

# Becoming Chartered: Personal and Professional Benefits

**Professional Skills and Health & Safety in Construction**

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There are many reasons why becoming a member of a professional body would be advantageous to any employer; not only would it result in increased financial opportunities, but it would also advance any professional business's reputation, whilst helping to establish the business as a major player within the industry; nationally and potentially, internationally. As an architectural technologist, I would become a member of CIAT (The Chartered Institute of Architectural Technologists). Obtaining chartership from this body, would allow me to use the designation MCIAT. This report describes the process of registration and becoming a chartered professional. It also details the benefits of joining CIAT and the opportunities for improved health and safety, within the business, for my employer. I have also conducted a personal SWOT analysis, which provided the basis for my professional development plan, which is also included in this report.

In addition to using the CIAT website for my research on this process, I also reached out to CIAT directly, via phone call and email, and sought confirmation of the required stages that need to be completed, to ensure that my understanding and knowledge of the topic, is accurate (Fitzpatrick, 2021). As I already possess the academic qualifications to apply for membership (Level 4 or above on the Regulated Qualifications Framework, within the built environment), I would first apply as an 'Associate Member'. The CIAT website describes this membership as "recognition of academic achievement within Architectural Technology and a holding grade of membership as you progress to Chartered Membership" - Joining the Institute, Associate Membership, ACIAT (CIAT Architectural Technology). As an Associate Member, I'd then need to spend a few years in the industry, to gain experience, before being able to progress my membership to chartered, MCIAT. At this point, there are two routes to choose from, to finalise becoming chartered: a Professional Assessment, or a Professional and Occupational Performance (POP) Record.

A Professional Assessment would require a self-assessment of my professional experience, before comparing this against The Professional Standards Framework (PSF) document. When the Professional Assessment has been satisfactorily completed, I'd then attend a Professional Interview, where I'd be required to demonstrate my skill and knowledge, through discussion of my professional background, knowledge of construction processes and experience within the industry. The alternative route (POP Record) would also include form of self-assessment, this time, assessed against The POP Record Standards. It would, however, also require a qualified professional to confirm the self-assessment content and standard and help to provide advice and context. Once this has been completed, I'd then have to pass a Professional Practice Interview.

While researching for this report, the most important source of information was CIAT, themselves. One of the opening sentences on their website, which describes the benefits of becoming chartered, states "MCIAT is a globally recognised standard of excellence and benchmarks your knowledge, experience and professionalism." Chartered Membership: Professional Standards Framework (CIAT). This sentence, alone, indicates just how well respected the term 'MCIAT' is, within the profession and construction industry. This would also suggest that any professional able to use this designation, along with the company that they work for, would also be well respected and recognised for their skills and competence.

Becoming chartered, would not only provide additional skills and knowledge, that would be beneficial for day-to-day use, within the company, as I could be trusted with work that carries more complex responsibilities, but would also create many new opportunities, by attracting new and additional work, high profile clients, contracts from large corporations, both in the UK and overseas, among other things. Having a chartered architectural technologist, would provide confidence to anyone (existing clients, or potential new clients), in the company's ability to complete any required work, to the highest standard available and make them feel that they'd be well taken care of and provided with the highest level of professionalism and

skill. By becoming a member of CIAT, there are many additional advantages that would be available to me, that could also be well utilised and shared within the company and its other employees, where appropriate.

There are ongoing CPD (Continual Professional Development) events to take advantage of, alongside specialist support. This would provide new and valuable sources of learning and information, which would be provided by the leading body of architectural technologists, meaning that I'd always be in a strong position to learn, apply and share the newest developments and technologies. Having regular access to cutting edge information and developments, within the industry, would also mean that my quality of work would be maintained, while my technical abilities and professional knowledge would also continue to regularly improve. This could also result in additional or new contracts from clients, who may require professionals with access to specialist topics and knowledge, which the average, unchartered professional, may not be qualified to take on.

Members of CIAT have access to local events, including those provided by other bodies, such as RIBA (Royal Institute of British Architects), CIOB (Chartered Institute of Building) and RICS (Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors), providing potential to learn additional information and practices, that could be useful to the business. I would also have access to other members, who are also chartered, or on the pathway towards becoming so. This could provide opportunity for networking and learning other best practices, within the industry.

There are many professional skills and criteria that an architectural technologist must possess and embody; not only to obtain chartership and membership with CIAT, but also, to generally be great at what they do. Many of these skills are widely known and are usually considered to be in the field of design and design solutions, project and design management, problem-solving, knowledge of building and construction science and methods and realising design in built form. In addition to these, a sound knowledge on the topic of health and safety is also critical. Becoming a member of CIAT would add vast value to the company, within the area of health and safety. The following standard is taken from the Quality Assurance Agency Subject Benchmark Statement for Architectural Technology, as was quoted in the Professional Standards Framework, already mentioned, describing the skill set needed for this topic-

"An ability to identify hazards and risks and develop and maintain safe systems of work and legal and relevant legislation and regulatory frameworks" Chartered Membership: Professional Standards Framework (CIAT).

Having a chartered member within a business, with a proven track record of meeting such standards, would provide other companies with confidence in said company's ability to produce work that would have health and safety at its core, when designing and producing it, whilst also being able to promote and create a safe and professional working environment, where required, for all parties involved. A chartered member would also have a sound up to date knowledge of the CDM, with the ability to produce work in line with CDM regulations. The HSE website, which publishes the CDM, demonstrates the importance of keeping health and safety in mind, from the early stages of any project. Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015 (CDM 2015)- What you need to know.

An architectural technologist would come under the term 'designer' in the CDM, which goes on to explain how the decisions of a designer could have a substantial impact on any project, from the planning and design stages, through to the health and safety of contractors and workmen, and even those who go on to use the design or structure, after it's been completed. Attaining the designation MCIAT would vastly improve my knowledge and ability, further enhancing my ability to avoid, reduce or control risks, while also providing the correct information provided on all drawings produced, as a residual risk or hazard register, specific

to that product or design, for example. Such details would enable me to produce a higher quality of work, aimed at reducing risks for any works undertaken, reducing the likelihood of any health and safety issues, thus minimising the likelihood that any parties involved (including my employer), would be liable for any damages or costs, as they would have already been considered and planned for, from the offset.

The CDM also states that any designer must have the relevant health and safety skills, knowledge and experience (SKE) and capability, to fulfil the duties that are required of them. The website goes on to state that having a high level of SKE, might be produced or learned through having records of continued professional development and/or membership of professional institutions or bodies; both of which would be gained through joining CIAT and becoming a member; with the intent to become chartered.

This report has outlined the many advantages and potential opportunities that could be provided to me, as well as my employer, if I am granted permission and support towards becoming a chartered professional, with CIAT. It's also likely that my employer and company, would benefit in more ways, than I would, from me becoming chartered, as it would enhance so many additional areas of work for the company and its employees, through improving existing standards, while also being able to charge more for my higher professional status, providing additional opportunities to create new work, new clients and an improved status and reach, within the industry.

I have conducted a SWOT analysis, which helped me to create a personal development plan, to aid me in my next steps and application for CIAT.

| STRENGTHS                                                                                                                                                     | WEAKNESSES                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Competent with construction techniques, details and methods                                                                                                   | A better understanding of contract law- this will help with any formal reports and communications, needed for varying projects                                                                  |
| A good understanding of Auto CAD and Revit                                                                                                                    | Application of structure design methods and techniques to improve understanding of design of buildings from a structural designer's perspective to understand limitations of building materials |
| A competent problem solver, confident in my ability to find solutions for complex design problems                                                             | Technical report writing- to better convey my design/architectural principles e.g., building regulation requirements                                                                            |
| Knowledgeable of building standard requirements, including things such as planning and building regulations                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| OPPORTUNITIES                                                                                                                                                 | THREATS                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Conflict resolution- useful for resolving issues between design team members, contractors and clients                                                         | Not having a thorough understanding of potential hazards and risks that could impact the work I produce                                                                                         |
| Application of BIM technologies-utilisation of existing BIM knowledge to further improve design concept and communication with others within the project team |                                                                                                                                                                                                 |

Table 1- SWOT Analysis, Victoria Weeks

| Victoria Weeks             |                                                                           |                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Architectural Technologist |                                                                           |                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Review of learning needs   |                                                                           |                                                                                                 | Development plan                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| REFERENCE                  | IN WHAT AREA DO I NEED TO IMPROVE MY PERFORMANCE?                         | WHAT DO I NEED TO LEARN IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE THIS?                                               | WHAT WILL I DO TO ACHIEVE THIS?                                                                                                     | WHAT ARE THE LIKELY RESOURCES AND SUPPORT THAT I WILL NEED?                                                                                                   | HOW WILL I EVALUATE A SUCCESSFUL OUTCOME?                                                                                                                                                      |
| 1                          | Application of structure design methods and techniques                    | A basic understanding of structural mechanics                                                   | I could attend an approved course, aimed at enhancing my knowledge, skills and application of both towards architectural technology | ICE design manuals and supporting learning books, time off work to attend the relevant courses and support with travel and overnight stay, where applicable   | I will gain a certification after passing the course. I'd also be able to produce better quality drawings, that structural engineers could work with, without needing to alter them, at a cost |
| 2                          | A better understanding of contract law                                    | A better understanding of law in construction                                                   | Read the ICE contract law manuals and/or attend the relevant training course                                                        | Request approval from directors to log hours of CPD during work time/ request authorisation to use this training course as part of my ongoing CPD development | I will gain certification after passing the course, also I'd be able to offer suitable advice to my employers in relation to contract law and improve best practices within the business       |
| 3                          | Technical report writing                                                  | How to structure reports for different scenarios, tailoring the content for the desired outcome | Request training from senior colleagues, qualified to give advice                                                                   | Example reports, time folder training and reference reading materials. Allocated time with senior staff member, each week.                                    | Improved quality reports, in addition to feedback from senior colleagues.                                                                                                                      |
| 4                          | Conflict resolution                                                       | How to resolve disputes in the construction industry                                            | Attend an accredited arbitration or mediation construction-specific course                                                          | One day off work to attend the course, advice and knowledge from senior colleagues and reading materials and reference books for the course                   | I would obtain an accreditation to prove I am competent to professionally mediate in times of dispute; both on site and in writing                                                             |
| 5                          | Improved understanding and knowledge of health and safety in construction | How to implement risk assessment methods, properly and better                                   | Read relevant literature, regularly read the HSE website for existing and                                                           | Access to senior colleagues, who can support or answer any                                                                                                    | I would be able to produce more thorough and better quality design risk assessments                                                                                                            |

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|--|--|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  |  | knowledge<br>designed at<br>helping me<br>assess and<br>foresee<br>potential future<br>risks | new<br>information<br>that is<br>relevant | questions I<br>may have, in<br>relation to my<br>study of the<br>topic | and become<br>and improved<br>source of<br>knowledge for<br>other<br>colleagues,<br>within the<br>business, on the<br>topic of health<br>and safety |
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Table 2- Personal Development Plan

### Reference List

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