

Competency matrix guidance

A guide to how to approach composing a competence matrix in order to assist the Validation committee and applicants in specialist areas. This does not replace the existing matrix but is a guide for applicants to see where they fit in with the application process.

A few key things from the Groups Forum workshop

- What is the competence matrix? It is a grid describing what is required to be demonstrated by applicants at the relevant grades in the four areas of competence; knowledge, autonomy, coping with complexity and perception of context.
- The matrix serves two purposes, firstly it helps applicants and upgrading members identify more clearly how they fit in with the ClfA member grades; secondly it assists the committee in making decisions about the grade demonstrated.
- Membership is evidence-based, with evidence including three strands: the competency statement, supporting documentation (such as reports) and references.
- The National Occupation Standards (NOS) are a bit too detailed to use for competency matrices, but they do help you think about the job you do as a collections of skills, knowledge and demonstrable experience - which is exactly what the matrices aim to unravel.
- A matrix should not to be overly specific and risk alienating or excluding people with different types of employment or experience.

Step by step guide to developing a specialist matrix

1. Read the applicants guide, especially the section regarding the existing competence matrix and note the language used for each grade. As a general rule Practitioner (PCIfA) is usually for career starters, Associate (ACIfA) is usually for those mid-career who have some autonomy and Member (MCIfA) is for those who are well-established in their careers and perhaps own or manage the company they work for.
2. Start by thinking about the important aspects of your specialist area and the areas of context these may fit into the four areas of competence - knowledge, autonomy, complexity and context
3. You can begin filling in a blank matrix by looking at one grade at a time and then comparing them across the levels to ensure they are comparable or you can start with one aspect across all the grades. This is the most preferred method as it was easier to see the comparison for each grade as you went along.
4. Keep it short and use straight forward language as we have applicants applying from other countries as well as the UK.
5. Don't forget to compare this to the other existing specialist matrices on the website at www.archaeologists.net/Matrices

If you need any further help please get in touch with the ClfA office.