



Visitors examine an inverted vessel. Credit: Wessex Archaeology



The process of assessment for accreditation has been as informative and collaborative as it has been formal and rigorous. Accreditation lasts for five years and during that period ClfA keeps in regular contact, offering student talks and access to training and events. Students are offered free Student membership of ClfA throughout the duration of their course and, on graduation, they have access to tailored guidance to support them to apply for Practitioner accreditation.

Degree accreditation forms part of a wider strategy to create a variety of routes into archaeology and a structured foundation from which to build archaeological careers. Time will tell if accredited degree programmes have made a significant impact in helping graduates to enter the work force, but early indications, as demonstrated in the article from Louise Rayner on page 9, are promising.

Another advantage of the scheme has been to bring together representatives from academia and industry. The resulting dialogue has been valuable for both applying departments and those individuals who make up the accreditation panellists. It has allowed ClfA to

communicate directly with students and staff and is a platform for cross-sector discussion about the future needs of the archaeological sector in the UK.

Not all archaeology students will choose to work in archaeology – it is, after all, a degree acknowledged to provide excellent transferrable skills that non-sector employers value highly – but for those that do, accredited degree programmes lay solid foundations for a career in archaeology that can be built on through employer training and continuing professional development to create confident and talented archaeologists for the future.

For more information on applying for a degree programme to be considered for accreditation see [ClfA's Accredited degrees page](http://www.archaeologists.net/careers/info-for-training-providers/accredited-degrees) (www.archaeologists.net/careers/info-for-training-providers/accredited-degrees) or contact anna.welch@archaeologists.net

Approved training courses

Employer training is essential for developing knowledge and skills at all points in an archaeologist's career. For

early-career archaeologists in particular, a period of supervised orientation and on-the-job training is vital to achieve that first level of professional competence. This should be holistic training, rather than contract specific, so that early career archaeologists are employable for subsequent jobs and are confident that they have the skill set to work efficiently, ethically and to a high standard. This ensures that they know what archaeological work they can do without close supervision and where they need further training in order to investigate heritage assets in a professional way.

ClfA-approved training and CPD recognises formal training schemes mapped to National Occupational Standards (NOS) and are designed to deliver competence at either Practitioner or Associate grade. Sixteen Registered Organisations offer ClfA-approved employer training schemes, providing structured graduate and non-graduate training opportunities.



Students learn practical skills on a Bournemouth University fieldschool. Credit: Anna Welch



Employer training schemes are an essential follow up to the skills and knowledge that students have gained during their degree programmes but can also be aimed at non-graduates entering the workplace. They can be linked to formal qualifications like an NVQ and are often supported by the BAJR Skills Passport. Trainees on ClfA-approved employer schemes are eligible for the CSCS Trainee card which allows supervised work on site so that they can build their site skills. They can also join ClfA as Student members, giving them access to Pathway to Practitioner guidance and resources to support their professional

development. Supporting early-career archaeologists on a ClfA-approved employer training scheme leads to confident, competent and professional archaeologists who will boost the archaeology work force as well as helping individuals to have long-lived and rewarding careers.

For more information on training within the workplace and ClfA-approved employer training schemes in particular, see ClfA's [Careers kit](http://www.archaeologists.net/careers/info-for-employers) (www.archaeologists.net/careers/info-for-employers) or contact us at approvedcpd@archaeologists.net

Apprenticeships and National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs)

After quite some time in development, heritage apprenticeships in England are starting to take off! The industry now has six apprenticeship qualifications approved by the government, covering both archaeology and conservation. The ClfA assessment centre has just completed its first year of working with employers and training providers to deliver assessment and award qualifications to the first tranche of successful apprentices.

Heritage apprenticeships have been designed by leading employers in the sector who have come together to agree on the essential qualities for people working in heritage roles; these have been set into competence standards that all apprentices must meet. This means that anyone who holds a heritage apprenticeship qualification has demonstrated their expertise by going through a rigorous assessment process to prove they can do the job, consistently, to



Trainees on Pre-construct Archaeology's ClfA-approved employer training programme. Credit: Pre-construct Archaeology

industry standards. The job roles that the standards cover are

- Archaeological Technician level 3
- Historic Environment Advice Assistant level 4
- Cultural Heritage Conservation Technician level 4
- Cultural Heritage Conservator level 7
- Archaeological Specialist level 7
- Historic Environment Advisor level 7

Employers can take on an apprentice, if they provide the right work environment to support an apprentice's learning and development. Typically, training providers deliver the formal training but the majority of learning takes place on-the-job and utilises the huge potential that most workplaces have as places to learn and grow. So, why are employers taking on apprentices?

There are many reasons, but some of the most reported include how recruiting for an

apprentice can often attract high-calibre candidates who don't want to pursue the university option, giving employers greater choice in the pool of talent. Apprentices can also bring a fresh and enthusiastic approach to the work. They often free up time for existing staff who can delegate smaller tasks that will also help the apprentice to learn. Oh, and there's funding! The government picks up the tab for the formal training and for the assessment at the end of the programme, offering employers real value for money. (If you're paying the training levy, then this is a good way of recouping some of that cost!)

There are more subtle benefits too. By taking on apprentices, employers are demonstrating their commitment to recognised training and sending a message to their existing workforce that they care about recruiting and developing the next generation of archaeologists. It's a good look for employers!

So, what is ClfA's role in heritage apprenticeships? While all apprentices go

through a comprehensive and in-depth training programme, having rigorous assessment at the end is key to ensuring that the qualification is trusted and respected. That's where ClfA comes in. ClfA's assessment centre is recognised by qualifications watchdog Ofqual as a formal end-point assessment organisation (EPAO) for apprenticeships. The Ofqual recognition demonstrates how the EPAO has met rigorous operational quality standards; that the EPAO is part of ClfA means that it's governed by people who really understand the qualifications it assesses!

Phil Pollard, Heritage Apprenticeships Manager at Historic England, says:

'Apprenticeships are a brilliant way to equip a diverse range of people with specialist knowledge and skills in the heritage sector. ClfA independently assesses each apprenticeship placement to ensure that candidates meet the high standards required.'



Archaeology students from UCLan working at Garn Turne, Pembrokeshire. Credit: Adam Stamford

We feel it is incredibly valuable to have professional bodies such as ClfA undertaking this assessment. Historic England has already worked with the Institute to assess our first group of Historic Environment Advice Assistant apprentices and we are impressed by their enthusiasm and dedication to the role.'

As with other aspects of education and training, vocational qualifications are devolved in the UK and different systems exist in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. In Scotland, work is underway to create a Modern Apprenticeship framework for an entry-level field archaeologist, supported by a new vocational qualification.

The ClfA assessment centre is also approved to offer the level 3 NVQ Certificate in Archaeological Practice. NVQs are nationally recognised qualifications that are all about competence; qualifying with this NVQ

demonstrates that someone has the skills and understanding to carry out complex archaeological activity.

NVQs are different from traditional exams; typically, they're delivered in the workplace and candidates are assessed on carrying out workplace tasks.

For example, in one of the units of the Archaeological Practice NVQ, candidates are assessed on how well they contribute to intrusive investigations. An assessor will observe them preparing for, and undertaking, intrusive operations and preparing records and schedules. The candidate is also asked questions about their underpinning knowledge on implementing intrusive investigations so it can be decided whether they are competent in this area.

Anybody can register for an NVQ, if they have access to the relevant workplace opportunities for learning and assessment. There are no entry qualifications and there are few time restraints on completing the

qualification, so they are far more flexible than traditional exams.

Like the apprenticeship criteria, NVQ standards have been developed by employers so they are focused on what true competence in a role looks like.

NVQs are used by employers who want a flexible qualification that puts the business first; they can also be instrumental in supporting systematic training as NVQ standards are great for identifying skills gaps. NVQs are regulated qualifications (so they carry the Ofqual badge) and candidates are assessed by ClfA assessors who are professionally accredited and hold a formal assessor qualification.

Candidates also like the flexibility of NVQs. All ClfA assessors will use the NVQ standard to draw up a bespoke assessment plan so the candidate can work through the NVQ at a pace that suits them. And again – they have a formal, Ofqual-recognised qualification at the end!



Reading students on the Islay fieldschool.

Credit: Reading University

Apprenticeships are now proven routes into the industry and NVQs are supporting individuals and businesses to grow. They offer employers and candidates a viable and valuable option in widening access into the sector, and they promote real jobs and high-quality qualifications.

Accredited degrees, employer training programmes, NVQs and apprenticeships offer more choice for aspiring archaeologists. As well as career entry routes, they provide upskilling and professional development opportunities for archaeologists already some way along their own career journey. What they all have in common is the potential to lead to professional accreditation – we want all archaeologists to aspire to, and celebrate, being professional!



Completing context records. Credit: Reading University