

New accredited application guidance

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At the beginning of December 2020, we were excited to launch our new and improved application guidance webpages. Since then we have made some further improvements based on applicants' feedback and as a result, I have noticed the quality of applications has improved.

We have upgraded the joining webpages (www.archaeologists.net/join) to include all guidance in one place, which should make it easier to apply for accreditation. There are individual pages for each grade of accreditation (PCIfA, ACIfA, MCI fA) and an 'apply online page' with the deadlines and FAQs. For those interested in joining for the first time, we also have information about professional archaeologists, membership benefits, subscriptions and renewals, and testimonies from CI fA members of all accreditations and a range of historic environment backgrounds. You can read these at www.archaeologists.net/join/testimonies and submit one yourself for the TA member news section.

We also have a new professional pathways page, which is being populated with resources to assist in gaining skills and knowledge to work towards the next accredited grade. You can sign up to the relevant ProPathway ebulletin in the Members Area using the 'Update contact details' form.

To help support applicants this last year, during the Covid-19 pandemic we waived the upgrade application fee and ran nine accreditation workshops digitally, which we plan to continue throughout 2021 alongside providing recordings of the information to assist those who are unable to attend a workshop. We can offer these workshops to Registered Organisations if they have many staff wishing to apply; please get in touch if you would like to arrange one.

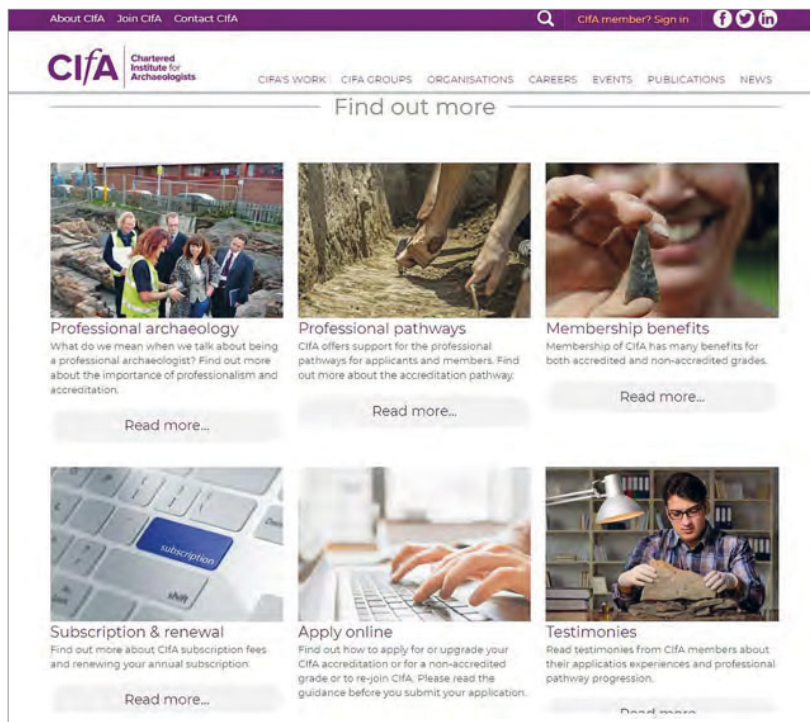
We have also started working with neurodiverse members and non-members to help make the process more user friendly and offer alternatives when needed. I would be happy to work through the process with potential applicants as we want to support as best we can; the application process is not a test, but a means to demonstrate your application meets the required criteria for accreditation.

Over the last few years a suite of specialist matrices has been developed by CI fA's Special Interest Groups and some external bodies to help applicants see how their role fits into the main competence matrix, and to assist the Validation committee in assessing applications appropriately. Recent additions include voluntary and community archaeology and a revised field archaeology matrix. You can see the full list of matrices at <https://www.archaeologists.net/matrices>

The screenshot shows the CIFA website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for 'About CIFA', 'Join CIFA', and 'Contact CIFA'. A search bar and a 'CIFA member? Sign in' link are also present. The main header features the CIFA logo and a menu with categories: 'CIFA'S WORK', 'CIFA GROUPS', 'ORGANISATIONS', 'CAREERS', 'EVENTS', 'PUBLICATIONS', and 'NEWS'. The main content area is titled 'Practitioner (PCIfA)' and lists the requirements for this grade of accreditation. A sidebar on the right, titled 'In this section...', contains a list of links: 'Individuals', 'Join CIFA', 'Student or Affiliate', 'Professional pathways' (highlighted in purple), 'Membership benefits', 'Subscriptions and renewal', 'Organisations', and 'Register your organisation'. Below the main text, there is a section titled 'How to apply' and a note stating: 'To apply at PCIfA, you will need to provide two appropriate references and prepare a statement of'.

Helen Parslow MCIfA, Chair of the Validation committee, says:

'Try not to feel intimidated by the blank statement of competence or think you don't fit the criteria. Follow Lianne's advice and applying is easier than you imagine. Also do ask for help from Lianne or others you know who have already joined or upgraded or are on the Validation committee.'



If you have been thinking about applying, it is not as difficult or as time-consuming as you may think and is a useful reflective process to see how much you have achieved in your career; it can also help inform your Personal Development Plan (PDP) for Continuing Professional Development (CPD). I am here to help if you have any questions, and if anything is unclear you can drop me an email at membership@archaeologists.net.

Members of CIfA are professionally accredited and skilled in the study and care of the historic environment.

The Validation committee has delegated authority from the Board of Directors to assess applications for individual accreditation. The committee is made up of volunteers who are accredited members of different grades and they assess the statement, references and examples of work and benchmark these against the four areas of the competence matrix. This is a rigorous process of peer review, but we are happy to help you apply. If an applicant demonstrates the criteria, they will successfully be awarded their accreditation, but the committee can also make alternative decisions, which include defer/pend for more information, rejection, or offering a lower grade (and in some cases a higher one!). The committee will explain the reasons for their decision and offer advice about how to demonstrate the grade in the future.

Helen Parslow, Chair of the Validation committee, says:

'Joining the Validation committee is very rewarding, especially if you enjoy finding out about archaeological work that others are undertaking and enhancing your CPD with the knowledge and skills you gain from getting involved with your Institute. It is also a great networking opportunity, talking to others on the committee from different areas of the historic environment who you might not usually meet.'

If you are interested in joining the Validation committee, please send expressions of interest to Lianne at membership@archaeologists.net.