

Statement of competence guidance and template

(Revised April 2022)

BEFORE you start this or the online form, please read the relevant application guidance and supporting performance criteria webpages to help complete it.

- [PCIfA application guidance](#)
 - [PCIfA performance criteria](#)
- [ACIfA application guidance](#)
 - [ACIfA performance criteria](#)
- [MCIfA application guidance](#)
 - [MCIfA performance criteria](#)

The statement of competence is the most important part of your application. It informs the Validation committee about how your skills and experience **demonstrate** the criteria in the [competence matrix](#) (PDF) for the grade you are applying for and helps them reach a decision. You can upload it to the online form.

Since April 2022 new requirements have been added to the application criteria. You may need to undertake some training in ethical competence before you apply to be able to **demonstrate** the perception of professional context part of the competence matrix. (See application guidance webpages above)

Remember the committee members do not know you or your work. Please take time to write it carefully and include all your roles and qualifications, where relevant, giving specific examples. You **MUST** include this information otherwise your application cannot be reviewed by the committee.

The template is on the second and third pages. Please refer to the competence matrix on the application guidance webpages above. For further information on how the competence categories apply in different areas of practice, please see our supporting [specialist competence matrices](#).

Statement of competence template

Name of applicant:

Grade applied for: PCifA ACifA MCifA

Employed or voluntary work

Please give **detailed** information about your role and responsibilities **for your current and most recent roles over the last two years**. Use each heading of the competence matrix (above) as a guide. You should cover how you **demonstrate** the four areas - knowledge, autonomy, coping with complexity and perception of professional context - using **specific** examples. You may find it easier to give an example of a project/s you have done from beginning to end.

For any roles you've undertaken **longer than two years ago**, please give a **brief description** of the responsibilities held.

If you have worked on several short-term projects within one company or more in the same role, you can group these together.

The boxes will expand as you type, and you can copy and paste to add more boxes as required. Please ensure you write in the first person (e.g. I carry out/I undertake).

Position held:	Project Officer (Consultancy)
Organisation name:	A Company
Dates position held:	24 th February 2020 to present
Length of time in role:	2 years and 5 months

Description of role and responsibilities:

In my role as a Project Officer (Consultancy) I have been involved in the successful production of consultancy projects including desk-based assessments, EIA and ES chapters; heritage impact assessments and written schemes of investigation. My responsibilities include conducting research utilising both online and archival resources and the production of supporting graphics for my reports using GIS, predominantly making use of historic environment records and the National Heritage List for England (although I have also made some limited use of the online resources provided by Historic Environment Scotland and Cadw, the Welsh Government's Historic Environment department) when working on projects in Scotland and Wales.

My main responsibility is the production of written archaeological and historic environment assessments that advise our clients of the potential for heritage constraints relating to their proposals and corresponding with clients, local archaeological authorities and senior management to ensure that my approach meets both statutory and internal standards. I am responsible for managing my own time to meet project budgets and deadlines and have worked on collaborative projects with other members of the consultancy team, as well as with our geophysical survey and fieldwork teams. During the COVID pandemic I also assisted the fieldwork team by working as a member of the excavation team during Windfarm excavations and by producing written schemes of investigation, archaeological evaluations reports and excavation reports.

Knowledge:

The range of work that I have undertaken in this position has broadened my working knowledge of the Historic Environment, with the geographical locations of my projects varying far more widely than for my previous, fieldwork based roles.

These projects have included producing heritage impact assessments for proposed solar farms and battery energy storage facilities in predominantly rural landscapes where broad chronological sequences have often been identified. For example at a site, the heritage assets identified in the historic wetland environment were characterised by Late Iron Age occupation and Roman exploitation of slightly higher and dryer ground, with later periods of activity predominantly characterised by a series of attempts to improve the land

through irrigation. My project work has also included working on environmental impact assessments relating to the redevelopment of existing industrial sites including the site and another site, both of which had far tighter chronological sequences (in these instances from the 19th century onwards) associated with their assessments.

Although most of my projects have been based in England, I have also undertaken some project work in Scotland and Wales. These projects have included providing Environmental Impact Assessment Scoping inputs with regard to a proposed windfarm, where the identified heritage constraints spread across a large date range. My project work in Wales has been limited to producing high level desk top studies associated with proposed investigations on existing electricity tower foundations.

Almost all of my project work revolves around using IT. On a daily basis I'm using standard software such as Microsoft word and Adobe to view and edit reports as well as Microsoft excel for viewing exports of shapefile attribute table. I also use ArcGIS on a daily basis for viewing data supplied by clients, various historic environment records and downloaded from the National Heritage List for England (NHLE) in order to produce data and figures to illustrate my reports. This involves using and recognising different file formats such as shapefiles, .dwg, .dxf, files and how to open, view and modify them. It also involves using different image files such as jpeg, geotiff, PNG and understanding how to, when necessary, georeferencing them.

As part of the projects I undertake I use a wide range of information resources including data provided by the relevant Historic Environment Record (HER), the NHLE, Environment Agency LiDAR data downloader, the British Geological Surveys online map viewers, Historic England's map search and aerial photo explorer, Heritage Gateway, the Archaeological Data Service and Britain from Above and CUCAP (Cambridge University Collection Aerial Photograph) for online aerial photographs as well as other online resources typically identified during the course of the project work.

The vast majority of my project work is undertaken ahead of proposed renewal energy developments and associated infrastructure projects, most typically solar farms and battery energy storage facilities, which have given me a good working knowledge of key planning legislation and policy's relating to the historic environment such as those laid out by current planning regulations set out in the Planning Practice Guidance (2014, updated July 2021, Historic Environment section updated July 2019); National Planning Policy Framework (June 2021); Planning (Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas) Act, 1979; Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act, 1990; and any relevant local planning policies.

My work involves making assessments about the potential for, and significance of, archaeological remains within a site using the resources outlined above as well as additional information identified during walkover surveys and visits to local archives. Most of my project work has also involved assessing the potential for impacts upon the settings of designated heritage assets by a proposed development within a set study area. As a consequence of this I have developed my understanding of setting assessments over the past two years by completing numerous projects where impacts upon setting was a pertinent planning consideration and by regularly using and reviewing the guidance outlined in the Setting of Heritage Assets: Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3 (Second Edition) and the relevant sections of the NPPF.

I have also undertaken heritage statements in support of Listed Building consents, including a site and another site, which have required me to be cognisant of the guidance within Historic England's Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance for the sustainable management of the historic environment (Historic England, 2008), Statements of Heritage Significance within Advice Note 12 (Historic England, 2019) and Guidance on Setting (Historic England 2017).

In addition to the more detailed desk based assessments that I have produced I have also worked on projects, most notably a site which was related to a proposed programme of investigation on existing electricity towers, where planning permission was not required, as per the Electricity Act of 1989 and a series of subsequent amendments, but assessments were still undertaken as part of 'best practise' procedures.

Overall these projects have given me a strong working knowledge of where the work I undertake as a consultant fits within the planning process (sometimes pre-application – especially with regard to EIAs, sometimes in support of a planning applications, and sometimes in response to comments provided in response to an application) which enables me to provide evidence based advice regarding what archaeological work needs to be undertaken and, as crucially, at what stage it will need to be undertaken in the planning process.

As I work for a Registered Organisation of the ClfA there is regular monitoring and approval by external peers of our internal systems, standards and skills development. All of my project work is quality assessed by ClfA-accredited Project Managers, prior to submission, and all work is completed with regard to the standards of professional conduct outlined in the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' (ClfA) Code of Conduct (ClfA, 2021), the ClfA Standard and guidance for Commissioning Work or Providing Consultancy Advice on Archaeology and the Historic Environment (ClfA, 2020a), and the ClfA Standards and guidance for Historic Environment Desk Based Assessments (ClfA, 2020b), along with other guidance where relevant to the project.

Autonomy

My role within the consultancy team is to take responsibility for the delivery of my projects on time and within budget. Although I regularly liaise with my managers, I typically work independently on my project work, taking responsibility for correspondence with our clients and, when appropriate, the archaeological advisors to the local planning authority. I have also worked as the lead on a large project, which involved the production of over thirty separate reports and involved several of my colleagues. During this time I was responsible for liaising with our client and the local planning archaeologists regarding these assessments, managing the project timetable and elements of the financial information (maintaining spreadsheet detailing relevant purchase orders information and which elements of the project had been invoiced) and for providing a brief to my colleagues regarding the scope of the works. More recently I have also provided training sessions in setting assessments and archive use to a new member of our consultancy team.

Ordinarily I will be responsible for the initial project GIS set up (after contacting the client for their most recent design proposals), ordering of historic environment record (HER) data, collation of the relevant HER data, once available, with the NHLE data and any identified Conservation Areas (which often requires a search of the local planning authorities planning web pages), gathering together of sources of information from online sources (documentary sources, aerial photography, and historic maps), identification of data sources that should be viewed at the local archives and identification of any national and local planning policies and guidance that may be relevant to the assessment. I will typically also make the arrangements for a site visit and setting assessment, if required, as part of the initial data gathering and planning stage of the project. This information, once gathered, is then used to produce our assessment reports. When working on my own, project stages are typically completed with little to no direct work inputs (though advice and guidance, especially where a colleague has local or recent knowledge of the project area is always sought) from other members of the consultancy team until the report is ready to be edited.

I have also often worked in collaboration with other members of the team in order to fulfil one or more project tasks. Quite often it is a simpler task for me to complete a site visit and setting assessment than one of my colleagues, or vice versa, due to our relative locations. When this occurs communication of what is required by the individual undertaking the survey is key, in order to outline what the main heritage concerns for the project are and to make sure that any potential health and safety hazards have been identified. I have been responsible for the production of a large number of Risk Assessment and Method Statements (RAMS) and COVID RAMS relating to both my own and, on occasion, others' proposed site visits.

A major part of my role is the provision of advice to our clients regarding potential heritage constraints relating to their proposed developments. This advice is based upon the results of the project research and assessment, understanding of relevant and national planning policy and, when available, local planning authority advice. Where a situation seems more complicated than the norm, or lies outside my own personal areas of experience, I seek guidance from both other members of my team as well as other specialists within our company. We have quite often completed, for example, geophysical surveys as part of pre-determination archaeological assessments (examples being heritage impact assessments that I have worked on for proposed solar farms in Norfolk) where I have sought expert advice from our geophysical

survey team and what their data likely indicates. I have also sought advice from our internal historic building recording specialists when producing heritage statements in support of listed building consent applications for a house, office block and public house.

Although I endeavour to provide forthright advice based upon solid evidence, errors that I made during the initial stages of a project related to a proposed facility in a location meant that I had to, in collaboration with our fieldwork team, revise elements of our advised mitigation strategy. This error was caused by not noticing that the proposal boundary had shifted slightly during the production of the report, which meant that direct impacts upon one other heritage asset should also have been considered. This experience (along with a few other projects where design proposals have changed after our initial engagement) has resulted in me trying to improve my communication with our clients, particularly with regard to any design changes that they may be considering.

Coping with complexity

Consultancy project work often involves liaising with clients and stakeholders, other specialists (particularly LVIA and ecological specialists when working on an environmental impact assessment or any other pre-application assessment which would be used to inform the clients project design) and local planning authorities (or at least providing advice and reports to our clients that they then use to open discussions with them).

Almost all complexities within consultancy work are derived from one or more conflicting interests from the various parties inputting into a projects design process. One example of this was a project that I undertook where there were significant buried and ruinous standing remains of Locally Listed post-medieval industrial structures on the site. In this scenario the ecological advisors had also recommended a scheme of improvements that would require the planting new trees and vegetation to create and enhance the biodiversity of the site. I had to input into design meetings explaining that new trees, in particular their roots, would likely be a significant risk to the standing archaeological remains on the Site which resulted in a revision of their design approach and our own recommendations for a mitigation strategy.

On some occasions the unique nature of the archaeological resource creates an additional element of complexity into our assessments. Projects that I have worked on in a location, for example, have to include an assessment of the potential for caves, which have their own heritage value and requirements for archaeological mitigation. In this instance, as it was the first time that the company had worked under this type of brief, I had to design a new combined desk-based assessment and caves assessment report template, with inputs from the project manager and based upon feedback from the local planning archaeologist, in order to address the unique requirements of the project. In these scenarios it was possible to resolve the complex problems by engaging with either the client regarding their design or with the local planning archaeologist regarding what would need to be included in the assessment.

On occasion I have encountered conflicts of interest where no simple solution was immediately apparent, and I have had to request assistance and intervention from my project managers. This has occurred on a few occasions where attempting to order data from a historic environment record for a project has resulted in further questions from the relevant HER about the nature of the project, and on occasion, details of our clients. Ordinarily if the project we are working on is in support of a pre-application assessment we will not be able to provide this information as it would breach our confidentiality agreements. In most cases informing the HER that we cannot provide more information at this stage has been sufficient but on occasions where they have pressed for more, I have had to involve my project managers who were able to assist in resolving the issue.

As I have gained more experience in my role as a consultant, I have begun to see more repetition in the types of challenges that I encounter and with this experience now have strategies of how to deal with similar problems in the future. This is mostly derived from having developed more knowledge of where the pertinent legislation and guidance relating to a particular heritage issue is likely to be located, whether it be national and local planning policies that need to be followed or a particular set of guidance or advice that will need to be employed whilst conducting the work and producing the assessment. In situations where it is not clear what approach should be taken, I will initially discuss with my project managers, who will often be able to direct me to any relevant sources of information based upon their own experience and

knowledge. This has occurred more often when I have worked upon Scottish projects as I do so relatively infrequently and will normally ask my managers to apprise me of the location of any relevant legislation, policies and guidance.

Perception of professional context

My company is a limited company (with private shareholders) which is answerable to the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) as a Registered Organisation (RO). As such all of our work is underpinned by the CIfA Code of conduct: professional ethics in archaeology (CIfA, 2014 last updated 2021). The company have developed methodologies for the production of desk-based assessments and environmental impact assessments that are underpinned by the codes and standards outlined in CIfA Code of conduct. They have also signed up to their own code of conduct which is heavily derived from CIfA five principles. The company also holds ISO 9001:2015 accreditation, which is an independent verification that all of the company's internal management systems conform to international standards of quality project and financial management.

All of the work that I undertake is produced following these methodologies and with regard to the company code of conduct. As a consultant my role is to advise our clients on the potential heritage constraints relating to their proposals and to provide advice on the likelihood of requirements for archaeological mitigation. I am, therefore, always mindful of presenting the results of my assessments in a responsible manner as a failure to do so would result in damage to my own, my companies and potentially the heritage industry's reputations.

My reports all include thorough details of the methodology employed (alongside any relevant underpinning legislation, policies and guidance) and resources consulted that contributed to the overall assessment. This enables a level of quality control, both provided by the project managers, and by the archaeological advisors to the local planning authority who will ultimately determine whether the scope and detail within the assessment is sufficient.

For example, where designated heritage assets or local non-designated assets of high significance are potentially affected by a proposal, we typically advise our clients to, in the first instance, contact the archaeological advisors to the local planning authority who will then often recommend liaising directly with a local Conservation Officer and/or Historic England. Securing early advice from these parties with regard to any potential impacts from these parties is the most secure way of ensuring that our subsequent assessments will meet any specific concerns held by those responsible for conserving the assets. This has been key on a number of my projects, particularly when working towards Listed Building Consents, and has, on occasion, been facilitated by on site meetings with local Conservation Officers and the developer to discuss the proposals and to get an early idea of any likely constraints, and potential solutions.

It has not, however, always been possible for me to engage directly with the archaeological advisors to a local planning authority, typically due to confidentiality agreements and our clients preferring to do their own liaison. This has, on occasion, led to problems in determining the scope of the assessment that we have produced due to being unaware of specific local requirements which can vary quite widely. When this has occurred, we have sometimes had to revise our assessments with regard to the feedback and subsequently advise our clients that early engagement, preferably directly by us, could have enabled this issue to be avoided.

As I work as part of a consultancy team our work is typically involved in the provision of pre-application advise or assessments to support planning applications. Many of my assessments have concluded that further archaeological work is likely to be required by the local planning authority which may involve geophysical survey, trial trenching and subsequent excavations. As the company is a large multifaceted company which can provide geophysical survey and fieldwork we have to be mindful of the potential conflict of interests where our advice may result in work that another part of our company can then undertake. This goes back to the principle of presenting the results of assessments in a responsible manner and any potential conflict of interest is avoided as we do not, ultimately, decide upon the mitigation requirements relating to archaeology (this being the remit of the local planning authority) or contractually bind our clients in to using us to provide any further services.

Although, I am not yet a CfA member I have been keeping track of my training and professional development since September 2021 and, at the time of this submission, logged over 40 hours of training. The training programmes have included First Aid training provided by St Johns Ambulance and photogrammetry and historic building recording training provided by internal specialists. I have also attended an online talk held by the medieval pottery research group and an internal seminar on soil micromorphology as part of my own personal commitment to broadening my knowledge base in both practical and applicable terms to that can be applied to my current role and in more general terms to gain a basic understanding of current works being undertaken in other disciplines.

As a consultant my opportunities to directly engage with the public with regard to archaeology are relatively limited but that has not meant that my project work has not had a public benefit. For example, a large-scale desk-based assessment for a proposed garden village at a location completed in 2021, now forms part of the evidence base for the District Council Local Plan.

Career break to pursue other areas.

Position held:	Archaeological Consultant
Organisation name:	A Company
Dates position held:	May 2018 to November 2018
Length of time in role:	6 months
I worked as an archaeological consultant on a variety of environmental impact assessments. I was responsible for producing heritage baseline chapters, conducting independent research (both online and by archive visits) and working under the direction of a senior consultant.	
The skills that I initially developed in this role were built upon further in my subsequent work and will not, therefore, be discussed in more detail here.	

Career break to pursue other areas.

Position held:	Various roles (Site Assistant, Supervisor, Project Officer)
Organisation name:	A company
Dates position held:	September 2007 to September 2017
Length of time in role:	10 years
As a Project Officer I was responsible for the day to day management of archaeological projects. The responsibilities included running excavation projects to pre-determined time and budgetary restraints, mentoring project supervisors, assisting with tendering for projects and producing written reports and project designs. I was required to be competent with Microsoft word, adobe illustrator and CAD programmes to effectively operate in this role.	
As a Project Supervisor I was primarily responsible for the supervision and training of a fieldwork team and for quality control of the records being produced. My key responsibilities included training, supervision, surveying (typically with GPS) and report writing. I also assisted with the production of project designs and was involved in the organisation and running of a large scale training excavation.	
As a Project Archaeologist I was responsible for the excavation and recording of archaeological deposits and remains on a wide variety of sites. I was also occasionally responsible for the training and supervision of junior members of staff and paying trainees.	

Qualifications

Please list any relevant qualifications, including title, University and date of completion and a brief outline of the areas covered. The boxes will expand as you type.

Qualification title, University & date completed	Brief outline
Bachelor of Science in Archaeology (2.1), A University, July 2006	Key modules included palaeoecology, geoarchaeology and geophysical project work. Dissertation was a comparative

	assessment of various geophysical techniques on a Site, including comparisons to previously completed geophysical surveys on the same Site.
--	---

List of projects/publications/grey literature

If you have published papers or articles, authored grey literature or internal reports or delivered presentations about your work **in the last 2 years**, please list them below. Where work is co-authored or the authors not defined, please indicate which part(s) you were responsible for.

You can also highlight those you are including as your examples of work.

- A site (2021): Environmental Impact Assessment
- A site (2020-2021): Desk Based Assessment
- A site (2021): Heritage Impact Assessment
- A site (2021): Cultural Heritage Assessment
- A site (2021): Desk Based Assessment and Caves Assessment
- A site (2021): Heritage Statement