



Training and professional development: an IfA guide to good practice

This guide is aimed primarily at IfA Registered Organisations (ROs). The IfA recognises that the RO scheme includes a wide range of different organisations with different approaches to training and professional development. For many, this guidance may already be common practice in their organisations, others may have developed different approaches and some will not yet have been able to address such issues as skills audits and training plans.

The guidance is based on observed best practice in a number of organisations, the experience of IfA staff and the results of a wide range of projects such as the Roles and Skills Project, Training the Trainers, the development of the Occupational Standards and the case studies in their use. It is not intended to be prescriptive but rather to illustrate some of the ways in which ROs might meet their obligations with regard to training and professional development. ROs are encouraged to send comments and examples of best practice to inform future revisions.

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Introduction

“Training and continuing professional development in archaeology are the key to a demonstrably competent profession. There is an abundance of archaeological skill and experience amongst practitioners, many of whom are highly qualified (around 90% are graduates). Nevertheless, the provision of vocational training and the clear charting of development remain vital links in the demonstration of professional competence” (Howard 2006).

“However, the rapid expansion of professional archaeology over the last fifteen years has led to a widespread training deficit, as it has occurred without due consideration for the vocational development of the practitioners involved” (Bishop *et al* 1999).

“A number of factors militate against the successful provision of training in archaeology: an underdeveloped professional career structure, a lack of formal training, inadequate documentation of the skills required to practice in a given role, insufficient value being placed on training and insufficient resources being afforded to it” (Bishop *et al* 1999).

Membership of the IfA and registration as an RO places an obligation on individuals and organisations with regard to training and continuing professional development. This guide aims to help members and ROs meet those obligations by outlining current best practice.

Training or professional development?

These words are often used interchangeably to mean the same thing. For the purposes of this guide, training refers to the process of acquiring the essential skills and/or knowledge that allow an archaeologist to carry out their work safely and competently. Training is likely to be specific and targeted at the task in hand: for example, health and safety, first aid or computer software training. It can be formal or informal and may be provided in house or by an external training provider. Provision of training, in this sense, is almost always the responsibility of the employer. The IfA recommends that ROs allocate a minimum of five days training for each member of staff.

Professional development refers to the broader acquisition of the skills, knowledge and experience which allow an archaeologist to develop their career and their reputation. It is an ongoing process which may be related to current job role, future professional aspirations or more personal goals and objectives. Responsibility for professional development lies with the individual archaeologist and the IfA's *Code of Conduct* places an obligation on the archaeologist to keep their knowledge and skills up to date. However, the professional development of individual archaeologists is inextricably linked with the development of the profession as a whole and our ability to demonstrate competence in the wider world. The process should therefore be seen as a partnership between individuals, employers and the Institute.

Training

Adequate training provision is essential if archaeological organisations are to meet their legal and ethical obligations. Training is also an important factor in the recruitment and retention of staff, in the morale of an organisation and its ability to compete in the market place.

The Archaeology Labour Market Intelligence: Profiling the Profession 2002/3 report (Aitchison & Edwards 2003) indicated that archaeological organisations have a strong commitment to training as a principle. 93% responded that they identified training needs for individuals and for the organisation as a whole and 78% indicated that they had a training budget. However, only 55% had a formal training plan, implying that many archaeological organisations were spending money on training on an ad hoc basis. Only 57% of organisations reported that they formally evaluated the impact of training on individuals and even less, 35%, evaluated the impact of training on the organisation. Targeting and evaluating training allows organisations to maximise the effectiveness of often limited resources for training and should be undertaken as a matter of course.

National Occupational Standards in Archaeological Practice

National Occupational Standards (NOS) define the skills a competent person needs in order to undertake their job role. The archaeological NOS were developed as part of a project to define roles and skills in archaeology and were subject to widespread consultation across the sector. As well as being the building blocks of vocational qualifications, they can be used to identify skills needs, develop training programmes and define competence. The full suite of standards can be viewed at www.archaeologystandards.com. Case studies in their use are available on the IfA website (see below).

Developing a training plan

The first stage in developing a training plan is to identify the skills already present in the organisation and those that are in need of development. These should be addressed as the first priority. The best way to do this is to conduct a skills audit. This need not be a complicated, time-consuming operation but must be carried out in consultation with, and with the full co-operation of, staff. Where Union Learning Reps are in place, they should be fully involved in the process. A template for conducting a skills audit against the National Occupational Standards in Archaeological Practice is available on the IfA website at www.archaeologists.net/modules/icontent/index.php?page=41

Once skills needs have been identified, the most effective ways of addressing them can be considered. This should include the best ways of maximising resources in terms of cost, time and the benefit to individuals and the organisation as a whole. Buying in expensive, external training is not always the best option: think about what skills could be taught in-house either formally or informally, on the job. Make use of local learning centres such as further education colleges, community facilities and e-learning resources.

Training plans are not static documents to be completed and then shelved. Their ongoing revision should be informed by the results of staff appraisals or development reviews, business plans or future organisational development strategies and by evaluating the training provided.

Remember to consider all staff when developing your training plan. Under the Fixed-Term (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2002, staff employed on a fixed-term basis must have the same access to training and career development opportunities as comparable staff on permanent contracts.

Professional short courses

The IfA has developed a range of one day professional training courses on behalf of the Archaeology Training Forum. These are delivered at a range of establishments across the UK and designed to address particular skills gaps. The courses are subsidised and will, in the future, be linked to the National Occupational Standards, enabling them to contribute towards vocational qualifications. For courses currently on offer, see www.archaeologists.net/modules/icontent/index.php?page=111.

Informal training

Archaeology has always relied heavily on informal, in-house training whereby experienced staff pass on their skills and knowledge to less experienced colleagues during the course of their work. This is a valuable process but one that can be hard to structure. The National Occupational Standards provide a framework for vocational training and can be used to recognise and accredit skills learned in this way. It is important that the contribution of experienced staff to training is recognised and that their skills as trainers are enhanced too. ROs are encouraged to identify formally mentors for new and inexperienced staff and to use the mentoring manual which can be downloaded from the IfA web-site at www.archaeologists.net/modules/icontent/index.php?page=153.

Training and pay: IfA minimum salaries

A number of ROs currently offer training posts for archaeologists with less than six months experience at rates of pay below the IfA minimum for Practitioner levels of responsibility. In order to ensure that ROs are meeting their obligations with regard to minimum salary recommendations, we would encourage those offering training posts to identify this formally in their training plans. Such posts should be of finite duration, with clearly defined learning outcomes and automatic progression to PlfA minimum salaries once they have been achieved. Linking the training to the relevant National Occupational Standards would effectively demonstrate that these posts offer structured entry level training. Information and advice on the use of National Occupational Standards is available from the IfA.

Similarly, ROs appointing less experienced staff to AlfA or MlfA level posts on a lower salary, (for example where sufficiently qualified or experienced specialists are not available and less experienced staff have to be appointed and trained up) should ensure that training is linked to the relevant NOS and progression to the appropriate pay rate.

Evaluating training

Evaluating the impact of training on individuals and the organisation allows an assessment of the advantages and disadvantages of different methods of training, the quality of different courses and providers and whether or not the training provided is meeting the needs identified in the training plan. Evaluation activities might include

- asking staff to report back on completion of a course or to submit a short report
- reviewing in house skills to ensure that on the job training is structured and effective
- discussing training provision with staff and asking for feedback
- keeping staff and organisational development under review
- providing feedback to training providers

Key questions to ask are

Did this training activity meet the training need it was intended to address?
Did it provide good value for money?
Was it cost effective in terms of the number of people trained?
What was the main benefit of this training to the individual(s) trained?
What was the main benefit of this training to the organisation?
Were there any additional benefits to the individual or organisation?
Is this the best way to meet this training need in the future?

The results of evaluation should be used to inform revisions to the training plan.

Additional support

Training and career development opportunities need to be accessible to all staff and reasonable adjustments should be made for anyone classed as disabled under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. In preparing your training plan, you may need to consider how you would identify barriers to learning and provide additional support to your staff. There are a range of national organisations such as the Disability Rights Commission, the RNIB and the British Dyslexia Association who can provide advice to employers. Contact details are given in the Resources section of this guide. A project team in the Department of Archaeology at Reading University have developed a self assessment toolkit for fieldwork skills for use with students. This is available at <http://www.britarch.ac.uk/accessible/>.

Professional development

Continuing professional development (CPD) is the process by which archaeologists can maintain and develop their skills throughout their working lives. At its most basic, this might simply involve keeping up to date with new thinking, developments in methodology and changes in legislation. More information on the IfA's CPD scheme can be found on the IfA web-site at www.archaeologists.net/modules/iContent/index.php?page=20. The scheme, which involves undertaking at least 50 hours of CPD activities over a rolling two year period, IfA members will be asked to vote on a requirement for mandatory CPD at the 2009 AGM. ROs are expected to encourage their staff to undertake and record professional development activities.

Professional development goes beyond the essential training we need to do our jobs. It involves a critical personal assessment of where we currently are in our careers and where we would like to be in the future and provides a mechanism for identifying opportunities and areas where additional information and support will be required. Professional development may be linked to increasing experience or competence in a current role, future promotions or changes of direction or even broader lifestyle aspirations. It is an ongoing process and, whilst remaining the responsibility of the individual archaeologist, is most effective when seen as a partnership between archaeologist, employer and professional institution.

Direct financial support for staff professional development activities may not always be possible, especially where training budgets are limited, but this does not mean that professional development should be ignored. Staff appraisals are the ideal opportunity for a wider discussion of a staff member's career development and should be used to identify areas where the employee's aspirations may overlap with organisational priorities. Access to workplace facilities, use of work time, access to unpaid leave and encouragement and advice from workplace mentors can also be very helpful. Where the costs of development activities are met, this should be identified as part of the training plan and the basis on which funding decisions are made should be open and transparent.

ROs are expected to promote the concept of CPD and encourage their staff to complete personal development plans. Asking staff to link their requests for training to objectives within the personal development plan is one way in which the use of PDPs can be embedded as an effective career development tool. Gaining membership of the IfA or upgrading to a higher grade are particularly effective CPD targets which should be encouraged and supported by ROs.

Secondments, job swaps and work shadowing are relatively cost effective ways of providing development activities. The IfA has developed a programme of work-based learning placements, currently funded by the HLF and English Heritage and ROs are encouraged to use these models as the basis for developing workplace learning in their own organisations. More information is available on the IfA web-site at www.archaeologists.net/modules/icontent/index.php?page=156.

IfA conferences, workshops and dayschools

Attendance at IfA conferences can be an excellent opportunity for professional development and networking, especially for staff in the early stages of their career. ROs are strongly encouraged to consider funding attendance for junior staff wherever possible. Encouraging staff to give papers at the conference is also recommended.

The IfA's national, regional and special interest groups run dayschools and workshops on a wide variety of topics of relevance to their members. These provide excellent, cost effective opportunities for CPD and are advertised on the IfA website and to group members.

Union Learning Reps

Union Learning Representatives (ULRs) are trade union members who have been specially trained to provide help and advice to members in all aspects of learning in the workplace. They have the support of full time officials at the relevant trade union and have access to information about a wide range of training and learning opportunities in their areas. The IfA has worked with Prospect to train a small number of ULRs for archaeology and will look at training more in the future. ROs are encouraged to consult ULRs when developing their plans for training and career development in the workplace.

Conclusion

As an individual, spending time and thought on your own professional development helps build commitment and motivation. Having a well-trained, well-motivated work force makes good business sense for individual organisations and helps to build an increased sense of professionalism across the sector as a whole. Adopting a structured approach to both enables maximum benefit to be gained from limited resources. Sharing good practice across the sector allows the wider archaeological community to learn from the experiences of others. The role of the IfA is to advise, co-ordinate and facilitate training and professional development and to continue to promote 'professionalism' to its members, ROs and the communities which they serve.

Resources

Training – Archaeology

ATF

The Archaeology Training Forum is a delegate body representing all organisations with an interest in the issues of training and career development in archaeology. One of its roles is to oversee the development of professional short courses, such as those run at Oxford University Department of Continuing Education and more recently at Birmingham and Leicester Universities. For details of upcoming courses, visit the IfA website at www.archaeologists.net/modules/icontent/index.php?page=111.

BAJR

The British Archaeological Jobs Resource website contains details of archaeology courses in higher, further and continuing education through its Course Finder. See www.bajr.org for more details.

CBA

CBA briefing provides details of courses, conferences, dayschools and fieldwork training opportunities across England and Wales. It can be accessed via the CBA website at www.britarch.ac.uk or through the British Archaeology magazine.

EH Regional Science Advisors

In collaboration with other English Heritage specialists, the Regional Science Advisors present free regional courses covering subjects such as scientific dating, geoarchaeology, geophysics and osteoarchaeology. For details of forthcoming courses, see www.dur.ac.uk/eh.rsa/training.html.

IfA

The IfA's training remit is overseen by the Professional Training Committee. Recent work has included the development of National Occupational Standards in Archaeological Practice, the Qualification in Archaeological Practice and the development of professional one day courses, all on behalf of the Archaeology Training Forum. The IfA has also published its CPD scheme and advises members and ROs on CPD issues through workshops and presentations. Further information on the IfA's work on training and professional development can be found on the Training pages of the IfA website at www.archaeologists.net.

TORC

TORC is an information service for anyone interested in courses and training in archaeology from GCSE and A level courses through to specialised training for professional archaeologists, provided by the CBA. Its aim is to provide a searchable database of courses and training providers in the UK. It also provides a route into the National Occupational Standards in Archaeological Practice. See www.torc.org.uk for further details.

Training - general

CCSkills

Creative and Cultural Skills is the Sector Skills Council for the archaeology sector, replacing the Cultural Heritage National Training Organisations (CHNTO). Sector Skills Councils are independent, UK-side organisations licensed by the Secretary of State for Education and Skills to tackle the skills and productivity needs of their sector. The IfA has been working closely with CCSkills to reformat the National Occupational Standards to make them easier to use. More information on their work can be found at www.ccskills.org.uk

Learndirect

Learndirect is the public face of the University for Industry, a partnership between government and the public and private sectors in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Learndirect provide a large number of online courses in computing, business skills and self development, as well as key skills such as maths and English. The courses provide a wide range of cost effective learning opportunities which can be accessed via the learndirect website or through a network of learning centres. Learndirect also provide careers advice and guidance. For further information, see www.learndirect.org.uk/. The Scottish University for Industry provides a similar service and can be accessed at www.scottishufi.co.uk.

LSC

The Learning and Skills Council is responsible for planning, funding and evaluating post-16 education and training in England, outside higher education. The LSC is organised on a regional basis and the funding they are able to provide is informed by local priorities. For more information or to find your local LSC, visit www.lsc.org.uk. Similar services are provided through the Welsh Assembly Government Department for Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills in Wales and through the Scottish Executive's Enterprise and Lifelong Learning Department in Scotland. In Northern Ireland, a Learning and Skills Advisory Board advises the Department for Employment and Learning on current and future training initiatives and employment requirements.

Prospect

Prospect is the trade union which represents archaeologists working in the private sector as well as national heritage agencies and museums. In common with many trade unions, training and professional development have become increasingly important bargaining issues in recent years and Prospect has produced a wide range of on-line resources for members. Prospect also recruit Union Learning Reps and have an extensive programme of courses available to members. For more information, visit the education and training pages at www.prospect.org.uk.

Access

Inclusive, Accessible, Archaeology

This project addresses the dual issues of disability and transferable skills in the teaching of archaeological fieldwork. It will increase awareness of disability issues in Archaeology and improve the integration of disability in fieldwork teaching. The emphasis is on the development of a self-assessment tool kit for physical and psychological abilities in fieldwork. This tool will increase students' awareness of their acquisition of transferable skills and

promote careers management skills. For more information visit the project website at <http://www.britarch.ac.uk/accessible/>

Disability Rights Commission

www.drc-gb.org/employment.aspx

British Dyslexia Association

www.bdadyslexia.org.uk

Royal National Institute for the Blind

www.rnib.org.uk

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