

Statement of competence guidance and template

(Revised April 2022)

BEFORE you start this or the online form, please read the relevant application guidance and supporting performance criteria webpages to help complete it.

- [PCIfA application guidance](#)
 - [PCIfA performance criteria](#)
- [ACIfA application guidance](#)
 - [ACIfA performance criteria](#)
- [MCIfA application guidance](#)
 - [MCIfA performance criteria](#)

The statement of competence is the most important part of your application. It informs the Validation committee about how your skills and experience **demonstrate** the criteria in the [competence matrix](#) (PDF) for the grade you are applying for and helps them reach a decision. You can upload it to the online form.

Since April 2022 new requirements have been added to the application criteria. You may need to undertake some training in ethical competence before you apply to be able to **demonstrate** the perception of professional context part of the competence matrix. (See application guidance webpages above)

Remember the committee members do not know you or your work. Please take time to write it carefully and include all your roles and qualifications, where relevant, giving specific examples. You **MUST** include this information otherwise your application cannot be reviewed by the committee.

The template is on the second and third pages. Please refer to the competence matrix on the application guidance webpages above. For further information on how the competence categories apply in different areas of practice, please see our supporting [specialist competence matrices](#).

Statement of competence template

Name of applicant:

Grade applied for: PCIfA ACIfA MCIfA

Employed or voluntary work

Please give **detailed** information about your role and responsibilities **for your current and most recent roles over the last two years**. Use each heading of the competence matrix (above) as a guide. You should cover how you **demonstrate** the four areas - knowledge, autonomy, coping with complexity and perception of professional context - using **specific** examples. You may find it easier to give an example of a project/s you have done from beginning to end.

For any roles you've undertaken **longer than two years ago**, please give a **brief description** of the responsibilities held.

If you have worked on several short-term projects within one company or more in the same role, you can group these together.

The boxes will expand as you type, and you can copy and paste to add more boxes as required. Please ensure you write in the first person (e.g. I carry out/I undertake).

Position held:	Project Archaeologist – Initial 3 months as trainee
Organisation name:	Company name
Dates position held:	May 2022 - Present
Length of time in role:	6 months

Role and Responsibilities

In my role as Project Archaeologist I primarily undertake the excavation and recording of archaeological features. This can be broken down to include: the identification of possible features on open excavations or during evaluations; cleaning of features; choosing methods of excavation; excavating features using hand tools as well as large tools such as a mattock; following deposited fills and their stratigraphy; collection of finds; photography and drawing of features to scale; completion of context sheets.

I also understand and use GPS systems on site to further record the features upon completion of the excavation, as well as taking levels using a dumpy level. I have begun to be a part of post-excavation, carrying out finds processing and flotation and am looking forward for more opportunities to develop my understanding of this over the winter period. Any new skills I can learn as part of this role interest and excite me.

Knowledge

Since beginning as a trainee, my knowledge of archaeology has grown with input from both within and outside of my professional role. As a Project Archaeologist with a CfA-registered company, I work to the standards expected of us as well as the ethical principles set out by the Code of Conduct, to reliably record and protect the historic environment within which we work. I have developed the ability to identify and record archaeological features with little supervision, in both open excavation sites and evaluation trenches, understanding the importance of recording these as accurately and in as much detail as possible.

I begin by recognising features within the natural stratigraphy and cleaning them to find edges, thus giving me the information required to choose the correct method of excavation. Having decided how much of the feature requires excavating, and how to best gather the required information, I lay out a string as necessary and excavate using the suitable tools for the task, following any stratigraphic fills and relationships between intercutting features, collecting finds and samples as required. Upon completing the excavation of a feature, I know how to record using photography including a photo board, scale and north arrow, followed by creating a drawing of both section and plan from a level line to a scale suitable for showing the detail as

required. I am also now able to complete detailed context sheets, describing the characteristics of each context and discussing any possible relationship to other features.

The sites I have worked on so far include building development and quarry sites, producing a variety of archaeological features from Prehistoric pits, Iron Age roundhouses and ditched enclosures to Medieval priory building walls and through to post-medieval. Some of these have shown evidence of various phases of construction, requiring attention to create clear recordings, scale drawings and accurate matrices.

Since beginning my traineeship and in my subsequent position, I have enjoyed taking responsibility to continually expand my knowledge of both archaeology and history through regular reading and podcasts.

Autonomy

From the onset of my training, I have grown in my ability to work independently and can now confidently identify and record features within an environment, understanding the natural stratigraphy and the relationship of features within that.

Before any new excavation or evaluation, I read through the pre-excavation material. This helps to inform my expectations of a site and, as well as collaborating with those on site, guides my discussion of features. I talk with the Project Officer and Supervisors to understand the expected deposits on a site, and the historic background as explained within the WSI, as well as with other Archaeologists on site to explore descriptions of features found, and the fills within them, and any possible relationships. Similarly, I am available on site if trainees need advice or assistance in developing their skills or if they have questions regarding a feature. If they ask a question that I am comfortable answering, I will assist them to the best of my ability. I enjoy working as part of an on-site team, especially being able to discuss, share and receive knowledge of archaeology, the subject being one of my lifelong passions.

I also take it upon myself to research features and finds in order to be able to give a more accurate description when recording. One example of this is when we found chunks of possibly Germanic black lava stone on site. Following research, I discovered that our find was part of an Anglo-Saxon quern stone as were imported from Francia. This tied in with the finding of some broken possible Anglo-Saxon loom weights which I was also able to identify through research.

Coping with Complexity

At the point that I am presented with a new area on a site, I feel it necessary to discuss it with more senior Archaeologists to prepare myself for what may be uncovered. In that way I feel I am better informed and prepared when I encounter a context with characteristics that are new to me. In these instances, I look for advice on how best to proceed, but am determined to quickly understand and search for opportunities to build upon that new knowledge.

In some excavations I have found arrangements of features which have required complex matrices. In these instances, I have become confident in my own ability to read and understand the relationships of cuts and/or fills. However, I will still discuss the relationships with a supervisor or Project Officer in order to receive more experienced input.

One example would be a series of six linearly situated pits with two intercutting postholes which I was part of excavating and which I recorded. It was interesting to decipher the order of the contexts in order to create accurate scale drawings and accompanying Harris matrix. In this instance I was quite sure of the succession of events, although was able to confirm it through discussion with the Site Supervisor.

Another example of something unexpected came earlier on during my traineeship when I found a clay object in a small pit. Assuming it to be a potentially whole pot trapped in the section, I asked my Supervisor for help to instruct me on how to support it during excavation and recording. Ultimately, it transpired that the object was an Iron Age loom weight (the only one found on site at that time) so I was glad to receive the advice and have taken it on board for future discoveries of that type.

Perception of Professional Context

Before an excavation or evaluation, I aim to read through the WSI and take on board any information

provided, including understanding the aims and methods employed. On site, I can speak with the Project Officer and/or supervisors to understand the site strategy at the beginning of an excavation and also as it evolves throughout. Approaching any dig, I always follow the guidance of the ClfA Code of Conduct, primarily endeavouring to accurately record the archaeology present on a site and preserve it (at least in record form) for future research and posterity. I trust my judgement when excavating a feature, determining the Code of Conduct, along with my CSCS knowledge, which together advise me on how to help myself and others remain safe on site. In some cases, an excavation may be on a quarry site where the expectation is that the archaeology will be destroyed during quarry works. In this instance I carry out the excavation of features as I would with all excavations, aiming to work as neatly and accurately as possible, recording in as much detail as achievable, with the added significance of knowing that my work will be the only surviving record of the contexts.

As a Project Archaeologist, I appreciate the advice and knowledge of a site that I can receive from Supervisors and Project Officers on site. If I encounter a situation on site which appears unusual or requires more understanding, I am happy to defer to those with a more appropriate level of ability.

As many of our evaluations are carried out on land belonging to members of the public, we often come into contact with people outside of the archaeological world. In these instances (when it is on their property) I fall back on my experience in customer-facing roles to make it a positive opportunity to discuss findings with them and, if safe, show them features and finds discovered, particularly if they show an interest in the field, or if an interest is sparked within them through the work carried out. In some instances, this can happen with construction workers, ecologists or groundwork engineers who are also on site. As an example, on one evaluation a neighbour of the site appeared and explained he used to work at the British Museum and was interested if we had found anything of interest. Although there were only a few features I was able to explain to him how the site related to the information from works in the nearby landscape as well as the presence of a piece of Roman greyware dated one ditch – possibly in relation to a nearby Roman road found in previous works. I aimed to give him enough information which I could accurately provide to interest him whilst being aware of the need to protect the historic environment from members of the public.

Qualifications

Please list any relevant qualifications, including title, University and date of completion and a brief outline of the areas covered. The boxes will expand as you type.

Qualification title, University & date completed	Brief outline
Not applicable.	