



Federation of Archaeological
Managers & Employers
Unit 54,
Brockley Cross Business Centre,
London, SE4 2PD

Dr Helen L Loney
Principal Lecturer
Department of Geography, Archaeology and the Environment
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Dear Dr Loney,

I am writing to you on behalf of FAME, the Federation of Archaeological Managers and Employers, in regards to the retention of the archaeology and heritage programme at the University of Worcester. We are the trade body representing the archaeological employers working in development-led archaeology in the United Kingdom (UK) and as such are greatly concerned about suspension of the that degree programme at the University.

Your programme is integral to both the West Midlands and the whole archaeological sector. We require a highly educated workforce provided by programmes like yours; 93% of archaeologists hold at least a Bachelor's degree or higher. This is not going to change as a degree is required for archaeologists to obtain a CSCS card and one cannot work on a construction site without a CSCS card, meaning they cannot work on almost all commercial projects. With the gutting of the archaeology department in Birmingham a decade ago and Warwick concentrating on Classical Archaeology your programme is the last programme in the West Midlands that can meet our members need for trained graduates in the region.

We are facing significant skill shortages, this has been highlighted by many news organisations for several years now¹. For the last five years our members have reported staff shortages as our workforce has nearly doubled, as reported through our *State of the Archaeological Market* reports². In fact, our job shortage has become so severe that we have requested and were granted the

¹ See <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3590563/HS2-homebuilding-schemes-risk-delay-Britain-running-archaeologists-examine-relics-dug-construction.html> or <https://www.theguardian.com/science/2017/jun/20/trouble-brewing-british-archaeology>

² <https://famearchaeology.co.uk/what-we-do/publications/>

inclusion of archaeology positions on the UK Government's Shortage Occupation List for obtaining work visas in the UK. Only sectors with the most extreme shortages in skilled workforces are placed on this list so that it is easier to bring in foreign workers to fill positions. The sector needs programmes such as yours.

COVID, while heavily damaging employment prospects in many industries, has not yet impacted us. We were one of four sectors that the BBC reported are still experiencing job shortages³.

Like every sector there are ups and downs in terms of job demand but we have been tracking the number of archaeologists employed in the UK over time and the trend has been for increased growth. I have included an illustration of this growth over the last century:



The demand for archaeologists is only increasing and will be for the foreseeable future, that is why we need programmes such as yours to help meet that need now and well into the future. Especially in the West Midlands, as 10% of our workforce is normally based in the that region. We have tracked those numbers for 20 years and that demand has stayed fairly steady, going as low as 8% but as high as 25%+ during the HS2 project. With 45 Universities providing archaeology programmes in the UK ; however, that is already down to effectively just yourselves, as mentioned above, for 10% of our workforce in the West Midlands. The loss of your programme would leave a unprecedented gap in training graduates for our workforce.

If you or your colleagues would like to discuss the sector's need for your graduates please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely,

Kenneth Aitchison
CEO of FAME

³ listed 3 out of 4 of UK sectors struggling to fill needed job vacancies - on BBC Radio 4, September 29th, 2020.