



## Professional pathways July 2023 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 CIfA 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.

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### Applying for practitioner – Ellen McNamara PCIfA

Applying to upgrade can seem quite daunting initially; it is often a strange experience writing about yourself! CIfA accreditation applications also require you to speak about your competencies rather than just experiences, which can be difficult to approach if you haven't done it before. I knew that I wanted to upgrade to PCIfA, so spoke with my line manager to see if it could be one of my performance development targets for the year. I found this helpful as it gave me a deadline to work towards.

If you aren't sure whether you have enough experience to be accredited, the first thing to do is spend some time thinking about what you do in your day-to-day role. List these out and then start to think about which of the [four criteria](#) they are demonstrating. What kind of work do you do? What standards and guidance do you follow? How do you fit in amongst your staff team? I found that using the four criteria as headings in my statement of competence made it easier

to provide a specific example for each. This is also a good way to recognise any gaps you might encounter, and a great opportunity to identify some areas for CPD. For example, a good way of demonstrating coping with complexity is writing about the first time you undertook a particular type of work, or when you encountered something unexpected. If you aren't sure if you have anything to demonstrate problem solving, you could think back to some challenges you have worked through or you speak with your line manager to see if there is anything new you could learn. This will give you something to discuss in your application.

I also made sure to familiarise myself with the [CifA Code of conduct](#). You need to refer to this directly in your application, discussing how it guides your work. You should also be familiar with other standards and guidance relevant to your work. Spend some time thinking about why these are important before you start.

Finally, don't be afraid to ask for support with your statement. You can speak to colleagues, or managers, or a member of CifA staff. It is not against any rules for your manager to read your application! It can actually be very helpful, as they might spot something you have missed out, or something you have not emphasised enough.

My application was successful and I am now accredited at Practitioner grade. If you have any questions about the application process, I am more than happy to chat. My email address is [ellen.mcnamara@archaeologists.net](mailto:ellen.mcnamara@archaeologists.net)

**Ellen is Membership Services Coordinator with CifA**



### **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 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 some pieces of work that you can use as examples to support your application before you do.

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 Practitioner (PCifA), 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 can include an academic referee alongside an employer one.

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 PCIfA grade you will need to have worked on at least one project to be able to use it as an example in your statement to support the four areas of the competence matrix fully, but do not need to have any written examples yet (if you do, please include them).



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

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

For coping with complexity, have you undertaken any complex work such as a feature you have not seen before or piece of work you have not carried out before and dealt with these effectively and how did you do this?

For perception of professional context, do you use the *Code of conduct* to guide your work and think about 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](mailto:membership@archaeologists.net) and we will be happy to help!



### Any questions? Please ask

If you've got a question about CfA or careers please send it to [anna.welch@archaeologists.net](mailto:anna.welch@archaeologists.net) or for membership enquiries contact [lianne.birney@archaeologists.net](mailto: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?

Practitioner applications are reviewed at the end of each month and details of how to apply, application costs and deadlines are here <https://www.archaeologists.net/join/apply>. To help you prepare look at [the resources on the Practitioner section](#) of the 'Join CfA' pages, particularly the [recorded guidance on YouTube](#).

We want to encourage every archaeologist to submit a successful application for professional accreditation. But how do you ensure you have included everything in your application, so it is more likely to be successful? Join Ellen's digital workshop on 10 November for a review of the accreditation process, covering everything from the online application form to the statement of competence and everything in between. She will walk through each step of the application, ensuring you understand what CfA's Validation committee is looking for and how to best demonstrate your skills and knowledge to them. Our workshops fill up quickly, so [register now to join](#) the next one.



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](#)

The Council for British Archaeology's [Festival of Archaeology](#) 2023 is underway. The [CIfA Early Careers Special Interest Group](#) and the Council for British Archaeology are hosting a digital Early Careers Conference on July 26<sup>th</sup> from 3.00-8.00pm GMT. For more details and how to book [see their festival webpage](#).



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](mailto: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'.

Anna Welch BA MA ACIfA, Professional Development & Practice Coordinator

Lianne Birney BA MCIfA, Membership Manager