

# TAKING CONTROL OF YOUR FUTURE

making the most of opportunities to expand your career horizons

Kerry Wiggins ACIfA (9032), ClfA Senior Membership Services Coordinator

All accredited ClfA professionals have a responsibility to keep their knowledge and skills up to date and many look to their employer to assist with this. Employers offer training to fill skills gaps, meet the changing requirements of the market and create coherent and productive teams.



Taking part in Registered Organisation inspection panels, for example, can provide valuable CPD opportunities. Credit: Kerry Wiggins

A capable business will recruit and develop staff to achieve these objectives. Good training will engage staff and develop competencies. Appraisals and professional development plans will note personal goals, but where time and money are at a premium, an organisation may focus training and development on those people and practices it has identified can quickly fill the gaps, rather than meeting the aspirations of the individuals it employs. An employer has no obligation and sometimes little incentive to offer anything beyond the requirements to make their business a success.

Most of us, as individuals, will not be the proprietors of the business we work for and will be unlikely to invest the whole of our career in one company or one area of work. We may well have a vision of growing and expanding our careers into other areas of interest and achievement, either within, alongside, or even outside our current profession. In this case we cannot afford to consign our future aspirations for personal development into the hands of our employer. We need to be more ambitious for ourselves than our employer is for us.

If we imagine ourselves as a business, we should invest for future growth. We should build on our strengths and identify areas for further development, be observant and agile in seeking and taking advantage of opportunities. We should look for chances to practise resilience and

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**‘You probably get more out of it [being a Registered Organisation inspection panel member] as CPD than virtually any other activity’**  
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flexibility to help weather setbacks; build confidence and adaptability by stretching the boundaries of our comfort zone; and be prepared to embrace an element of risk. We should be patient and accept that investment for the future may not be rewarded with immediate benefits.

Taking control of our own learning frees us to explore and opens up new opportunities that often take us in unexpected directions. However, freedom comes with responsibilities and these are likely to include finding and sometimes funding our own training. However, if we are willing to travel a little further, we may find training that is less expensive or even free.

We can also spend time in self-directed study or distance learning or use annual leave to shadow others or volunteer. Importantly, we should maintain a record of learning and development. Some employers have

retained Continuing Professional Development (CPD) records when staff leave their employment, meaning it can be difficult to retrieve these later. ClfA's online CPD record is a portable resource that can be taken anywhere.

Sometimes, successful career development can take an unplanned route. Luck is an important element in our lives and we can all identify directions we have taken through chance encounters. Luck in career terms is the meeting of planning and opportunity.

Planning involves engaging in a wide range of activities and networking opportunities. This develops skills and competencies and provides valuable experience, meaning we are well prepared and best placed to take advantage of opportunities when they present themselves. Employers value this experience as real evidence of competencies. Engaging in a diverse range of activities and taking on even small challenges develops valuable soft skills such as effective communication, adaptability, integrity and resilience. These can give the edge in job hunting, progression at work and professional accreditation.

Taking advantage of activities, engaging in something without necessarily being able to assess the outcome, defaulting to saying yes rather than no, puts us in the way of unexpected opportunities either directly or through our enhanced networks. When those opportunities arise, the skills and experience we have developed will result in us being recognised as the right person for the role. So, next time take up an employer's offer of attendance at the ClfA conference.

Participation in our profession is another invaluable CPD opportunity. An accredited member of any grade can apply to sit on Advisory Council, Validation committee, Registration committee (Organisations) and Registered Organisation inspection panels. Get involved with ClfA Area and Special Interest Groups or look at volunteering with local societies who can sometimes fund training.

Our website has a careers page with online training and a wealth of training and professional development information, as well as access to the online CPD diary where members have shared their CPD learning opportunities. Further training and resources can be found on the BAJR and CBA websites, and ClfA Area and Special Interest Groups regularly run CPD courses.



Events such as the ClfA annual conference can provide a wide range of networking opportunities. Credit: Alex Llewellyn/ClfA

**'Within three days [at a ClfA conference] I was able to improve my report writing and data management strategies and was confronted with the necessity of – and then equipped with the skills to produce – selection and retention guidelines for archives. I can see all of these experiences helping in my progression to attain ClfA membership and each has helped me develop further as an archaeologist.'**



**Kerry Wiggins**

Before joining ClfA as Senior Membership Services Coordinator, Kerry worked for adult careers guidance services for 16 years. She has a Master's in Careers Guidance from the International Centre for Guidance Studies (iCeGS) at the University of Derby and was a long-standing member of the Career Development Institute and on the UK register of career development professionals.

**Further reading:**

Krumboltz, J D, & Levin, A, 2016 Luck is no accident: Making the most of happenstance in your life and career. 2nd edn. Impact Publishers  
 Prince, E S, 2019 7 Skills for the Future. Pearson Education