



Chartered
Institute for
Archaeologists

Professional Pathways

August 2023 bulletin

Move on to Member

Welcome to the August 2023 Professional Pathways bulletin for people who are working towards [Member \(MCIfA\) applications](#). [Professional Pathways](#) aims to support members through CIfA accreditation by signposting to useful advice, resources and training that will help you build on your existing knowledge and skills and reach the next stage in your professional career.

This bulletin will focus on meeting the criteria for applications for those with career breaks or who are applying as a specialist.

In this bulletin:

- **When should I apply if I've had time away from archaeology or recently been promoted?**
Lianne Birney MCIfA, Membership Manager.
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When should I apply if I have had a career break, just got back into archaeology or had a recent promotion? Lianne Birney MCIfA, Membership Manager.

If you have had a career break for any reason, decided to return to working in archaeology or have recently been promoted you can still apply but you will need to ensure you have carried out complex work and decision-making in a range of complex, technical or professional activities.

First, it is a good idea to check the work you have carried out since returning or being promoted and if you have enough current evidence to be able to fully demonstrate the criteria at Member (MCIfA), and that your two referees know you well enough to be able to comment in

detail about the work you do. Don't forget you need to have a quality assurance referee who can comment on your work, such as a curator, local authority archaeologist, someone from a large body such as Historic England or a specialist where relevant.

You could start to write your statement of competence using the four areas of the [competence matrix](#) as headings and answering the [performance criteria questions](#); this should help you to see any gaps that might need to be added to your training plan or Professional Development Plan (PDP)

to ensure you can show you meet this area of the criteria. Specialist matrices for some areas can be found here too and are more specific, such as fieldwork and osteology.

For MCIfA grade you will need to have worked on a variety of projects and we expect to see a range and breadth of work examples with at least five completed pieces of work including reports, statements, emails, project plans – whichever examples support what you do and show your best, most complex work to support the four areas of the competence matrix fully.

Think about the criteria and what could demonstrate each area, for example for knowledge are you up to date on any recent legislation changes, the ClfA Standards and guidance or relevant guidance for your area of work?

For autonomy, think about how you reach decisions and balance different viewpoints and how you undertake your work in the team and the wider historic environment.

For coping with complexity, think about your best, most complex work examples and if you have been in any difficult situations and dealt with these effectively and how did you do this?

For perception of professional context, think about how you use the Code of conduct to guide your work and how your work relates to the public interest.

We have lots of [guidance about what to include](#) and our [ethical resources](#) are a great place to get started and help prepare to submit your application. If you have any questions, please ask the membership team at membership@archaeologists.net and we will be happy to help!



How can I meet the competence matrix when my job is more unusual?

If you're applying for MCIfA accreditation it can be challenging to find examples of your work that will meet the competence matrix. All applications for professional accreditation are assessed against the [main competence matrix](#) so you will need to match your skills and knowledge to that but we have a series of [specialist competence matrices](#), which have been compiled by our Special Interest Groups and external groups and are tailored to specific areas. The specialist matrices assist applicants in understanding how their work fits into the main competence matrix and by identifying what information they could give to the Validation

committee to demonstrate competence at MCIfA. It will help the committee if you mention that you've used a specialist matrix to understand where your skills and competence can be mapped to the main matrix. Once you've identified the skills and knowledge you need to demonstrate in your statement of competence, it will be more straightforward to decide what evidence might support your application.

Here Helen Parslow talks about [her experiences of applying for MCIfA](#) using evidence of her skills from working with archives

How increasing your project management skills can enhance your career and help you make a successful MCifA application.

Recently we have had requests about how to develop project management skills and it's a common misconception that you need to have 'Project Manager' in your job title to be able to apply for MCifA accreditation. This isn't the case, but at MCifA level you need to show that you take full responsibility for your own work and have a significant level of accountability for the work of others and/or the allocation of resources.

For example you may manage a team on site, be responsible for managing HER resources or for managing your own time and resources as a self-employed specialist. You should be confident in making decisions based on your knowledge and have the depth of understanding to be able to see different approaches and solutions. Learning project management skills might not seem relevant to the job you do or the direction in which you see your career developing but skills such as time, task and resources management are increasingly in demand across a broader range of job roles than you might expect. Here [Kirsty Dingwall of Headland Archaeology](#) describes how she became a project manager and what her job entails (courtesy Headland Archaeology).



Project management skills provide a range of tools and techniques that you can use in your current work role to help increase your efficiency, meet deadlines, help with day-to-day work planning and develop the skills you need to take overall responsibility. Understanding how collaboration between different disciplines can improve efficiency can help you to appreciate the roles that different professionals play in complex projects. In "I got 99 problems and archaeology ain't one" Naomi Trott, Senior Cultural heritage Consultant for Arcadis explores how integrated project planning helps to

make things run smoothly [37:19mins [CifA2021 - An archaeologist, a town planner and an engineer walk onto a site... multidisciplinary environments and the archaeological profession](#)].

Having an overview of a project, appreciating the part that everyone plays and the most appropriate approach will help you to demonstrate the skills set out in the competence matrix under 'coping with complexity' and 'perception of context'. Project management gives you the skills to identify and lead projects and is a great way to develop your autonomy. If you are able to organise and carry out projects you will be an asset to any employer and organisation, as well as more able to manage your own work. It is a good idea to speak with your line manager to help identify these opportunities as part of your performance development appraisals.

Other ways to develop your project management skills include the ['Introduction to project management' lunch and learn session](#) delivered by Martin Locock MCifA. It is designed for people working in the sector who have had little contact with project management and covers project management as a discipline, common terminology and acronyms, the role of a project manager in the heritage sector, and challenges faced by those new to



the role. You can find more recordings of ClfA events and past conferences (including those from this year) on [our Event recordings page](#). Historic England offers [free online training on MoRPHE project management](#) that you can study at your own pace and will take around four hours. It is tailored to the Historic England approach to project design and is a good introduction to creating project proposals and tracking your progress.



Any questions? Please ask

If you've got a question about ClfA or careers please send it to anna.welch@archaeologists.net or for application 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.

When are the application deadlines for MCIfA applications?

- Apply anytime up to 14 August 2023 for professional review interviews w/c 11 September for 31 October committee meeting
- Apply anytime up to the end of January 2023 for professional review interviews mid-March for a May committee meeting (dates to be confirmed)

There is more information about applying, including a examples of what to include and recorded guidance, [in our 'Join' section of the website](#).

What can you do next?



Our innovation festivals provide an opportunity to showcase and celebrate the innovative practices and approaches being undertaken across the historic environment sector, whilst tabling for wider discussion some of the identified barriers and challenges to implementing innovation in archaeological research. Our next week-long virtual festival will be held from 9 - 13 October 2023 and will comprise a mix of short sessions on each day along with opportunities for open discussion, CPD and knowledge transfer. For more information about the festival and how to propose a session [see our Innovation festival page](#) and you can find lots of CPD by looking at previous years' recordings.

- [Recordings from the January 2021 Innovation festival and more about the 'Building capacity through innovation' project](#)
- [Recordings from the October 2021 Innovation festival](#)

Implementing racial equity and wellbeing in the workplace



Principle 5 of the Code of conduct states that any member shall respect the aspirations of employees, colleagues and helpers with regard to all matters relating to issues of equality of opportunity and employment. Run by the European Society of Black and Allied Archaeologists (ESBAA), this CPD workshop will focus on implementing racial equity and wellbeing in the workplace. For more information, and to book, [see our Events listings](#).

Look on our [events page](#) for other events such as our digital tea breaks and topical lunch and learn events 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, appearing to read 'Anna Lianne'.

Anna Welch BA MA ACIfA, Professional Development & Practice Coordinator

Lianne Birney BA MCIfA, Membership Manager