CIfA | Chartered Institute for Archaeologists

What you need to know

Joining a CIfA inspection panel

www.archaeologists.net

What is a Registered Organisation?

Registered Organisations are businesses and suppliers of archaeological services that have been assessed and inspected by CIfA and are members of CIfA

The Registered Organisations scheme is a unique quality assurance scheme in archaeology. It is a 'kite mark' indicating high professional standards and competence.

Registered Organisations have demonstrated they have the skills to provide informed and reliable advice and execute appropriate schemes of work while minimising uncertainty, delays and cost.

Registered Organisations subscribe to the same codes of professional conduct and practice as individual accredited members.

Registered Organisation Scheme Inspections

- CIfA registration lasts for a set period (normally three years), after which organisations must reapply.

- Inspections are repeated for each application. They involve a rigorous peer review by a panel, which includes a CIfA facilitator and two or three other panel members.

- Inspections may involve a site visit for organisations carrying out intrusive work.

- This process helps organisations review their practices and benefit from recommendations for improvement.

Do I qualify as a panel member?

- ❑ Members of the Registrations committee (Organisations)

- ❑ Responsible Post Holders or their nominated deputies, who must be senior employees of a   Registered Organisation and an accredited member of the Institute

- ❑ Relevant curators for organisations carrying out contracting and consulting work

- ❑ Relevant (Institute-accredited member) contractors or consultants for organisations carrying out curatorial work

- ❑ Other accredited members of the Institute with relevant technical knowledge

- ❑ Historic environment specialists who are not members of the Institute and who have relevant technical knowledge

- ❑ A member of Institute office staff, or appropriate representative, to take minutes, guide procedure, and write up the final inspection report

Regulations for the registration of organisations https://www.archaeologists.net/codes/cifa

Before the inspection

As part of their application, the organisation provides supporting information. This is available for reference, but you are not expected to read everything
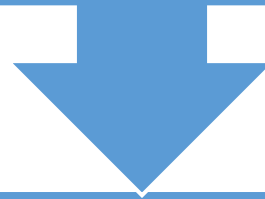
Key documents for review from the organisation are the

Application form	Project reports

Supporting information available for reference

Copy of the signed record of the resolution passed by the governing body

Organisational diagram

Organisational skills audit and training plan

List of grey literature reports (normally for the last two years)

Details of organisation's publication record

Archive deposition strategy and programme

Application form

The application form includes a checklist with background details such as the number of offices, staff, and services.

It also provides a more detailed description of the organisation's processes and activities

Project reports

We will send you a list of grey literature produced by the organisation being inspected and ask you to select a couple of reports to review. Use your knowledge and experience to check them against the relevant *Standards and guidance*.

You will also choose the project for the 'talk through'. This is an overview of how the organisation manages a project from start to finish, including its management processes and the quality checks carried out.

A training module on reviewing reports and a detailed guide to the project talk through are available on the panel members resources page.

Pre inspection meeting

An online meeting is held shortly before the inspection to review the application and project reports.

It helps plan the day and highlight any areas of focus

Inspection Day

The CIfA representative chairs the meeting to ensure the agenda is followed and breaks are taken. The CIfA representative also takes notes for the report, while panel members keep their own notes

The morning session usually runs from 10:00 – 13:00 with scheduled breaks

The afternoon session starts at about 13:30 and continues until 16:00

Morning session

The Responsible Post-holder (RPH) begins with an introduction to the organisation, including any changes since the last inspection.

This is followed by a meeting with the management team to discuss key areas as relevant to the organisation.

the structure of the organisation

staffing and employment

CIfA membership and promotion of the Institute

training and CPD

public benefit

health and safety

archives and publications

commissioning

quality assurance and the project talk through

Afternoon session

Between 13:30 and 15:00 the panel splits up to talk to staff and visit a site if one is available.

The panel will speak to staff in person, or if they are away from the main hub - on site, in other offices, or working from home - they can join the online meeting from a laptop, tablet, or phone.

Staff may be spoken to all together or in groups. Managers should not be present for these discussions.

Site visit

The site visit includes observations and conversations with staff.

Ideally, this should be a substantial project (not just a watching brief) with several staff available.

The visit can take place on the inspection day or be arranged before or after, possibly alongside a monitoring visit by the historic environment advisor.

A site visit form and guidance are available.

Photo: South West Archaeology

Feedback

After speaking to staff, the panel meets for about 30 minutes to agree what impressed them and where they have concerns or see opportunities for improvement.

At 15:30 – 16:00, the panel meets with the management team to share feedback.

Comments or concerns form part of the feedback to the Responsible Post-holder.

After the inspection, the panel decides whether these concerns should lead to suggested Conditions or Recommendations for the Registration Committee (Organisations) (RCO), who make the final decision.

Recommendation	Criterion
Registration	no benchmarks triggered/ no obvious areas for improvement
Registration with encouragement and recommendations for improvement	implementation of recommendations likely to improve the quality or reliability of the organisation's practice. Committee to determine whether the recommendation is 'to be considered' or 'to be implemented' to make improvements, and may recommend a timescale
Registration conditional upon demonstrated improvement or production of a programme of improvement	failure to implement means the organisation has the potential to do work that could be considered in breach of the *Code of conduct*, other regulations and Standards and guidance
Registration refused	fails to meet criteria in by-law; or the organisation's responses insufficient to persuade Committee that it can be depended on to comply with the *Code of conduct*, other regulations and Standards and guidance
Registration deferred	application not ready to be reviewed by Registered Organisations committee, awaiting additional information

Inspection report

The CIfA representative drafts the inspection report and sends it to the panel.

The panel reviews and adds amendments, and once everyone agrees, it goes to the Responsible Post-holder for checking.

Finally, the report is submitted to the Registration Committee, who decide whether to register the organisation and whether to issue any conditions or recommendations.

Draft copy circulated to panel	
Draft copy reviewed and approved by panel	
Draft copy reviewed and approved by RPH	
Final report filed	

CIfA Registered Organisations

INSPECTION VISITS FORM

Organisation:

Date:

RPHs:

Names of panel members: Kerry Wiggins, CIfA representative and inspection facilitator,

Declarations of interest:

1 Was the purpose of visit explained by the inspection panel to the Responsible Post-holder?
YES/NO

2 Did the panel members introduce themselves? YES/NO

3 Was the procedure for the day explained to the RPH
- private review of form/meeting by panel? (prior teleconference) YES/NO
- discussion of form and any queries and comments arising? YES/NO
- site visit (if relevant)? YES/NO
- talk to staff? YES/NO
- inspection of relevant papers? YES/NO
- discussion of findings with Responsible Post-holder? YES/NO
- record taken of discussion? YES/NO
- report back to RCO which will make final decision? YES/NO

4 Whom did the panel speak to and about what? (Names and topics)

5 Previous recommendations: *See previous registration letter*

6 Post – meeting:

Panel recommendation to RCO: To Register for 3 years with recommendations
(no longer discussed with the RPH at the inspection visit. The panel can discuss during the inspection day and confirm it afterwards when this report is circulated. Only those things mentioned in the report can be mentioned in the recommendations to the RO committee).

This section is only for the panel members and CIfA representative(s). This part of the report is removed from the RPH version that is circulated.

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Insert suggested recommendations or conditions – recommendations are either 'to be considered' (no deadline) or 'to be implemented' (with a suggested deadline). Conditions should also have a suggested deadline. Any recommendations and/or conditions must be associated with those concerns or comments outlined in section 7.2 below.

Condition
Insert numbered conditions

Recommendations to implement
Insert numbered recommendations with deadlines

Recommendations to consider
Insert numbered recommendations

Explanation/summary of panel recommendations to RCO:
Once conditions and recommendations have been listed, an additional explanation/summary needs to be provided to explain to RCO the reason behind the panel recommendations. For example, 'the reason this is a condition is because it has been recommended at several previous inspections and not implemented etc.' Or 'the reason this has not been suggested as a condition (as in previous inspections) is because…'

7 What things impressed/caused concern? (report back to RPH in final interview at end of visit)

The panel would like to thank XX and XX and the team for their hospitality and time on the day of the inspection.

7.2 What caused concern/comment?
Insert numbered comments

7.3 What impressed?
Insert numbered comments

How did the Responsible Post-holder respond to the panel's comments on these issues?

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www.archaeologists.net

Please visit our Inspection panel resources page for more information

https://www.archaeologists.net/panelresources

Information about the role of the Registration Committee (Organisations) can be found here

https://www.archaeologists.net/about/governance/committees

Or contact us with any questions

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