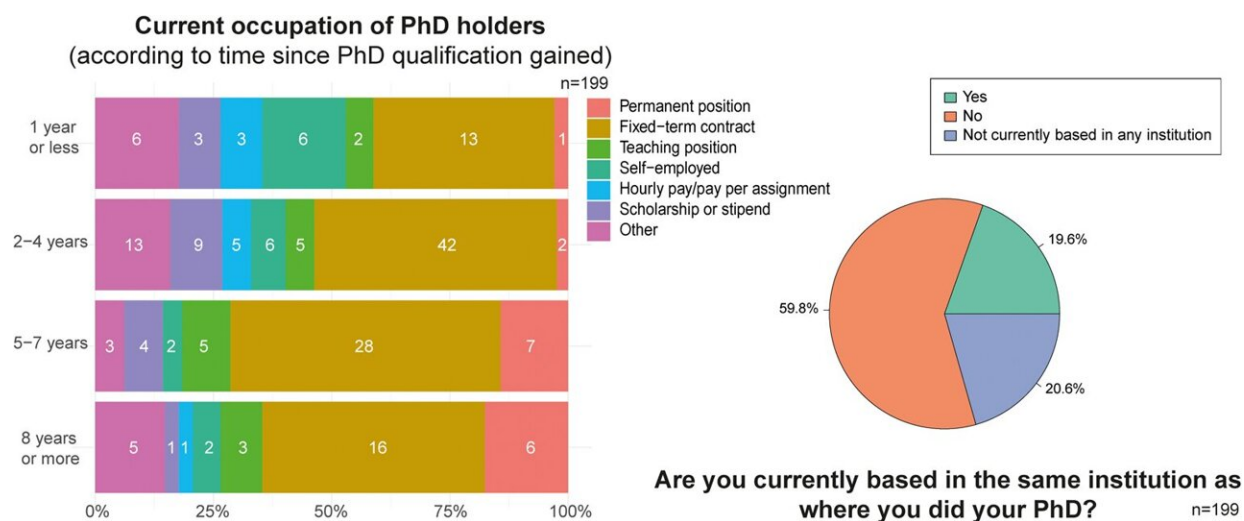


# Early-career archaeologists are pessimistic about future careers

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Occupation of PhD holders. Credit: *European Journal of Archaeology* (2022). DOI: 10.1017/eea.2022.41

A high proportion of early-career researchers in the field of archaeology are concerned about the lack of career development opportunities available and believe their chances of finding long-term employment in their chosen discipline are low.

This is one of the findings of an international survey recently published in the *European Journal of Archaeology*. The survey was coordinated by Dr. Maxime Brami, a researcher at Johannes Gutenberg University

Mainz (JGU), and involved 419 early-career archaeologists.

"Only about 21% of the participants believe it is likely that they will find a permanent position in archaeology," said Brami. 45% of those surveyed said that unlimited contracts in the field are extremely rare. Furthermore, 84% claimed to have suffered from stress due to a lack of career prospects, while 61% cited competition for jobs in the field as a stress factor.

However, despite these rather negative aspects, many early-career archaeologists remain passionate about their discipline and 71% of those surveyed expressed a desire to continue working in academia.

According to Brami, the idea for the survey was prompted by a growing number of the approximately 1,500 members of the European Association of Archaeologists (EAA), in particular the early-career academics among them, who in recent years have been expressing concern about their professional situation. Brami and his colleagues from the Early Career Archaeologists (ECA), a community within the EAA, subsequently designed the survey and launched it in 2021.

The [survey](#) consisted of 37 questions and was advertised via the ECA and EAA websites as well as on social media. Of the participants, 86% were based in Europe, 20% of these were from Germany; 46% had completed a doctorate, while 43% held a Master's degree or a similar qualification.

In addition to worries about the job climate, bullying was also cited as an important topic, with 47% of the participants reporting being bullied in the workplace, in most cases by their superiors. The [working environment](#) in archaeology was repeatedly described as "toxic" and "very competitive." About 62% of women reported experiencing gender-based discrimination during their careers, as opposed to about 12% of

men.

"In the past two decades, there has been a steep rise in both the number of doctoral graduates and short-term employment contracts at universities, while the number of permanent faculty positions has stagnated. This has led to oversaturation in the academic job market and precarious employment conditions," said Brami, commenting on the possible reasons for the difficult situation.

He suggests that the outlook for early-career archaeologists may be improved if, among other things, the transition from graduate to a permanent member of academic staff was structured more clearly. In addition, early-career academics needed to be better informed about the support available to them, for example from [labor unions](#), and about means of combating bullying.

"In principle, early-career researchers should have the same ordered working conditions as permanent employees, with regular progress reports and opportunities for further development, so that they can improve their [career](#) prospects."

**More information:** Maxime Brami et al, A Precarious Future: Reflections from a Survey of Early Career Researchers in Archaeology, *European Journal of Archaeology* (2022). [DOI: 10.1017/eea.2022.41](https://doi.org/10.1017/eea.2022.41)

Provided by Johannes Gutenberg-Universität Mainz

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