

**CIfA Professional Practice Paper:**  
An introduction to providing career entry training  
in your organisation





# Contents

<b>Introduction</b>	2
<b>1 How to plan structured training</b>	4
<b>1.1</b> Planning a structured training programme	4
<b>1.2</b> Assigning roles and responsibilities	7
<b>1.3</b> Linking training to the NOS and NVQ in Archaeological Practice	10
<b>1.4</b> Training the trainers	12
<b>1.5</b> Recruitment	12
<b>2 Running structured training</b>	14
<b>2.1</b> Induction	14
<b>2.2</b> Documenting progress	15
<b>2.3</b> Formal review	17
<b>2.4</b> Supervision	18
<b>2.5</b> Dealing with problems	18
<b>3 Realising the benefits of structured training</b>	19
<b>3.1</b> Costs, benefits and risks	19
<b>3.2</b> Whole career planning	20
<b>3.3</b> Tips from trainers and trainees	22
<b>Select references</b>	24
<b>Appendix 1</b>	24
<b>Appendix 2</b>	24

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ISBN 978-0-948393-22-8

First published December 2014. Revised December 2020

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# Introduction

This paper is for employers and employees within archaeological and heritage organisations. It provides an introduction and guide to the principles of structured work based training as they might be applied in those organisations, based on a tried and tested model. The model has been piloted through the Institute for Archaeologists' Workplace Learning Bursaries Scheme, funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, and has already been adapted for use by Historic England and the Council for British Archaeology. The model can be used to structure a training programme for career entry level employees, employees transferring between specialisms or employees moving between levels in the first few years of their career. This paper has been published by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) and is supported by online materials at <https://www.archaeologists.net/careers/info-for-employers>.

Many employers in the heritage sector already provide training opportunities for their employees. These opportunities normally take the form of on-the-job learning, technical courses, practical training days or attendance at specialist conferences and seminars. The model described in this paper is different because it seeks to provide a planned variety of training for an individual over a longer period (a training programme) and this takes place in the workplace, using live projects and while delivering the organisation's products. The key features of this model are 1) the training programme does not rely on external training providers, 2) employees have strategic learning objectives based on personal career development aspirations and organisational need and 3) employers can realise greater benefit from money and time invested in training because employees' skills can be tailored to deliver work in hand and work planned for the future.



**Table 1 What is structured training?**

### Structured training is:

- delivered as a programme of an agreed length of time for an individual
- based on a training and review process while delivering real products in the workplace
- not provided by external trainers or through courses (although these may form part of the programme if appropriate)
- planned in advance
- directed towards specific skills to be gained
- supported by a dedicated supervisor and a mentor
- provided by staff who know how to train
- mapped against the National Occupational Standards
- monitored and reviewed in a structured way to provide a sense of progression
- organised using specially developed tools (in this case the Training Plan and Learning Agreement)
- accredited against a recognised brand - the NVQ or professional membership levels
- possible only with time and space for daily learning
- focussed on professional as well as technical skills
- based on the principle of a whole career approach – thinking beyond the programme in terms of career development planning

The National Occupational Standards in Archaeological Practice (NOS) break down the knowledge and skills needed to perform virtually every aspect of work undertaken in the sector. When you choose to train in a particular skill or set of skills, all you need to do is identify the appropriate part of the Standard and its requirements and ensure that after training the Standard has been met. The National Vocational Qualification in Archaeological Practice (NVQ) provides a route map to meeting the NOS, guiding candidates to bespoke sets of new skills or competencies at junior level. NVQs are seen as a route to professional status by ClfA, which offers fast track membership at Practitioner level to those with a full NVQ in Archaeological Practice at level 3.

## 1 How to plan structured training

### 1.1 Planning a structured training programme

A structured training programme following the ClfA model must focus on the development of skills by an individual (the trainee). While the same programme may be adapted over and over again for other trainees, the specific nature of the skills to be trained in and the manner of the training require one-to-one planning and management and cannot easily be given to a group.

A structured training programme needs to offer skills that meet the current requirements of the organisation or any future skills gaps identified in its business plan. It is important for those involved in training (trainers and trainees) to understand how good training can have a positive effect on the work of the organisation. The skills to be gained must also offer the trainee career development opportunities and meet their own aspirations for learning.

Training that is linked to the development and sustainability of the organisation merits senior management input into its planning and execution. A training programme should be developed and shaped by the organisation's management team and a senior manager should take responsibility for the delivery of the training (although not necessarily for every day instruction) as the programme Supervisor (see section 1.2 below).

The outline of all training programmes should be structured using a Training Plan. This should be set out formally, along the lines described below, before any form of recruitment (internally or externally) to the training programme can take place and before detailed tasks and goals for learning are set. The Training Plan then sits alongside the job description and person specification for the post to which the training is attached. Potential trainees will be able to see the Training Plan to help them decide whether the skills offered match their own aspirations and what they can bring to the training.





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Training Plans have already been written for a number of different types of trainee roles within archaeological organisations, as part of the HLF Workplace Learning Bursaries Scheme. Organisations may take these models and adapt them to offer the particular skills they would like to offer in these different roles (see Appendix 1 and <https://www.archaeologists.net/careers/info-for-employers>).

**Table 2 The Training Plan**

**The Training Plan must**

- identify the need for the programme and how it fits into the organisation’s skills framework and business plan
- define the length of the programme and of any parts of the programme that involve time with specific specialists
- identify the proposed outcomes of the programme – what skills the trainee will have and at what level
- identify supporting roles – a Supervisor, Mentor and other supporting staff
- define the learning activities that will deliver each skill to be gained – the type of projects or products that the trainee will be working on
- map the skills offered against the NOS
- provide a timetable of inductions and formal reviews
- provide details of the locations for work, means of communication and ways of working with other staff members
- provide details of additional elements to the training – formal courses, conferences and papers to be given or produced

**1.2 Assigning roles and responsibilities**

Organisations should provide a high level of support throughout a structured training programme, identifying the appropriate staff to support the trainee and dedicating enough hours every week to ensure that effective training and constructive feedback can take place. The appointment and dedication of supporting staff are fundamental to the success of a training programme, and these staff should be identified and drawn into the placement process at its outset. Supporting staff will themselves benefit from supporting a structured training programme, as they gain new management skills, test their own knowledge and skills, and learn new ways to explain the purpose of their work.

The following roles are required to support effective structured training. These roles may be combined within smaller organisations, although the Mentor should always be an independent advisor (allocated from outside the organisation if necessary).

**Line manager**

It is the Line manager’s responsibility to oversee the programme. They answer to the organisation’s management team and work closely with the Supervisor to ensure that the programme works.

The Line manager will be responsible for

- employment issues
- ensuring that the trainee knows what is expected of them



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- the trainee's welfare
- the Training Plan
- **Training the trainers** – ensuring the right staff are in the right supporting roles, and that they have the appropriate skills for the role
- **Recruitment** (alongside the designated Supervisor, Mentor or other senior staff)
- Induction of the trainee
- signing off the placement at its end and making sure the learning goals have been achieved

### **Supervisor**

It is the Supervisor's responsibility to plan, monitor and report on the work of the trainee, and they should be available to the trainee on a daily basis. The actual day to day training may be shared between different members of staff, for example where a programme includes a variety of areas of work involving different specialists. The Supervisor will be responsible for

- Documenting progress of the trainee through the Learning Agreement and Formal review
- Helping the trainee to develop a portfolio of their work
- **Whole career planning**
- **Dealing with problems**
- Making sure the trainee gets the most from the experience

### **Mentor**

It will be the Mentor's role to be available to support the trainee as a sounding board and give impartial advice. Mentors will usually be experienced staff within the organisation or from outside it, and should not be the Supervisor or Line manager. A Mentor needs to be

- a role model
- professional
- a good listener
- a good motivator
- able to help develop self-confidence
- able to give support in dealing with practical problems
- patient
- positive
- easy to talk to

### **Peer**

The Peer should be someone who has had previous recent experience of structured training, or an equivalent staff member with an interest in training and their own professional development at a step just ahead of the trainee. They will be a friendly guide to help with day to day tasks, both administrative and technical – including introducing the programme holder to other colleagues at the same level.

### 1.3 Linking training to the NOS and NVQ in Archaeological Practice

The Training Plan should describe how the skills to be learned will match up to the National Occupational Standards in Archaeological Practice. These standards are recognised by employers to reflect the skills and competencies required to work in the sector, they ensure that a similar, high standard of training is given across the UK, and that skills are described in a language other employers and client organisations within the sector understand.

The Standards are grouped into around 60 areas of practice and can be downloaded from the National Occupational Standards database (see the References below).

Each 'Learning goal' listed within the **Learning Agreement** should be referenced to the standard or specific part of a standard that will be met by the training



**Table 3 Linking learning goals to the NOS in Archaeological Practice – examples**

Learning goal	NOS reference
1 Learn how to catalogue digital archives to ADS standards	CCSAPAE3 all criteria
2 Learn how to work safely in the workplace	CCSAPAH10 all criteria
3 Learn how to monitor the environment in which the physical archive is stored	CCSAPAC6 criteria 7–11

Where possible the organisation may wish to register a trainee for all or part of an NVQ in Archaeological Practice. This involves independent assessment by CfA appointed Assessors against a predetermined set of NOS. If not registered for an NVQ, the NOS can still be used to measure achievement against the standards by the supervisor or NOS expert within the organisation, or could be used by the trainee as evidence in support of an NVQ at a later date.

## 1.4 Training the trainers

The preparation and training of those taking on supporting roles will be important to the success of the programme. Those supervising or mentoring may not have carried out such roles before – these are roles which require specific skills in their own right, so staff will need to be supported to gain them and put them into practice. Once gained, staff will find that these skills benefit other aspects of their role such as line or team management.

Staff may benefit from training in

- managing people
- listening
- mentoring
- training and coaching
- conducting appraisals and reviews
- professional development management
- resolving conflict
- conducting effective meetings
- providing constructive feedback
- project management
- performance management
- time management
- creative problem solving
- motivating others
- using the National Occupational Standards in Archaeological Practice
- NVQ assessing.

## 1.5 Recruitment

An organisation may wish to recruit to a new post that includes structured training. However, if the training is to be offered to an individual already in post, then nominating someone for training may be done through competition for the position of trainee or may be simply offered to an individual as part of the career development and appraisal process.

Organisations will have their own procedures for recruitment and for interviewing or promoting staff. For a training focussed post these procedures may be used with some variation.

Examples of job descriptions and person specifications for trainee roles can be found at <https://www.archaeologists.net/careers/info-for-employers>.





## Table 4 Recruiting trainees

### Important differences between recruiting to ordinary roles and recruiting a trainee

- the job description and person specification must make it clear that the role involves structured training
- the job description should list the tasks and responsibilities of the post but should also outline the training that will be provided
- the person specification should set out clearly the aptitude and approach to learning that the organisation is looking for in a trainee (together with any minimum qualifications or experience required to form the basis for training), rather than focussing on present skills
- organisations using the ClfA model for training programmes must offer these programmes in line with the ClfA recommendations for minimum salaries; training positions should be of finite duration with clearly defined learning goals leading to appropriate salary progression
- the shortlisting panel should consider how applicants for training posts will benefit from the training
- interviewers (a maximum of 3 individuals) should not be intimidating, and should give the candidate the opportunity to demonstrate their enthusiasm for the training offered

## 2 Running structured training

### 2.1 Induction

It is important to brief trainees as you would any other members of staff to avoid misunderstandings about the role and status of the trainee.

An induction for trainees should include at a minimum

- a health, safety and security briefing
- briefing on organisational culture (behaviour and client expectations)
- briefing on the organisation's working practice (working hours, holidays, special events, time keeping, delivery of work, quality review procedures)
- briefing on the structure of the organisation - key staff, reporting and communications and the role and status of the trainee in the organisation
- advice on what to do if any grievances arise



### 2.2 Documenting progress

The progress of the trainee is documented using the Learning Agreement.

The Learning Agreement sets out the skills to be gained, as proposed in the Training Plan, with detail of how and when each is to be achieved within the specified time frame of the programme. Once a trainee starts their training, it is important to put this in place as soon as possible so that the trainee is clear what is expected of them.

The document has a section where the Supervisor can record the trainee's progress in learning each skill which can then be reported back to the Line manager. An example of a Learning Agreement can be found at <https://www.archaeologists.net/careers/info-for-employers>.



**Table 5 The Learning Agreement**

#### The Learning Agreement

- is produced by the trainee and the Supervisor together
- is based on the Training Plan - the learning goals from the Training Plan must be transferred to the Learning Agreement
- includes goals to develop soft skills – communication, people management, writing and negotiation – as well as technical skills
- includes a detailed and dated schedule of tasks and activities to deliver the identified learning goals
- identifies any particular areas of training support that the trainee will need
- can include additional personal goals (not in the original Training Plan) that the trainee wishes to achieve within the programme in any particular areas appropriate to the role and organisation
- is referenced with the NOS
- includes space for review of progress against the goals
- is a flexible document and can be amended to take into account work flow and changing organisational priorities

### 2.3 Formal review

Formal review of the programme is carried out by the Supervisor, and happens at times scheduled at the beginning of the training programme. Following an initial meeting to set up the Individual Learning Agreement, a review should be carried out at monthly meetings, or more often if necessary. The number and frequency of reviews will depend on the nature and length of the training and how quickly learning goals can be achieved.

The review should take the form of a discussion of the learning goals, noting progress on the Learning Agreement itself and making changes to the document to accommodate changes in the activities that the trainee will be undertaking to meet each goal. Supervisors should familiarise themselves with the relevant NOS requirements that relate to each goal and ensure they have been met before the goal is signed off.

The trainee should be encouraged to develop a portfolio, to include work they have produced, good reports and commendations, and any presentations or papers they give over the course of their programme.

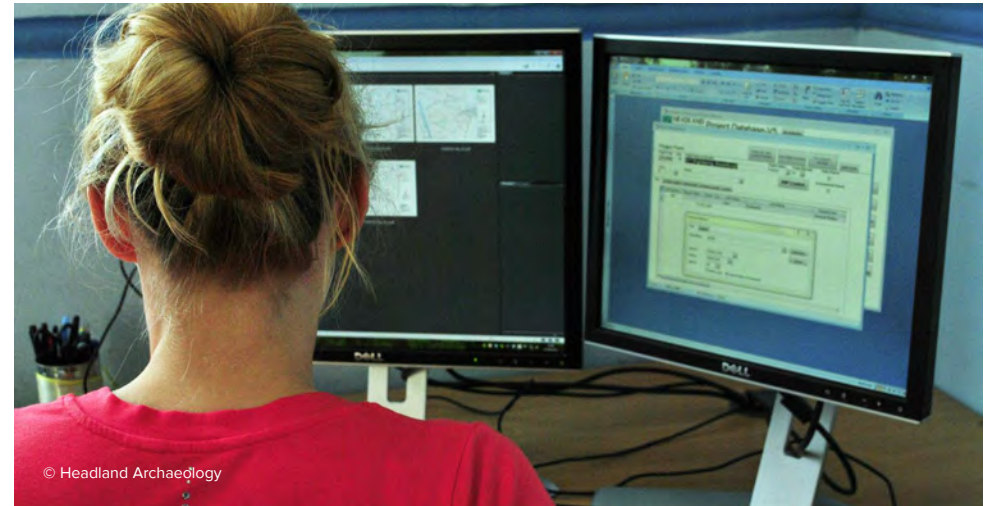
Depending on the length of the training programme, further review may be undertaken periodically in the form of an appraisal or professional development review. The organisation will have its own methods for doing this. These reviews should always include discussion of the Training Plan and the Learning Agreement.

## 2.4 Supervision

Trainees should be given a balance of independence and monitored supervision. In terms of time spent supervising, the average model is intensive supervision for the first month (1 day per week) followed by 2–4 hours per week. This time should cover Line manager, Supervisor and Mentor responsibilities. The Supervisor and trainee should agree between them how often they will meet to discuss new tasks or tasks that have been completed and keep each other informed if any changes to this plan occur. Giving constructive feedback is a key part of supervision, and Supervisors should be sure to give feedback regularly, both formally through review of work, and informally in relation to soft skills and professional behaviour.

## 2.5 Dealing with problems

Problems usually arise when individuals feel disappointed in the training they are receiving or they are confused about their role and what is expected of them. The Supervisor will deal with problems relating to training. For other problems, the trainee may choose to go to the Mentor.



Problems are unlikely to arise as long as

- the programme has a clear Training Plan
- there is a fair and thorough recruitment process
- there is a clear definition of supporting roles
- there is good quality supervision
- good communications are established at the outset
- there is a proper induction
- the Individual Learning Agreement is reviewed frequently

## 3 Realising the benefits of structured training

### 3.1 Costs, benefits and risks

Seven organisations (from both the public and private sectors) that have hosted 12 month structured training programmes under the IfA Workplace Learning Bursaries Scheme have submitted data on the costs, benefits and risks of running structured training programmes.

Most agree that the primary cost (apart from the normal employment cost for any staff member) is in staff time for planning the training. In terms of time spent actually delivering training, the average model is intensive supervision for the first month (1 day per week) followed by 2 – 4 hours per week. Some of this time is time that would ordinarily be spent in line management responsibilities for equivalent members of staff.

In terms of benefits, trainers report that trainees on a structured programme are on average 70% productive on client work over 12 months. Trainees contribute significantly to producing work on time and to budget. Most organisations who have offered structured training have been able to put forward an example of where the trainee has produced a high-quality product or several.

Many organisations confirm that a trainee undergoing structured training progresses quickly. Trainees are also found to gain greater independence over the 12 months than other staff starting at the same stage, due to the level and range of responsibilities given in a planned 12 months in comparison with employment alone, and due to the increased confidence gained by having dedicated training support for the 12 month period.

Organisations have also said that they use their training programme for positive PR – in tenders, to impress clients, corporate bosses or funders. Offering a training programme enables organisations to show commitment to defining and delivering standards.

In addition, through delivering training, organisations can help promote a positive culture in their organisation and attract better staff. The application and enthusiasm of a trainee can also act as a positive force among existing staff. Staff learn how to share experience and knowledge and to be challenged in their approaches. They may also learn new skills to support the trainee. The trainee themselves may be trained in skills that otherwise are not available in the marketplace.

The only risks identified to providing such training are associated with the pressures of time and availability of staff to plan and supervise training. This paper should make those processes straight forward and aims to help save organisations time.

### 3.2 Whole career planning

The Supervisor should work with the Line manager to help the trainee develop professionally over the course of the programme, beyond the technical goals of the training programme itself. This might include encouragement to speak at professional conferences, to pursue or upgrade professional membership, to undertake formal training in technical areas relevant to their role or carry out their own research and reading.

Towards the end of the programme, it is the responsibility of the organisation to consider how the trainee will make best use of the skills they have acquired, what role they should assume, and what further skills they may need to develop to achieve their own and the organisation's goals. The trainee's Continuing Professional Development (CPD) will build on the training provided by the organisation, developing or adding goals to the Individual Learning Agreement for the trainee to take forward. ClfA has a monitored CPD scheme, which involves setting out personal goals (in a Personal Development Plan, PDP) and recording activities undertaken to meet goals (in a CPD log) and is compulsory for its accredited members. This approach can be developed easily using the Individual Learning Agreement as a base.



If the organisation is not retaining the trainee, then career guidance should still be given, and the organisation should offer advice and support for the trainee to find a post where they can make use of their new skills.

### 3.3 Tips from trainers and trainees

#### Jenny Tonkins Scottish Canals – trainee in heritage management 2013

- Do make sure that **networking opportunities and work shadowing** are part of your training
- Do focus on your **learning goals** and address these in depth, rather than aiming for a huge range of additional skills but only acquiring them at a superficial level
- Don't forget **soft skills** – how to construct an email, when to pick up the phone instead, how to juggle workload
- Do **enjoy feedback** – think of it as accelerating your learning and get used to discussing your personal progress

#### Victoria Singleton Suffolk CC – trainee in archaeological archives management 2013

- Do **be clear** about how your new skills fit into the organisation and its business development
- Do build **short placements or shadowing** into your training – see how other departments or organisations work and compare them to your own
- Do **keep track of learning outcomes** for a sense of satisfaction and achievement
- Do **attend trainings events, open meetings and conferences** – build CPD into your working life from the start

#### Natalie Ward Northumberland National Park – trainee in heritage management 2010

- Do **be open-minded** and take every opportunity offered during training – you never know what might be useful in the future
- Do remember that **you can learn from anyone** you come into contact with, not just those tasked with training you or just historic environment specialists.
- Do **ask lots of questions**
- Don't be afraid to **take risks or make mistakes** – they are a valuable learning experiences
- Don't expect too much of yourself – **keep it achievable**



#### Natalie Ward Brecon Beacons National Park (trainer 2013)

- Do **be patient** – your trainee is learning
- Do **be willing to learn things yourself** – training is not a one way process
- Do **offer praise** – it means so much to the trainee and reinforces good practice
- Do remember that your trainee **may get more out of a training placement** than professional skills, and in ways you might not expect
- **Don't expect a trainee to be you 5, 10 or 15 years ago** – they aren't

#### Sabina Strachan Scottish Canals (trainer 2013)

- Do **introduce your trainee to the rest of the business** – it provides context and perspective
- Do make sure that your trainee **learns the soft skills** needed for a career (communication, delegation, team working, people management skills), not just the technical skills
- Do spend time helping your trainee with their **report writing style**
- Don't neglect the **Learning Agreement** – it helps you structure your training and gives the trainee a sense of achievement

## Select References

National Occupational Standards, <http://www.ukstandards.org.uk>

The Archaeology Training Forum (Training Award), <http://archaeologytraining.org.uk/>

The NVQ in Archaeological Practice, <https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/82144.html>,  
[www.archaeologists.net/learning/nvq](http://www.archaeologists.net/learning/nvq)

ClfA's scheme for Continuing Professional Development,  
[www.archaeologists.net/development/cpd](http://www.archaeologists.net/development/cpd)

CC Skills and English Heritage Sector skills survey, <https://historicengland.org.uk/content/heritage-counts/pub/2013/historic-environment-cultural-heritage-skills-survey-pdf/>

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## Appendix 1 Existing Training Plan models

Training Plans have been developed for placements in a number of areas of archaeological practice through the HLF Workplace Learning Bursaries Scheme, amongst other schemes. Training Plans should be bespoke to the organisation and the placement, but these models may provide a good starting point for development of your own Training Plan.

Training Plans are available for career entry in the following job roles at  
<https://www.archaeologists.net/careers/info-for-employers>.

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## Appendix 2 National Occupational Standards in Archaeological Practice

Links to individual National Occupational Standards in Archaeological Practice can be found in the document 'Guidance on mapping short courses to National Occupational Standards (NOS)' which can be accessed from this page <https://www.archaeologists.net/careers/info-for-employers>.

ClfA Approved Training & CPD is a quality mark to identify learning opportunities which have been assessed against our strict quality assurance criteria. To find out more about how your training can carry the Approved Training & CPD logo, go to <https://www.archaeologists.net/approvedcpd> or email [approvedcpd@archaeologists.net](mailto:approvedcpd@archaeologists.net).



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## About ClfA

The Chartered Institute for Archaeologists is the leading professional body representing archaeologists working in the UK and overseas. We promote high professional standards and strong ethics in archaeological practice, to maximise the benefits that archaeologists bring to society.

*An introduction to providing career entry training in your organisation* is a ClfA Professional Practice Paper. For details of other practice papers and reports, please visit our publications webpage at [www.archaeologists.net/publications](http://www.archaeologists.net/publications).

For more information about ClfA, contact us on

email: [admin@archaeologists.net](mailto:admin@archaeologists.net)

web: [www.archaeologists.net](http://www.archaeologists.net)

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