

Jobs in British Archaeology

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2015–18

The Jobs in British Archaeology (JIBA) series returns to The Archaeologist for the first time since 2015. This series, running since 1993, collects data from job postings to examine salary and job trends in UK archaeology. This latest article covers the financial years 2015–2018, indicating how the approximately 6800 individuals currently employed in archaeology (Aitchison 2019) are being paid.

How the numbers were obtained

Data was gathered from salaries posted in job advertisements from ClfA's Jobs Information Service and Training (JIST) and British Archaeological Jobs and Resources (BAJR) from 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2018. These adverts have been found to represent an accurate portrait of salaries in archaeology (Aitchison and Rocks-Macqueen 2013).

Further explanation of the methodology can be found in previous articles (see references). Important details for understanding the data presented are:

- part-time wages are calculated pro-rata to provide the equivalent salary
- overall averages are taken for each job category – where a salary range is given, an average is taken
- highs and lows (Figures 1 and 2 and Tables 3 and 4) are based on the highest and lowest reported salaries for each job category

ClfA and BAJR minimums

BAJR and ClfA set required minimum recommended salaries. For ClfA, these are set at the Practitioner, Associate and Member levels of accreditation, and have been used for comparison in Figure 1. Since 2014, all ClfA members must 'endeavour to meet or exceed' these recommended salaries as per Code of Conduct Principle 5.5 (2014).

Salaries: archaeologist 'hierarchy'

The JIBA series categorises field (and occasionally laboratory) positions into a 'hierarchy', running: Trainee – Technician – Supervisor – Officer – Project Manager (Rocks-Macqueen 2013).

From 2015 to 2018, average salaries grew steadily across all roles in the hierarchy (Figure 1) as did the number of roles advertised (Table 2). Since warranting their own category in the 2015 JIBA series (Rocks-Macqueen 2015), the number of advertised Trainee positions continues to rise – with a particularly large increase in 2017–18 (Table 2).

While the average Supervisor salary has increased steadily, the range of Technician salaries has increased significantly (Figure 1). This means that although a Supervisor within an individual company will earn more than a Technician, it is increasingly likely that the same Supervisor will be paid less than a Technician in another company or area of the UK. This could create issues in the profession as some archaeologists will earn less money for significantly more responsibility than their peers.

The Officer category continues to be affected by the proliferation of job titles identified in the 2013–4 JIBA series (Rocks-Macqueen 2014). Several roles carry the term 'officer'

Table 1: Average salaries for 2015–18

Year	Trainee	Technician	Supervisor	Officer	Project Manager
2015–16	£16,923	£18,512	£20,571	£24,439	£32,104
2016–17	£15,768	£19,010	£20,998	£25,010	£32,014
2017–18	£16,972	£19,714	£21,367	£25,603	£32,918

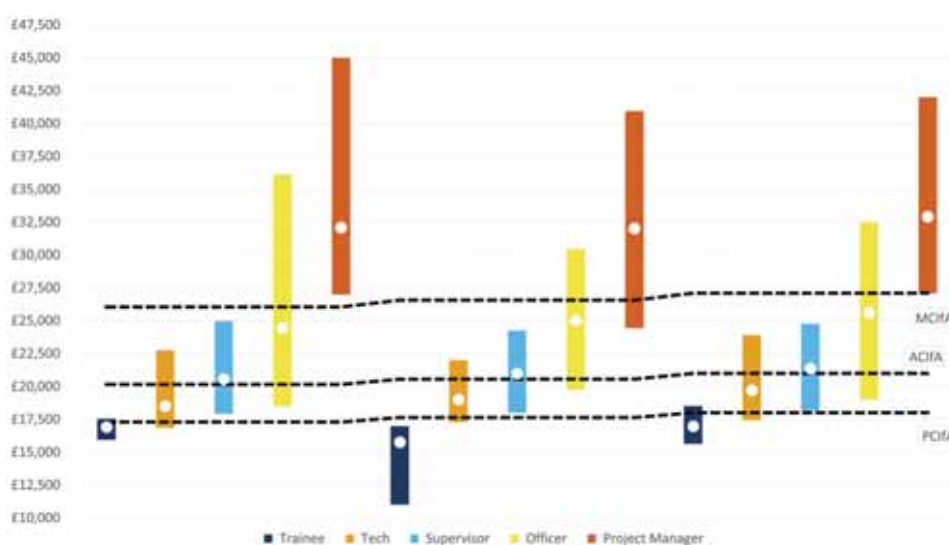


Figure 1: Highest, lowest and average salaries (white dot) per role for the 2015, 2016 and 2017 financial years, compared to ClfA minimum recommendations

and require experienced candidates, but pay what may be considered Technician or Supervisor levels.

The Project Manager role most clearly differentiates itself from other roles in the hierarchy in terms of pay – for all three years the lowest paid Project Manager roles are above or equal to the average Officer role. The role, which saw a dramatic increase in average salary during the early 2000s, has somewhat plateaued since 2014 and continues to average around the £32k mark.

Salaries: other roles

Since 2013, other roles have been categorised into: Community and Education; Conservation; Consultancy; CRM SMR; Curation and Collections; Geophysics; Surveying; and Illustration.

Only Conservation and Illustration roles have seen a gradual increase in average salary. Noticeably, the average salary for Geophysics has steadily declined over the three-year period. For the year 2017–18, 58 per cent of Geophysics roles were further described as at ‘Trainee’ or ‘Assistant/Technician’ level.

After peaking above £30,000 in 2015–16, the average Consultant salary has decreased over two consecutive years. This average should be taken with a pinch of salt as, unlike all other categories, most consultancy jobs do not divulge a salary (eg only 38 per cent of Consultant advertisements specified a salary in 2017–18).

The potential of dropping Illustrator as a category was floated in the last JIBA article (Rocks-Macqueen 2015) because only six jobs were advertised throughout that year. However, an average of eleven Illustrator roles were advertised per year 2015–2018, with job titles including ‘Graphics Officer’ possibly indicating a diversification of the skills required for the role. With this increased advertisement rate it has been decided to keep this as a separate category for now.

Table 2: Total job advertisements per role, 2015–18

Year	Trainee	Technician	Supervisor	Officer	Project Manager
2015–16	3	91	49	61	25
2016–17	7	110	42	56	50
2017–18	25	156	62	78	55

Table 3: Highest and lowest advertised salaries per role, 2015–2018

		Trainee	Technician	Supervisor	Officer	Project Manager
2015–2016	Low	£15,941	£16,837	£17,921	£18,500	£27,000
	High	£17,528	£22,750	£24,980	£36,131	£45,000
2016–2017	Low	£11,008	£17,280	£18,000	£19,750	£24,440
	High	£16,982	£22,000	£24,250	£30,434	£40,945
2017–2018	Low	£15,642	£17,431	£18,160	£19,000	£27,100
	High	£18,522	£23,896	£24,772	£32,500	£42,011

Community and Education roles saw a sharp decrease in average salary and salary range in 2017–18. Only roles within units or with direct reference to archaeology (i.e. ‘Community Archaeologist’) are counted in this category, so it is likely that many roles were counted within the general heritage category ‘CRM SMR’.

Changes and limitations to JIBA

Limits to this analysis that have been raised in previous JIBA articles include the omission of freelance and self-employed archaeologists (2015), proliferation of titles, and negating the effect of regional variations such as London weightings (2014).

There has been a significant increase in the number of general heritage jobs advertised in BAJR and JIST, but especially JIST.

The categories ‘CRM (Cultural Resource Management) SMR (Sites and Monuments Record)’ and ‘Curation and Collection’ have become too general to draw reliable averages from. The CRM SMR category originally focused on local authority jobs but over the last decade has become a catch-all for the increasingly diverse range of jobs advertised in our data sources. For example, the 1,174 CRM SMR roles for 2017–18 range from interns and trainees to heads of large institutions (one offering a salary of £100,000, which was removed for distorting Table 3). The pre-2012 method of separating CRM SMR into ‘Junior’ and ‘Senior’ categories is unworkable with the current volume of jobs. Future JIBAs are likely to drop the analysis of such jobs as it takes up a significant number of work hours and has moved away from the goal of these reports – jobs in archaeology.

References

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 Aitchison, K, and Rocks-Macqueen, D, 2013 Archaeology Labour Market Intelligence: Profiling the Profession 2012–13
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Table 4. Lowest, highest and average salaries for other roles, 2015–2018

		Comm and Edu	Conservator	Consultant	CRM SMR	Curation and Collections	Geophysics	Illustrator	Surveyor
2015–2016	Low	£18,047	£14,722	£19,000	£13,442	£17,386	£17,788	£17,000	£17,600
	Average	£24,023	£26,141	£31,217	£28,365	£25,600	£22,160	£21,359	£25,991
	High	£31,489	£35,000	£47,500	£65,000	£38,064	£32,500	£26,343	£43,000
2016–2017	Low	£15,500	£18,000	£19,126	£13,852	£15,950	£17,600	£18,367	£17,600
	Average	£25,486	£26,696	£28,540	£27,754	£25,174	£21,667	£22,918	£27,373
	High	£37,348	£38,000	£50,852	£55,000	£40,000	£32,188	£33,844	£53,000
2017–2018	Low	£18,000	£17,277	£19,650	£14,500	£17,426	£16,500	£18,000	£18,000
	Average	£21,846	£26,844	£28,448	£27,477	£26,472	£20,800	£23,748	£24,999
	High	£24,231	£50,000	£42,011	£100,000	£47,000	£25,000	£27,250	£40,000

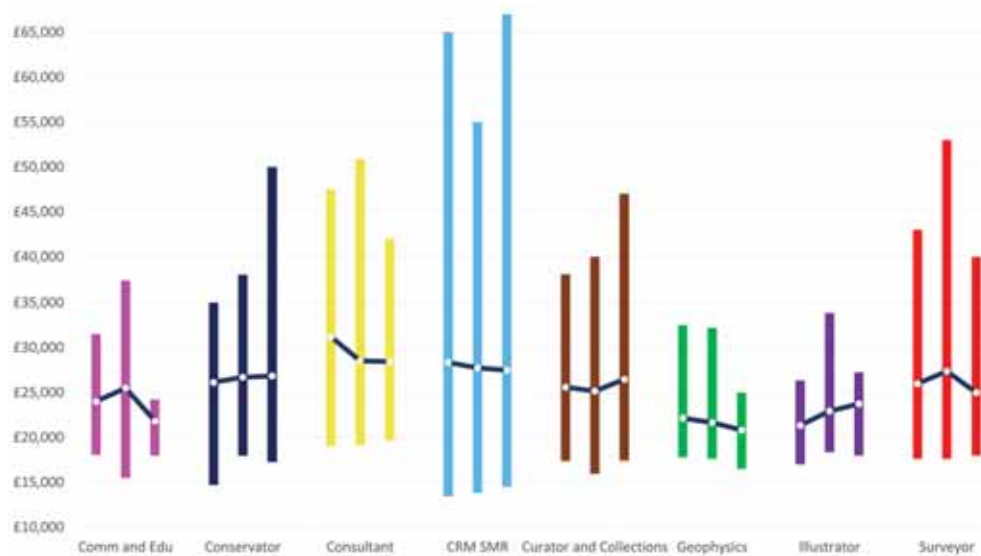


Figure 2: Highest, lowest and average salaries (white dot) for other archaeological roles for the 2015, 2016 and 2017 financial years

Table 5. Total job advertisements per role, 2015–18

	Comm and Edu	Conservator	Consultant	CRM SMR	Curation and Collections	Geophysics	Illustrator	Surveyor
2015–2016	12	13	25	130	13	17	8	19
2016–2017	24	10	33	159	23	24	14	6
2017–2018	8	66	33	1174	144	24	11	23

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Ben Lewis was a Cultural Heritage Projects Researcher at Landward Research during the researching and writing of this paper. He currently works for Historic England. Ben conducted data gathering and wrote the majority of this article.

So Young Ann holds a BSc in statistics from University College London. She has a strong background in mathematics and a keen interest in data analysis. Through a series of internships at different companies during her training, she has gained experience in data analysis and visualisation.