



Chartered
Institute for
Archaeologists

Professional pathways September 2022 bulletin Pathway to Practitioner

Welcome to this edition of Professional pathways. Previous bulletins can be found on the [Professional Pathways page](#).

Professional pathways aims to support members through the ClfA accreditation process by signposting to useful advice, resources and training that will help members to build on their existing knowledge and skills and reach the next stage in their professional career.

In this bulletin:

- Professional profile: Megan Schankler
- Reasons and opportunities to volunteer with ClfA
- What can you do next?

Professional profile: Megan Schankler

Megan is a Practitioner working for Museum of London archaeology (MOLA). Here Megan talks about starting a career during the pandemic and gaining skills through volunteering.

I'm Megan and I'm currently a commercial field archaeologist in Northampton. From 2016 to 2019 I studied at the University of Birmingham, and came out with a degree in Ancient History and Archaeology. I found that I was really interested in bioarchaeology and museum engagement, and wanted to do some further study. This brought me to the University of York, where I studied MSc Bioarchaeology. The unexpected experience of graduating into a pandemic meant that I struggled to find work in archaeology, and I ended up taking a job outside the field while still looking for my way into commercial archaeology. During my job hunt, I became involved with the ClfA Early Careers group (then New Generation) as an Ordinary Committee member. I have been volunteering with the group ever since, and in August 2021 I was elected as Chairperson. I officially started my archaeological career full time in March 2021, working for Headland Archaeology. I now work for MOLA and have worked on a range of rural sites in both roles, as well as being involved with post-excavation data entry.





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In August 2021, I applied for Practitioner accreditation with Cifa (PCifa). I was initially concerned that I didn't have enough experience to be accredited, however that's not the case. To be accredited as a Practitioner, you need to show that you can work under your own judgment with some overall supervision, be part of a team working to understand complex situations, and have a good working knowledge of an area of historic environment practice which you use practically in your work. With the support of my colleagues and supervisors at Headland, and members of the Early Career group committee, my application for accreditation was accepted.

This accreditation allowed me to run for Chairperson of the Early Career group, as you need to be accredited to be a Chair, Secretary or Treasurer. I have learned valuable skills through my volunteering, connected with some great people, and I am proud of what we've achieved over the past few years, having delivered successful conference sessions

and even full conferences! I would really recommend getting involved with a Cifa special interest or area group, and many are looking for new committee members. You can be co-opted as an Ordinary Committee member as a Student or Affiliate member, which is a great opportunity for career development and getting to know the sector.



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Reasons and opportunities to volunteer with Cifa

When you're starting out it can be difficult to find opportunities outside your working hours to increase your skill set, especially in those 'soft skills' that are invaluable and transferable throughout your career. Volunteering with Cifa can be very useful in building these skills and is also a great way to increase your knowledge about the historic environment sector.

- Volunteering can help you to develop friendships and working relationships with your peers, supporting your mental and emotional wellbeing.
- It will help you to build some valuable contacts who might be able to make you aware of work opportunities by allowing you to network with the wider historic environment community.
- Team working, with different types of people, will prepare you for a variety of projects.
- You can learn and develop important, transferable work skills such as organisation, leadership, teamwork, communication skills, problem-solving and task management.
- Volunteering can also help you build upon skills you already have and fill skills gaps which will build your portfolio of work and help you in your career.
- It can provide you with a motivation for building your own career and the satisfaction that you are influencing how the profession will work in the future.

There are lots of ways you can get involved. As a Student or Affiliate you can be elected onto the committees of our [special interest and area groups](#) as general members and then stand for an officer position when you have gained accreditation. The [Early careers group](#) is very active and students are automatically part of it on joining ClfA.

You can join as many groups as you like. Just log into the website and go to the members area where you can join or leave any groups by updating your contact details and preferences. Once you are accredited you can represent your group committee at the Advisory council or stand for election independently. There are other committees where your growing skills will be welcomed and you can find out more about [volunteering with ClfA](#) on our website. The skills and knowledge that you acquire through volunteering with ClfA will help to provide examples of work for your Practitioner application.



Any questions? Please ask

If you've got a question about ClfA or careers please send it to anna.welch@archaeologists.net or for membership enquiries contact lianne.birney@archaeologists.net. You'll get a confidential answer but if the information could help others it will be included in an anonymised FAQs section.

What can you do next?

If you are planning to apply for PCIfA within the next six to twelve months you will need to demonstrate how you meet the new ethical 'performance criteria' in your statement of competence. You can find these within [the competence matrix](#) and advice on how to give relevant examples in your application on the ['Join ClfA' pages](#).

You will need to give examples and evidence to show how you meet the four areas of the competence matrix for Practitioners:

Knowledge - Good working knowledge of key aspects relevant to area of historic environment practice, and competence in its application, in accordance with relevant professional standards

Autonomy - Some responsibility for achieving tasks using own judgement and autonomy, whilst working under general supervision. Collaboration with others is expected

Coping with complexity - Appreciates complex situations within the role held and able to achieve partial resolution alone. Some activities are complex and non-routine Sees actions as a series of steps and recognises the importance of each role in the team.

Perception of professional context - Demonstrates understanding of the ethical requirements of ClfA *Code of conduct* and is able to apply to own work. Upholds the values of the Institute to work in the public interest

There were [changes in the application process](#) earlier this year to include more awareness of ethical working practices. To help you prepare, we have compiled ethical resources on our website at [Resources for professional ethics | Chartered Institute for Archaeologists](#). If you haven't already done so, you should work through the [ethics elearning module](#) and read the practice paper, [An introduction to professional ethics](#). If you have any questions about the process, please contact [Lianne](#).



Our next Innovation week-long virtual festival will be held from 10 - 14 October 2022 and will comprise a mix of short sessions on each day along with opportunities for open discussion, CPD and knowledge transfer. There is also a number of group AGMs taking place in the next few weeks so keep a look out in your in-box and on [our events calendar](#). There may be opportunities to join a committee.

The [Cifa Annual general meeting](#) will be held on 11 October. Join us to find out what we've done over the year and what our next goals are.

We're continuing our Zoom digital breaks in rotating morning, lunchtime and evening time slots. Look out for the registration link on the website and in your e-mail. We are repeating some of the more popular themes so please let us know if there's something you missed that you'd like to see again, or if you have an idea for a topic. E-mail us at membership@archaeologists.net

If you have any questions or suggestions for the next bulletin please send them in.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Anna Lianne'.

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