



Chartered
Institute for
Archaeologists

Professional Pathways

January 2022 Bulletin

Move on to Member

Welcome to the January 2022 Professional Pathways bulletin for people who are working towards [Member \(MCIfA\) applications](#). [Professional Pathways](#) aims to support members through CIfA accreditation by signposting to useful advice, resources and training that will help you build on your existing knowledge and skills and reach the next stage in your professional career. The content of the bulletins should help towards demonstrating the four elements of the CIfA competence matrix for your Member application.

This bulletin will focus on professional ethics to help you to meet new requirements coming in in April this year.

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Professionalism and professional ethics

CIfA accreditation is how archaeologists demonstrate to their clients, their employers, peers and the public that they have the knowledge, skills and integrity to meet professional standards and to deliver value to society. Working to professional standards requires professional competence: archaeologists need to be technically skilled and they need to understand and apply ethical principles to their work. These ethical principles are set out in [the Code of conduct](#) and the standards for technical competence form the basis of the competence matrix which all applications for accreditation are measured against.

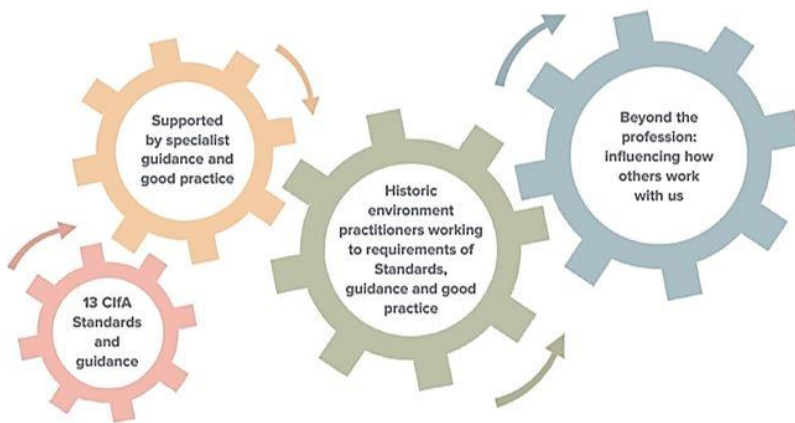
If you're planning on applying for MCIfA after 1 April 2022, you will need to demonstrate that you are working in an ethical way. [A change to the way we assess applications](#) gives ethical competence equal weighting with technical skills and underlines that archaeologists need both in order to be considered professional.

The changes include the introduction of a professional review interview as part of the MCIfA application. The professional review will be an opportunity for you to discuss your work in more detail and to describe how you ensure that you are working in the public interest and delivering benefit to society. For example, you may be asked about your approach to decision-making and problem-solving, identifying potential conflicts of interest and your commitment to quality and self-reflection. We will be publishing detailed guidance to support this new part of the application process soon.



These changes will come into effect in April 2022, so if you apply for the 4 April application deadline this will be the current application guidance.

If you apply for the 15 August application deadline for the Validation committee meeting on 1 November this must be under the new application guidance. All deadlines can be found on the apply online page here www.archaeologists.net/join/apply



What else will I have to demonstrate?

How can you show the level of knowledge that you need to carry out your work? You can show that you are applying the [Code of conduct](#) to your own work in your statement of competence and CPD record as well as in the professional review interview by linking to examples of ethical working. The 'Knowledge' section of the [competence matrix](#) asks that you show

that you have 'authoritative knowledge and depth of understanding of sector and a broad range of historic environment practices' at MCIfA level. This means being aware of the legislation, polices, professional standards, research frameworks, industry good practice and compliance or quality assurance processes relevant to your work. Can you give examples to show this? In your professional review interview you will have an opportunity to discuss how you use this legislation and guidance in your work.

- can you show that you are working to appropriate professional standards and that you understand their relevance? As well as consistently referencing Standards and good practice guidance in your written work have you got examples that show how you apply them?
- do you make sure you keep your skills and knowledge up to date? Updating your CPD log and reflecting on what you've learned and how you will use this new knowledge will show your commitment to this. By regularly reviewing your PDP and targeting CPD opportunities to meet your goals you can show your professional achievement and progress
- are you critically evaluating your work? By having a method to review what you do regularly you can ensure that it is undertaken in accordance with the [Code of conduct](#)

- are you able to show how you have, or could, anticipate, recognise, and resolve potential conflicts of interest within your work in collaboration with colleagues or stakeholders?
- how can you show that you can make decisions about the best approach to take? Think of examples that show why you decided on this and how you implemented it. What impact did it have on the project or work you were undertaking? After reflecting on your course of action can you see where alternative approaches might have been used and how you would tackle them?
- can you show where you have contributed to the creation of new knowledge, helped others to benefit from your work or engaged with the public? [ClfA's Professional practice paper: delivering public benefit](#) may suggest examples
- how can you show that you support the Institute's values? Give examples of how you are promoting professionalism and ethical working practices and/or supporting and encouraging colleagues to do the same. Reference your professional accreditation by using your post-nominals when communicating with clients, colleagues and members of the public



Everyday ethical dilemmas

Making professionally ethical choices can be challenging and there isn't always a right answer. It takes practice to become confident in weighing up what the ethical solution should be and the resources on the [professional ethics webpage](#) are designed to guide you. How would you find ethical solutions to the following dilemmas, taken from the [Introduction to ethics professional practise paper?](#)

The first thing to do is to read through the Code of conduct and see what it says about the way that you should do your work and the way you should treat people around you. Think about which parts of the Code of conduct relate to each dilemma. Making ethical decisions is not always straightforward and often resolving a dilemma is a negotiation between conflicting interests.

1. A client is exerting pressure on the curator to sign off an area of investigation, when you know as an archaeologist that there is still work to be carried out in order to comply with the approved Written Scheme of Investigation.

You may find the following helpful in deciding the most ethical course of action: the preamble to the [Code of conduct](#) and Principles 1.1, 1.2, 1.7, 1.9, 1.11, 1.13,1.14; 2.1, 2.2; as well as the [Standard and guidance for archaeological excavation](#) 3.3.1 and 3.3.10

2. An archaeological organisation wins a highly competitive tender for an archaeological project. They recover a major finds assemblage and in order to save time and money the project manager decides not to x-radiograph any of the ironwork and, instead of employing an experienced specialist, a junior and relatively inexperienced staff member is asked to write up the pottery assemblage.

You may find the following helpful in thinking about things from different viewpoints and deciding the most ethical course of action: the preamble to the [Code of conduct](#) and Principles 1.1, 1.2, 1.4, 1.5, 1.11, 1.14; 3.2, 3.6; 5.8; as well as the [Standard and guidance for archaeological excavation](#) 3.4 and [Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials](#) 3.7.1, 3.7.3, 3.8.3, 3.9.1 You might find the definition of a specialist in the [Toolkit for specialist reporting](#) valuable in thinking about the levels of knowledge expected for specialist work and reporting.

Think about your own values as well as the project design. Ethics is a negotiation between what the requirements are to satisfy job requirements within the rules, and your own satisfaction that you have delivered a professional outcome according to the Code of conduct.

Check the [Introduction to ethics professional practise paper](#) for alternative ways to approach this and other dilemmas.

If you manage staff then you could consider running ethical discussions with them using personal examples or those from the professional practice paper or [e-learning module](#). Ethics discussions are good ways of testing solutions and discovering alternatives. The [Ethics database](#), which brings together over 500 sources on archaeological ethics, in a single place for the use of students, researchers, and professional archaeologists is another good source of examples to discuss. This [article by Joe Abrams MCifA](#), originally published in *The Archaeologist 106*, suggests ways to introduce ethical discussion at team meetings. One of the best and most usable books for further reading on the application of ethics is *Ethicability* by Roger Steare (2014).



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Professional profile – Shannon Danter, MCifA

Shannon is a Post-excavation and archives supervisor who has recently made a successful upgrade application to MCifA. Here she shares her experience of the application process and what helped her.

I applied to upgrade my accreditation level from Practitioner to Member and was accepted in December 2021. I split my application into several manageable chunks. I started off with my CPD log (which, admittedly had one or two gaps I needed to fill in!) and filled this in on the member's area on CifA's website. Having all of my CPD records in one

place on the website was really useful as it meant that I didn't have to search around my computer or paper records to bring everything together. I would definitely recommend using the online CPD log and updating it regularly, it will help streamline that aspect of your application as when you sit down to think about it, you've likely put in way more CPD hours than you'd think!

When writing out my statement of competence, I used the archives specialist matrix as it allowed me to clearly see how my work fit into the main categories. I first made notes on each bullet point on the matrix with an example of how my skills match them before writing up properly. As I work in Post-excavation and archiving, deciding what sort of examples of my work to include was slightly trickier as I do not write reports and therefore do not have an extensive bibliography of grey literature or publications. I aimed to include at least one example that directly related to each of the four pillars of the matrix. For example I included the selection strategy and Data Management Plan for a project I'm currently working on to demonstrate that I understand, and am able to implement selection policies.

Before I submitted my application, I attended a ClfA Zoom workshop which focused entirely on upgrade applications. This was really useful as it allowed me to ask questions about the types of examples I could include in my application that aren't written reports. I would recommend any upgrading members to look out for these workshops as they do give you peace of mind.



Any questions? Please ask

If you've got a question about ClfA or careers please send it to anna.welch@archaeologists.net or for membership enquiries contact 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?

Join our next digital chat on [10 February 12:30 - 1:15 PM](#). One of this month's sessions will be looking at ideas for easy, cost-effective workplace adaptations to benefit both neurodiverse and neurotypical colleagues.

We are repeating some of the more popular themes so please let us know if there's something you missed that you'd like to see again, or if you have an idea for a topic.

An Ethics workshop is planned for late February. Look out for more details on the website.

Thursday 28 April at the Cifa Annual conference will include a day-long opportunity to immerse yourselves further with *Ethics in Archaeological Practice*.

If you have any questions or suggestions for the next bulletin please send them in.



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