

Expanding CIfA's training delivery and resource

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Delivering high quality training opportunities is a keystone of CIfA's work and an aspect which is constantly being developed and expanded. This development is informed by feedback from our membership and a recent survey of our Practitioner (PCIfA) members highlighted some interesting responses.

PCIfA survey results

This survey specifically targeted PCIfAs, as previous membership consultations had revealed this area of our membership is finding it challenging to access relevant training to support their career development. We wanted to explore this further to ensure we provide relevant and accessible training to all individuals.

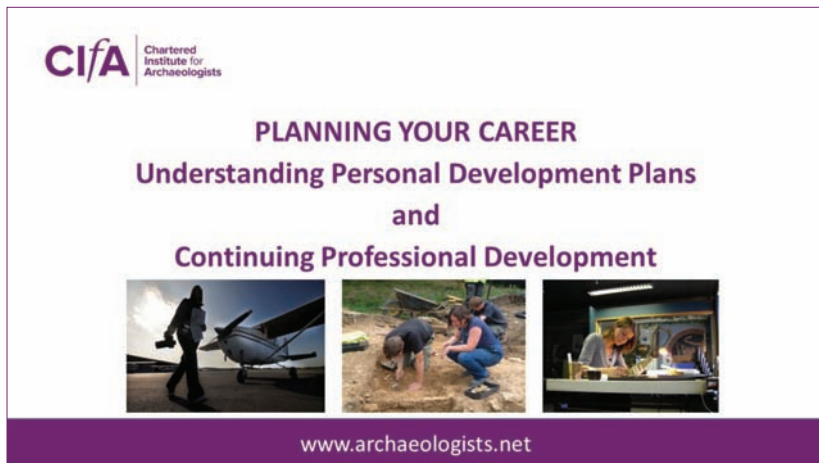
When asked about what type of training CIfA could provide, the preferred option was specialist training through the Special Interest groups, followed by skills training – eg professional ethics, writing reports, understanding desk-based assessments and then the use

and application of CIfA standards and guidance. The most popular suggestions for specific training topics through the Special Interest Groups were finds, geophysics, buildings archaeology (recording and understanding) and marine.

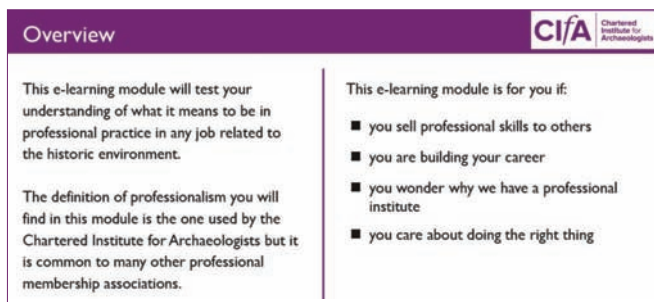
We were interested in learning about the methods of training delivery – most respondents selected a combination of options, but it is interesting to note that there was support for day-long workshops or conferences with opportunities for networking. Online learning modules were also welcomed by respondents. We also asked about how the cost and time for attending training would be covered, and it was interesting to see that employers are more willing to cover the time for staff to attend training than pay for training fees. However, there was still a large percentage of respondents who would have to cover all or part of the cost and time of attending themselves.

At the end of the survey respondents were asked to provide any further suggestions for training opportunities. The most frequent comments included:

- making them more accessible by holding them all over the country, particularly in Scotland
- encouraging employers to support the cost and time for Practitioners to attend training
- reducing the cost of training events
- better promoting of events and training that CIfA offers



PDP and CPD eguidance



Professionalism module overview

Highlights from the training survey to Practitioner members





Pre pandemic Advisory Council meeting. How will these meetings be facilitated in future and how can we adapt to ensure these group discussions continue in the meantime? Credit: Alex Llewellyn

Membership and participant surveys, such as the PCIfA survey, provide us with valuable feedback on the services we deliver and help inform what future events and training opportunities ClfA can facilitate.

Responses helped us target specific themes for training workshops and resources, but they have also highlighted the limits of our geographical reach. You have told us that it's challenging for our membership in the North to access training opportunities in the South (and vice versa). For every workshop or meeting, we explore remote access attendance, not only to widen our reach but also to reduce membership travel (and with that our carbon footprint). This unfortunately is often constrained by the training venue or workshop content, so to date, remote access attendance has been the exception rather than the norm.

When goalposts change: responding to members training needs in the face of world-wide disruption

These explorations of remote access attendance have never been more essential than in the face of a world-wide lockdown, where all of us are having to (at short notice) re-evaluate and re-design how we deliver our work. With this sudden change in working environment comes the opportunity to explore different ways of delivering training to our membership by utilising the ever-increasing digital platforms and improved connectivity.

We trialled a recent digital workshop looking at ClfA accreditation, funded through our Historic Environment Scotland grant. We are sustaining this momentum by expanding our digital learning programme and are preparing a number of digital workshops and training opportunities. These range from live digital workshops and webinars to expanding our suite of e-learning modules.



Adapting to remote working: ClfA staff having a regular online team catchup. Credit: ClfA

We don't know how long the pandemic is going to last, so it is crucial that we adapt our methods of service delivery to ensure our membership still has access to high-quality training opportunities. We hope that one positive legacy of the lockdown is that it will change how we as a profession deliver and access training and CPD, and how we network or attend meetings.



CAN YOU HELP?

While we have already managed to re-design some of our planned workshops and events to be delivered via digital platforms, we are looking at what more we can create and facilitate through partnership and collaboration. This is where you come in!

Do you have any specialist skills that you would be able to share with our membership? This could range from career advice (general or perhaps a specific specialism) or a training workshop that you already have prepared. Are there other training opportunities we could be signposting? Is there a specific theme we should be including within our digital learning programme? If you have any ideas on this (big or small), please get in touch with Elizabeth at conference@archaeologists.net