seeking to amend the Charter to allow chartered status to be conferred upon its members. Having achieved the first stage, ClfA is now consulting with its members and stakeholders on the development of a route, or routes, to chartered status for individual members.

2 First stage consultation

Possibly slightly unusually, this consultation has started with a blank sheet of paper. We have not even assumed that individual chartered status is something that our members would want, although a show of hands at the launch and inaugural AGM of the Chartered Institute indicated that at least those present were in favour.

As a starting point, we convened a series of workshops across the UK to gather initial feedback from members around a series of key questions

- i Do we want individual chartered status and, if so, what do we want it for?
- ii Who should get chartered status?
- iii How should they get it?
- iv How should it relate to existing grades of ClfA membership?

The workshops were held in Glasgow, York, London, Bristol and Manchester. In general, they were not particularly well attended, attracting on average around 15 delegates at each. The smaller numbers allowed for particularly targeted and useful discussion however and consideration is now being given to how we can widen participation in the consultation. Further discussion sessions have been held with ClfA's Advisory Council and Groups' Forum, with its Wales Group and with ClfA staff.

Each workshop followed a similar format: a presentation from another, quite often very different, Chartered Institute illustrating how chartered status is awarded in their organisation, followed by questions from the floor, and then a wider discussion around the four questions outlined above and a SWOT analysis of routes to chartered status from a number of professions alongside which archaeologists commonly work. A list of the presentations is included in Appendix 1 and these will be made available on the ClfA website shortly.

3 Workshop results

The results of the workshops, including the common aspirations and concerns that were voiced are summarised below, as responses to the key questions.

i Do we want individual chartered status and, if so, what do we want it for?

The response to the first part of the question was generally positive. Many delegates qualified their support, *'it would depend on the process/who can achieve it/how much it will cost'* but there were very few who felt that the option should not be pursued at all. Those that were not convinced were either concerned about the perception of another 'hoop' to jump through (mainly those at an earlier stage in their career) or felt that the existing system of ClfA membership was a sufficient demonstration of competence and expertise (mainly, but not exclusively, those more advanced in their career).

There was also a general consensus around the benefits of chartered status – *what do we want it for?* – which can be summarised as

- Supporting self-regulation and the promotion of professional standards
- Raising the profile of the profession with policy makers and the public
- Raising the profile of the profession (parity of esteem) with the people we work alongside (architects, planners, surveyors and engineers were all mentioned)

ii Who should get chartered status?

This was really a question about the level, in career terms, at which an archaeologist might achieve chartered status but delegates also considered the relevance of chartered status across different branches of the profession. Who should be Chartered and who might want to be?

There appeared to be less consensus around the answers to this question but opinion generally fell into one of two camps which, although there were nuances, might be summarised thus

- a Chartership is viewed as an indication of **seniority** or of being an expert in your field. As such it might be relevant primarily to senior consultants, site directors, project managers, local/national curators and senior specialists
- b Chartership is viewed as an indication of **professionalism**. As such, it is a qualification marking the end of formal training and the emergence of a fully-fledged professional

Examples of both approaches exist across the almost bewilderingly wide range of professional institutions that operate in the UK. The first implies perhaps a more exclusive status and ties in with early advice from the Privy Council Office to pitch chartered status at a high level. The second, whilst maybe more attractive in its implied inclusivity, would require widespread adoption of the culture change ClfA has been promoting for some time with regards to professional training at early career stage.

iii How should they get it?

Including the workshop presentations and the examples we included in the SWOT analyses, we have seen how chartered status is awarded in nine very different industries. Despite the perception that chartered status indicates a parity of education, knowledge, skills and responsibility across different industries, in practice it would seem that the only thing they have in common is that they all assess both technical and ethical competence. The way they assess varies enormously, with some being very heavily underpinned by accredited academic qualifications and others almost entirely constructed around CPD.

There were some common themes however and the most popular routes with workshop delegates were based around what might be described as a 'whole career pathway' approach which started with student or trainee grades and continued up to chartered professional. Many were based around programmes of structured and/or supported learning through CPD and led to a portfolio of work which could be submitted as evidence of competence. Many also included attending a professional review with a panel of peers. In some cases, the candidate's progress towards chartership was guided and supported by a mentor and there was certainly enthusiasm for this approach.

iv How should it relate to existing grades of ClfA membership?

ClfA's current membership validation systems assess an applicant's technical competence through assessment, by a panel, of a statement of competence supported by examples of the applicant's work. Ethical competence is assessed through references. The main differences between our current process and the systems described above are the absence of a structured programme to support the applicant in gaining the necessary skills and competence and the final professional review. The review is significant because this is the means by which ethical competence is assessed; applicants for chartered status are expected to be able to articulate a broad understanding of the wider legal, policy and ethical frameworks within which they operate.

The relationship between future chartered status and the current grades of ClfA membership generally elicited a lively debate at the workshops. Opinions were many and varied and included

- Current Member grade should become Chartered Archaeologist with an automatic transfer for all current Members
- Current Member grade should become Chartered Archaeologist but current Members would need to undergo some additional process (eg a professional review) in order to transfer
- Chartered Archaeologist should be a step up from Member in the current hierarchy of membership grades
- Chartered Archaeologist should exist as a separate designation, sitting alongside current member grades but with its own membership process
- Chartered Archaeologist should be phased in, eventually replacing the Member and/or Associate grade
- All accredited grades of membership (PCIfA, ACIfA and MClfA) should have the opportunity to apply for chartered status resulting in Chartered Practitioners, Chartered Associates and Chartered Members
- A system of membership validation based around Chartership should be introduced to replace the current system completely

Clearly, the relationship between a chartered grade and existing membership grades would be different depending on which of the two perceptions of chartered status described in response to question ii is applied. Each of the models listed above has strengths and weaknesses, as well as practical and financial implications. Some example of potential delivery mechanisms, based on the most popular options, are illustrated in section 4 below.

As well as considering the specific questions outlined above, the workshops also provided an opportunity for members to voice their aspirations for chartered status and also their concerns. Before we move on to consider options, it's worth noting these as they will need to inform the next stage of development and consultation.

Aspirations...

“ Chartered status is an externally recognised benchmark of quality which should help fellow professionals and the public recognise the high levels of skill and competence required by professional archaeologists ”

“ Chartered status should lead to parity of respect and reward ”

“ Chartered status should be a mechanism to improve professional standards ”

“ Chartered status should provide a mechanism for promoting the importance of professional accreditation, leading to increased membership of ClfA and an increased demand by clients for professional accreditation ”

“ Chartered status needs to be seen as prestigious and as adding value to the profession as well as to an individual's CV ”

Concerns...

“ There needs to be more transparency around ClfAs existing professional conduct and complaints processes. Otherwise, confidence in ClfA's ability to 'police' chartered status will be low ”

“ Chartered status should be accessible not just an 'old boys club' ”

“ The cost of becoming chartered could be barrier – there's a danger that some archaeologists won't be able to afford to be chartered even though they want to be and have the skills ”

“ In other professions, employers support their staff to become chartered – how can we make sure archaeological employers do the same? ”

“ Chartered status needs to be relevant and applicable to all branches of the profession otherwise it may be seen as divisive ”

“ Chartered status needs to be valued across our own profession – if it's not recognised by national and local curators, there won't be any point to being chartered ”

4 Delivery options

Based on the workshop results and the discussions with our Advisory Council, we have put forward the following options for further consultation. That doesn't mean that other options have been discounted at this stage though and, as part of this consultation, we would welcome feedback from members regarding other mechanisms for awarding chartered status. The options are offered as a starting point for discussion with an expectation that they will be amended and refined (and potentially replaced) as part of the process.

Option 1

Chartered Archaeologist grade is added to the existing system as an additional grade of membership above MCIfA. Assessment is based on the current membership validation process with the addition of a professional review to make the step from Member to Chartered Archaeologist. The current competence matrix is revised to reflect the higher grade.

Option 2

Chartered Archaeologist grade sits alongside the existing system. Applications for PCIfA, ACIfA and MCIfA continue to be assessed as they are now and a new membership pathway for Chartered Archaeologist is developed based around structured CPD and a professional review.

Option 3

Chartered Archaeologist grade sits alongside the existing system and eventually replaces MCIfA. A new membership pathway is developed which replaces the current validation system for all membership grades. PCIfA and ACIfA are stages along that pathway (as well as being membership grades in their own right). Existing members and new applicants can join the pathway at any stage (ie PCIfAs can work towards chartership without having to go through the intermediate grades). An understanding of the broader historic environment context, legal and policy frameworks and a commitment to professional ethics are an integral part of the process which is assessed through structured CPD and a professional review.

Option 4

The current membership validation system is replaced with a new membership pathway as above. PCIfA and ACIfA grades are replaced with a three stage process consisting of trainees/students, unchartered Members and Chartered Archaeologists. The level of competence expected of an unchartered Member is equivalent to that currently required for ACIfA. An understanding of the broader historic environment context, legal and policy frameworks and a commitment to professional ethics are an integral part of the process which is assessed through structured CPD and a professional review. Existing ACIfAs and MCIfAs can choose between applying for Chartered Archaeologist grade or transferring to the unchartered Member grade. PCIfAs are supported over a transitional period to upgrade their membership to unchartered Member.

5 Next steps

Developing a mechanism for awarding chartered status to members is a major piece of work for the Institute and one we're keen to get right. We need to ensure that any future process has the confidence of our members and stakeholders and is valued and supported by them. This means that we need to take the time to consider options thoroughly and to consult widely. If members are in favour, an outline timetable for the process would allow for a cycle of consultation, revision and further refinement throughout 2016 and 2017, followed by formal drafting with a target for submission to the Privy Council Office by the end of 2018. After that, the timetable is in the hands of the Queen and her advisors but, in the event of a positive response, it wouldn't be unreasonable to anticipate 12 months' worth of work (depending on the final option chosen) to develop the systems and resources needed to support the awarding of Chartered Archaeologist grade.

The immediate next step, however, is to get your feedback on the contents of this discussion paper. A short SurveyMonkey questionnaire has been prepared which asks for your response to some specific questions as well as giving you the opportunity to comment more generally on the overall concept of chartered status. The survey will run until Friday 20 May. You don't have to be a ClfA member to respond so please circulate this document and encourage your colleagues to have their say. Your response will inform the development of options which ClfA members will be asked to vote on at a future AGM. You can complete the survey online at www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/chartarch or request a paper copy by contacting anna.welch@archaeologists.net.

Appendix 1

Professional institute workshop presentations:

Institute of Chartered Foresters
Chartered Institute of Ergonomics and Human Factors
Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals
The Textile Institute

Chartership routes considered in the workshops:

Landscape Institute
Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors
Royal Town Planning Institute
Royal Institute of British Architects
Chartered Environmentalist