

Why Individual Chartership?

Key points/summary:

This discussion document draws on material which CIfA has already published as part of the process towards Individual Chartership and seeks to explore some of the issues and questions around the Institute's Chartership proposals in more detail. We are inviting debate as we develop the proposals further and will publish the discussion in ongoing communications.

In summary, we believe that Individual Chartership will

- improve the external perceptions of the archaeological profession and its members
- lead to enhanced public and client confidence
- strengthen accreditation processes and the value of CIfA membership
- make the profession of archaeology more attractive as a career and promote career pathways

CIfA has tested members' support for the principle of seeking Individual Chartership in a consultation, and has designed a framework for what the proposed Chartered Archaeologist grade would look like and how it would work. We think this high-level model meets the Privy Council requirements, has been benchmarked against other chartered professions, and fits the archaeology sector well. We recognise that there are questions and concerns about how we develop the model, and we are committed to consulting throughout the development process to address these issues. This debate will continue to influence the development of formal proposals which we hope to be able to present to members next year. We are now seeking to progress to detailed planning for what the Chartered Archaeologist grade will cover (professional and ethical competences), how the processes will work, and how we will roll out the new system.

This discussion document assumes that you have read the proposals which were approved at the 2017 AGM. [You can read them here.](#)

Throughout this paper, there are questions which you are invited to answer. We request that you read this discussion paper before answering the questions. [You can find the survey here.](#)

Contents:

1. Introduction
2. What is it?
3. What will it do?
4. Who is it for?
5. Why do we need it?
6. How will it be achieved?
7. When will it be achieved?

1. Introduction

Since the founding of the Institute in 1983, the discipline of archaeology has changed a great deal; in no small part due to the work of the Institute to better understand the profession, provide a framework for regulation within the sector, raise the profile of our sector with government and decision makers, and develop standards that accredited individuals and registered organisations in the sector must work to.

Gaining the Royal Charter in 2014 was a signal that archaeology had achieved a level of professionalism and unity that merited formal recognition. It was an important point in the development of the profession and one which will be part of the platform for future goals and development of archaeology into the future.

At the time of the Charter application, the decision to pursue individual charter was reserved for future occasion, but in 2015 ClfA's Board agreed to begin the process, and undertook a consultation the following year. **Over 75% of respondents backed the development of a route to Chartered Archaeologist status.**

The decision to move towards a system of individual chartership is not one which the Institute is taking lightly. We understand that this is an issue which inspires passion and concern in equal measure among ClfA members. Many valid concerns have been raised, and we are keen to give them the attention that they deserve. We also know that those who have had the chance to engage most closely in discussions about proposals are generally more supportive of them, and therefore we aim to give everyone the opportunity to take part in the discussion throughout the process.

This paper explores some of the core thinking behind the proposals as they currently stand. We want to be clear that what has been accomplished so far is the high-level shaping of a proposal that we think fits for archaeology, is based on information that we have learned from our closest comparators, and which satisfies the criteria of the Privy Council.

2. What is it?

Royal Charters date back to the 13th Century and are synonymous with professional institutes from the General Medical Council to the Royal Institute of British Architects.

Chartered status for individual practitioners is the most rigorously tested level of accreditation any professional body incorporated by Royal Charter can award its members. It is a formal, internationally recognised and externally verified mark of professionalism.

ClfA's Royal Charter means that it is required to act in the public interest, surrendering some independence in decision-making in order to ensure proper governance of a code of conduct for members and implement regulatory procedures which hold members to account. Essentially, Chartership provides a more formal basis for the trust placed in archaeologists by clients and by the public.

Being able to accredit and award individual chartered status to ClfA members is a way to clearly extend this formal, externally benchmarked and well-understood concept to individuals. It will

- Inspire additional confidence in your work
- Indicate your commitment to continuing professional development
- Give greater recognition for your level of professional attainment to a wider audience
- Help to further your career

The Chartered Archaeologist grade will be set apart from existing membership grades in meaningful ways, as it will be more instantly recognisable as a mark of high professional competence even for those not intimately familiar with existing ClfA grades. We know from research undertaken by other professional institutes, that the term 'Chartered' is more trusted more than any other comparable word (e.g. fellow, member, and degree). Chartership also has the advantage of being subject to external quality assessment by the Privy Council Office, which MCIfA does not, and as such can be assessed to be regarded as equal to other chartered professions.

Q. Do you agree with our assessment that Chartership represents the pinnacle of professional trust, rigour, and recognition?

Q. Is ClfA doing the right thing by pursuing this as a goal for the archaeology sector?

2.1. Ensuring we meet Privy Council regulations

We are proposing a new Chartered grade as part of this process. The criteria for current ClfA membership grades would not have been sufficient to enable us to use it as a basis for chartered status without substantial alteration. Rather than revise existing grades, which would have meant re-assessing everyone at that grade, regardless of whether they wanted to seek Chartership, we have opted to retain existing grades as a meaningful indicator of technical competence and are proposing no changes to them.

The current proposal is that Chartered Archaeologist grade will sit above MCIfA in that it requires MCIfA level technical competence, and additional proof of wider technical and ethical competences. Chartered Archaeologists will also be subject to more rigorous assessment of professionalism, assessed via a professional review, as well as assessment of CPD records.

See section 4 for a detailed discussion of why we aligned Chartership with MCIfA skills and questions about this decision.

Q. Are you happy with the creation of a Chartered grade above MCIfA?

2.2. New CPD requirements

In other chartered professions, demonstrating a commitment to keeping skills and knowledge up to date is a key requirement of the application process. All accredited members of ClfA (PCIfA, ACIfA and MCIfA) are required to undertake CPD and to provide evidence of their learning on request. In addition to that, Chartered Archaeologists will be expected to be able to demonstrate that they are setting development goals and objectives for themselves, and planning how they will meet them and reflecting on how their learning is benefitting themselves and the profession. In addition, there will be a formal requirement for them to submit evidence of this process on a periodic basis.

We are aware that there are existing issues with CPD and that some members already struggle with requirements. Reasons given include seniority (i.e. most CPD is aimed at early careers) or specialism (i.e. there's nothing that applies to my job).

We believe this highlights a wider issue with understanding CPD which some members have, where it is seen in too narrow a way. For example, taking 25 hours of CPD per year through organised courses may be impossible for many. However, ClfA also accepts many other activities as constituting CPD. For example, reading your copy of 'Historic Environment: Policy and Practice' journal, mentoring junior colleagues, learning a new software package, or attending a conference. Essentially, every time you learn something that makes you better at your job, or which improves your wider professional skills, you are undertaking CPD. It is important that your Personal Development Plan is properly structured in order to allow reflection on what you have learned and that you can therefore record your CPD activities as being beneficial.

This kind of CPD can help keep senior practitioners up to date and make them better communicators or advocates. It can make specialists more rounded, giving them greater understanding of the context of their work. Both of these are characteristics that we envisage Chartered Archaeologists will need to demonstrate.

As Chartered members will have a responsibility not only to keep their technical archaeological skills up to date, but also their understanding of broader issues in the profession, there should be no shortage of opportunities to log CPD.

[For more information about ClfA CPD and common misunderstandings, click here.](#)

Q. Do you agree with our vision for CPD and Chartership?

Q. Would additional information on Chartership and CPD be useful in a future discussion paper?

3. What will it do?

At the launch of the Chartered Institute in 2014 we told members that becoming a chartered institute would significantly raise the profile of the Institute and the archaeological profession and that it would bring us in step with other chartered professions such as architects, planners, surveyors and engineers. In turn, we said, it would raise the profile of accredited members of the Institute. We believe that it has, and is, doing so – by improving the perception of the Institute in government and leading to the development of better connections with other bodies in client sectors and other professional institutes.

Achieving individual chartered status is the next step in this same endeavour. Most Chartered professional institutes award individual chartership to their members. Many members of other professions pay serious attention to the stamp of charter and will look for chartered individuals and organisations to undertake work.

Of course, processes of improving the profile of archaeology, and experience of parity of esteem with other professions are not issues which will be solved overnight. Neither is chartership a magic bullet for pay, conditions, recruitment and retention in the sector. These are all complex issues that the Institute, along with other stakeholders are responsible for influencing in the long term. However, we believe that chartership is one piece of the puzzle. For example, some employers already give automatic pay-rises when an employee becomes a Chartered in their relevant sector.

3.1. Individual chartership and specialist competence

Some people have raised concerns that individual chartership will lead to a rise in cases of archaeologists taking on work for which they are not qualified. There is no reason why this should happen.

This is an issue which the Institute already deals with, as existing membership grades allow for the same diversity in specialist capabilities. It is down to the practitioner – in accordance with the Code of Conduct – to not take on work for which they are not qualified.

Not all MCIfA practitioners are qualified to run an excavation, not all are skilled at buildings survey, not all can produce technical illustrations. Accredited professionals who mis-represent their competences to clients are open to professional misconduct allegations. This will be no different for Chartered Archaeologists.

Like many other professions, archaeology is a broad church. ClfA has, for a number of years, encouraged all types of archaeologist to join the Institute. Membership has to serve all branches of the profession, with technical competence judged in the context of applicants' work, with reference to specialist assessors where necessary.

That is why ClfA has developed (and continues to develop) specialist competence matrices for a range of specialisms, and why our validation committee is flexible in its approach to considering applications from practitioners with a variety of roles. Fundamentally, we believe that archaeology is a discipline which includes all of these various specialisms and we seek to foster a sense of connection with overarching values and approaches.

Q. Are you concerned about specialist competences and individual chartership?

Q. Would additional information about specialist approaches to chartership be useful?

4. Who is it for?

Under the proposed model, anyone who can demonstrate MCIfA skills could apply to be a Chartered Archaeologist. Existing MCIfAs could apply immediately to be examined on their professional competence and ethics. If you haven't already demonstrated MCIfA level skills, you will need to do that before you can progress to the next stage.

We hope that the availability of Chartership will encourage more archaeologists to join the Institute and encourage more members at lower grades to consider pathways to development towards Chartership.

4.1. Practicing archaeologists

The Privy Council's rules set out that Chartered Status for individuals should only be awarded to practicing professionals. It is proposed that the Chartered Archaeologist grade will be open to all archaeologists who are directly and actively involved in investigating, managing or conserving the historic environment, whether in a paid or a voluntary capacity. Retired individuals will not be eligible to retain their chartered status unless they keep up an active involvement in the discipline in some relevant form (for example, as part of a CfA Special Interest Group, or through a local society). It will not be necessary for members who are temporarily unemployed, taking a career break, or suffering short term illness to lose their chartered status, unless they chose to.

All chartered members will be required to keep CPD up to date, although we will be exploring various options for additional options and mechanisms which could be adopted to ensure flexibility to individuals members with a range of personal circumstances.

Q. Do you have any questions or suggestions about how CfA intends to maintain Privy Council requirements on restrictions regarding 'practice' in a fair and accessible manner?

4.2. Why this model?

As part of the process of developing the current proposals, we examined a range of existing systems for awarding chartership from other chartered professions. This included looking at options suggested by members as part of the consultation. While there is no single model, and various routes had different merits, the model proposed for Chartered Archaeologist is one that we think will work well for archaeology and archaeologists.

There appear to be two main questions which people have asked us about why we chose this model:

- I am PCIfA/ACIfA. Why can't I apply for Chartered Archaeologist?
- Why doesn't Chartered Status exist as a separate strand of accreditation to PCIfA/ACIfA/MCIfA?

The first question, we think, draws on a common misconception about existing members grades; that MCIfA is a grade which is only for managers, directors, or individuals at the end point of their career. This is not true. It should be noted that more than 50% of all accredited CfA members already hold the MCIfA grade, meaning that it is a very broad and varied in terms of the members which hold it.

The proposals for Chartered Archaeologist status and the existing MCIfA grade are not intended to be exclusive grades. Both should be considered to be accessible for members at lower grades who set reasonable goals for career development. Chartered Archaeologist is not intended to be an honorific title given in recognition of length of service or high standing in a profession, nor is it necessarily a measure of seniority.

Although there are different models for individual chartership in different professions, by far the most common is for Chartered status to be awarded in recognition of the highest level of technical and ethical competence. Some organisations additionally offer 'Fellow' status or similar as a mark of seniority but this is not generally indicative of a higher level of competence than chartership. CIfA does not currently offer a parallel honorific to Fellowship, although others are available within the discipline.

The second question relates to a proposal that Chartership could be assessed as a 'parallel' accreditation, such that MCIfA would remain the highest grade, Chartership could be applied to ACIfA (and PCIfA) level, and would test different competence. This is a model employed in some other professions.

We felt that the option to make Chartered Archaeologist the unrivalled highest grade would give the greatest clarity to stakeholders and help to achieve greater impact from the change. This is because a parallel Chartered 'grade' would require clients and other stakeholders to understand a much more complex range of accreditations. For example, it would have been more difficult to understand the differences between an MCIfA Chartered Archaeologist, an ACIfA Chartered Archaeologist, and an MCIfA non-Chartered Archaeologist. Having Chartered Archaeologist sit as a clear highest grade negates much of this potential confusion.

Q. Do you find this explanation satisfactory? If not, please provide your suggestions.

Q. Would it be useful for CIfA to produce hypothetical scenarios and real case studies on career pathways to chartered status?

Q. Would you like to be contacted to provide a personal career case study?

Q. Do you have any other comments about eligibility for Chartered Archaeologist?

5. Why do we need it?

We think that chartered status will deliver a unique package of benefits for archaeologists and for archaeology:

1. Chartered status is an internationally recognised and externally verified title. This provides greater recognition for the profession of archaeology and parity with other chartered professions.
2. By proposing Chartered Archaeologist, CIfA is sending a strong signal on behalf of members that the profession of archaeology is working for public benefit.
3. It inspires client and public confidence about a person's abilities and professionalism.
4. Chartered Archaeologist mirrors MCIfA skills and additionally measures areas not currently assessed, including professional ethics.
5. Chartered status will make the profession of archaeology more attractive as a career. It will promote career pathways, attract new people into the profession and help create a sustainable future.

Arguably the sector does not *need* to pursue this change, but the issues which are affected by the move are key strategic concerns for CIfA, and have been for a long time. Chartered Archaeologist will not solve these problems, but are part of what CIfA has been working towards since its founding.

5.1. Why Now?

Some members have asked us whether now is the right time to be pursuing this change. These members have highlighted ClfA's limited resources and pressing challenges facing the archaeology sector as reasons why now is not the right time. We have sympathy for both of these points.

ClfA's resources are small compared to many larger professional institutes. However, developing Chartered Archaeologist is an opportunity to strengthen the profession and grow the membership of ClfA. It forms part of the plan to grow the Institute and improve resourcing in the long term for tackling challenges like ensuring effective regulation of the sector, setting standards, and improving conditions.

Throughout the process, we will be investing in the development and communication of Chartered Archaeologist, but we will also be ensuring that the final process will be cost neutral.

On the question of external challenges, we know the 'now' is always going to be a challenging time. Experience shows us that there will always be challenges that we face as a sector, and waiting for a quiet time is not realistic. On the other hand, now is also a good time for a variety of reasons; a recovery in sector employment in many areas and significant press attention given to a growing demand for archaeologists, and an embedding of ClfA's reputation with the client sector post-Charter.

Q. Do you think now is an appropriate time to pursue Chartership proposals? Why do you think that?

6. How will it be achieved?

This is a crucial question which accounts for a great deal of the concern that we hear from members. At present our Chartered Archaeologist proposals sit at a high level, setting out the broad ideology of Chartership and talking about values, benefits and in largely abstract terms. We will also be publishing proposals for what will be assessed at Chartered Archaeologist grade before ClfA Conference 2018.

The next level is to address questions of detailed consideration of the implementation of the proposed broad model, and to undertake costings for various options. From our research we have an understanding of how other similarly sized and resourced organisations have overcome certain challenges and have

Questions include:

- How much will it cost?
- How many people will apply?
- How will applications be managed?
- What will be the pressure on validation and how will we account for that with staff and volunteer time?
- Will there be a cap on applications in the first year?
- How will the first tranche of members be validated?
- What will be the impact on the market for archaeological services in the short term?
- Will members who have to wait to get Chartered be at a commercial disadvantage?
- How will the revalidation process be managed?

Clearly these are important questions on which we will share our findings with members in due course.

7. When will it be achieved?

In short, individual chartered status for archaeologists will be achieved when and only when we have a proposal which meets with the approval of members – appropriately balloted – and when we are satisfied that the processes for implementation are in place, costed, and any significant negative effects on the Institute and its members have been effectively mitigated.

We have set a timetable for this process up to a vote on a final proposal, which will occur absolutely no earlier than Conference 2019. After this there will be an implementation phase which may last a significant period of time, depending upon the outcome of analyses of many of the above questions.

CIfA's Board of Directors are committed to ensuring that the process is done right, is not rushed, and achieves its goals and we are fully prepared to see delays in the development and a significant implementation period to implement.

For further information about CIfA's Charter and the Chartered Archaeologist proposals, visit www.archaeologists.net/charter/chartered_archaeologists or email chartered@archaeologists.net.

