

Professional Pathways: short- and long-term strategies for sustaining a skilled profession

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The archaeology market is never static and for every large infrastructure project there is the challenge of where the next contract is coming from. The recession of 2008 hit archaeology hard and during that time many competent archaeologists and specialists were lost to the profession. The last few years have seen a boom in the demand for archaeologists as a result of large infrastructure projects and increased house-building. More archaeologists are now employed than ever before – over 6800 in 2017/18 – but the impact of the recession has left the profession in a less confident position than it perhaps should be about the future.

An article in The Guardian in 2017 warned that the number of students applying to archaeology departments was dropping despite Historic England estimates that the UK would need between 25 and 64 per cent more archaeologists by 2033 to meet anticipated demand. Only a relatively small percentage of archaeology graduates go on to work in the sector, prompting an initiative by University Archaeology UK (UAUK) and ClfA to jointly accredit degrees, to ensure those who are planning a career in archaeology can choose courses aimed at delivering vocational skills. The first applications for accreditation will be assessed in a pilot scheme from June and announced by the end of the year.

Capacity building has been the focus for heritage organisations, and historic environment Trailblazer Apprenticeships will soon be available in England, meaning that employers can work with Further and Higher Education institutions to deliver training that is not only tailored to their needs but also meets wider sector requirements. See page 18 for more information about the Modern Apprenticeships in Scotland.

Apprenticeships have the potential to make our profession more inclusive by creating non-academic entry routes into archaeology. As part of our work to promote professional accreditation, we are expanding our existing Pathways to PCIfA scheme, adding to the advice and on-line resources already available with more tailored support for archaeologists throughout their career. Our newly launched Approved Training & CPD kitemark is one way of identifying high-quality learning opportunities that are mapped to National Occupational Standards and promote professional standards and ethical working practices. Many of our Registered

Organisations are also investing in training schemes for employees and ClfA has so far approved twelve of these. Work-based training for early career archaeologists is invaluable in helping to ensure that competent and confident employees are retained in the workforce.

Interest in archaeology is not diminishing, as the success of the Young Archaeologists' Club attests (many clubs have large waiting lists). As a sector we need to convert that interest into training for careers. The future for archaeology in the UK is bright if we have the confidence to expect a future and train the professionals to meet it.

For more information on Trailblazer Apprenticeships see <https://historicengland.org.uk/services-skills/training-skills/work-based-training/heritage-apprenticeships/>

For information about Accredited degrees see https://www.archaeologists.net/Accredited_Degrees#overlay-context=accredited-degrees

For more information about ClfA Approved Training & CPD see <https://www.archaeologists.net/development/training>



ClfA bursary holder Foxy Demeanour. Credit: ClfA



UCLan and UHI students excavating 19th-century whales at Cata Sand, Orkney. Credit: Vicki Cummings/Jane Downes