

Professional ethics?

It's what chartered status is all about

Chartered status in the UK is a professional qualification based on the assessment of competence. Professional bodies awarding chartered status have a duty to act in the public interest and are required to ensure their members meet ethical standards of professional behaviour. Chartered professionals work in accordance with these ethical standards not because they are required to by law or because it is in their interests commercially, but because they have voluntarily made a commitment to do so. Public interest and professional ethics, therefore, sit at the heart of what it means to be a chartered professional, which may be why the public rate 'Chartered' more highly than other designations or qualifications when it comes to trust.

Understanding professional ethics and demonstrating ethical behaviour underpin the *Assessment of professional competence and commitment* criteria we are proposing for the new Chartered Archaeologist grade of accreditation. The criteria comply with Privy Council requirements for chartered status and have been developed following extensive consultation with members and with other professional bodies. They are designed to recognise and accredit the knowledge, skills and ethical behaviour required of archaeologists in the 21st century, clearly demonstrating parity with the professions our members work alongside. Introducing Chartered Archaeologist sends a strong message that our profession is striving for excellence, raising standards and working in the public interest, for the benefit of the historic environment.

The proposal was published last month and, in the run-up to an Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) on Friday 26 April, ClfA staff, Board and Advisory Council will be taking every opportunity to discuss and debate with members, in person and online. The question we'll be asking accredited members to vote on at the EGM is whether to amend the Charter by-law to allow a formal petition to the Privy Council. But we know, however, that members will want to see as much detail as possible about how we would assess applications for Chartered Archaeologist and the criteria they will be measured against before making their decision. As with our last AGM, the facility for on-line voting will be available. Only accredited members (PCIfA, ACIfA, MCIfA and HonMCIfA) can vote and 75 per cent of those voting need to be in favour in order to pass the resolution.



Credit: E Gardiner

If you vote in favour of changing the Charter by-law, the formal petition will be submitted in early summer 2019. If it's successful, and the Privy Council grant us the power to confer chartered status, we will develop more detailed application guidance drawing on the expertise of our Special Interest Groups to ensure that the process is relevant and applicable to all members who wish to progress and who demonstrate the required competence and commitment. This will also involve developing resources to support career development at all stages, enabling those considering a career in archaeology, or at the very early stages, to see a clear route for progression.

Not all archaeologists will want or need to become chartered, but the competence and commitment standards have been designed to be accessible as well as rigorous. The knowledge, skills and behaviours which underpin the standards are, of necessity, generic so they can be applied across all branches of the profession. They are supported by examples of the kind of evidence that would help to demonstrate them, but these are not exhaustive, and applicants will be encouraged to use examples relevant to their own area of professional practice. What they should do, however, is encourage would-be Chartered Archaeologists to think about their

Charter Timeline



practice in broader terms; how does it demonstrate ethical understanding and self-reflection? Or commitment to quality and high standards? Or the delivery of public benefit?

Becoming a chartered profession has been a strategic ambition for ClfA (and its predecessors the IfA and IFA) for nearly 20 years. Achieving it will be a huge step forward, recognising the public (and social, cultural and economic) value of the work our members do. As always, change

brings questions – and some concerns – which we will continue to address over the coming months. For more information about how we got here and the research undertaken to date, see the Chartered Archaeologist web pages at www.archaeologists.net/chartered. This is where you will also find FAQs and further details about the consultation process and the countdown to the EGM. You can contact us by email at chartered@archaeologists.net or by post or use the hashtag #ChartArch to tell us what you think.