

EAA Community Overview

Early Career Archaeologists (ECA)

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The Early Career Archaeologists Community (ECA) is a grassroots initiative of the European Association of Archaeologists (EAA), designed to hear, share, communicate, and act as advocates for the issues that affect early career archaeologists. We generally define ECAs as ‘professionals who have not yet held a position of responsibility or authority within their institution, often marked by tenure’ (ecarchaeologists.com), however we do not adhere too strictly to that definition, and we hold that, if you feel like an ECA, then you are one!

Initiated in 2020 by postgraduate and postdoctoral researchers as well as archaeologists working in the heritage and commercial sectors, the ECA has grown rapidly to become one of the largest communities sponsored by the EAA. Our guiding principle is that ECAs are professionals and should be treated accordingly, in line with the core values of the [European Charter for Researchers](#). Education and training requirements may not be used, for instance, as a basis to disqualify ECAs from the right to publish or to have their contribution to science acknowledged.

In addition to running our own [mentoring scheme](#) ([Preda-Bălănică, this issue](#)), we organize career events such as the session ‘[Becoming a published archaeologist](#)’ at the EAA2022 Conference in Budapest (jointly hosted by [European Journal of Archaeology](#)). The [useful links](#) section on our website contains many career resources for those looking for jobs, fieldwork opportunities, events and conferences. We promote the work of our members through [Spotlights on ECAs](#) and publish interviews of [tenured academics](#), with a view to making career paths more transparent for aspiring archaeologists.

The results of our 2021 international online survey of early career researchers in archaeology (419 respondents) are forthcoming (Brami et al. 2022). In short, we found that respondents were passionate about pursuing an academic career, but pessimistic about job and career prospects; 84.2% reported feeling stressed due to the lack of available career options. Over two thirds of respondents (68.0%) were female, highlighting the asymmetrical nature of the challenges faced. Workplace discrimination and bullying were recurrent topics in the over 180 open-ended comments received. A survey of ECAs in commercial and heritage sectors is currently under preparation.

The ECA Community is in the process of transitioning to an elected board. Three positions as 'chairperson' will be up for election in October 2022. The call for candidates remains open until 15 August, 2022. More information is available on our [community page](#). The new elected board will be in charge of the overall strategy of the Community. Future actions under consideration include additional support mechanisms for early career archaeologists, such as one-day workshops on professionally-relevant topics (e.g. how to write grant applications) and fundraising events to draw attention to common problems experienced by ECAs, including, for example, professional recognition of ECAs in the commercial and heritage sectors.

EAA members can subscribe to the ECA Community by ticking the relevant box in their [EAA membership profile](#). The ECA Community has an active social media presence and can be contacted via [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#). Any enquiries should be sent to ecataskforce@outlook.com.

Bibliography

Brami et al (2022) Brami, M., Emra, S., Muller, A., Preda-Bălănică, B., Irvine, B., Milić, B., Malagó, A., Meheux, K., Fernández-Götz, M. A precarious future: Reflections from a survey of early career researchers in archaeology, manuscript submitted.