

Submission by Unite the Union concerning an examination of pay and conditions of employment in the Commercial Archaeological Sector as provided for in the Industrial Relations (Amendment) Act 2015

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and Aim of This Submission

1.1.1 This submission is made by Unite the Union (the applicant union) on behalf of workers employed in the Commercial Archaeology Sector (the sector). The applicant union requests that the Labour Court examine the terms and conditions of workers in the sector under the terms of the Industrial Relations (Amendment) Act 2015 (the 2015 Act) with a view to making recommendations to the Minister that a Sectoral Employment Order (SEO) be established. In particular, the applicant union requests that the Labour Court recommend to the Minister that an archaeological SEO should include the following:

- A minimum hourly rate of pay for non-licenced Archaeological Workers of €22.50 to apply from the date of the establishment of an SEO.¹

1.1.2 The applicant union also requests the Labour Court to consider the impact of inflation on the above rate 12 months after the establishment of the SEO.

1.1.3 It is the applicant's view that the terms of the proposed SEO should specifically apply to the non-licensed Archaeological Workers, which generally corresponds to those working at the grades of Site Supervisor and Site Assistant providing excavation services, but can also encompass those working in survey, assessment, consultancy and specialisms. It is proposed that this would represent a minimum rate of pay for the Commercial Archaeology Sector.

1.1.4 This document will present the wider context that the archaeological SEO would operate in, while also addressing matters that the Labour Court is required to have regard to when making a recommendation to the Minister, as set out at Section 16 of the 2015 Act.

¹ Non-licensed Archaeological Workers constitute the largest cohort of working archaeologists in Ireland, and include supervisors, site assistants, and specialists. The only grade of archaeologist defined in government regulations is that of Licensed Archaeologist, who are suitably qualified to hold an archaeological licence for monitoring, test excavation, and testing. Licensed Archaeologist correspond to the grade of Site Director or Excavation Director in Ireland. See section 2.8 in this document.

2 THE SECTOR, ECONOMIC IMPACT, COMPETITIVENESS AND FUTURE DEMAND

2.1 Unite (the applicant union)

2.1.1 Unite the union's Archaeological Branch currently has 170 members. Unite has carried out research which has determined that the number of archaeologists employed in the Commercial Archaeological Sector is between 250 and 300 (see section 2.5 below). Therefore, we believe that Unite is representative of workers employed in the commercial archaeology sector, as required under section 15 of the 2015 Act when seeking the examination of the sector. The applicant union is seeking a Sectoral Employment Order be made for an hourly rate for non-licensed Archaeological Workers in the commercial archaeology sector of €22.50, which will effectively act as a minimum archaeological rate for the sector. The archaeological profession needs to attract new entrants and retain existing archaeologists, but our analysis has shown that non-licensed Archaeological Workers have the most precarious employment in terms of rates of pay, duration and location of work relative to the other grades of archaeological employees. The sustainability of the Commercial Archaeological Sector depends on retaining the existing experienced non-licensed Archaeological Workers and encouraging more people to enter the profession. Unite believes that an SEO will be a significant step in achieving this. The following submission will detail the results of our analysis of the archaeological sector, and our arguments detailing why an SEO is required for this sector.

2.2 The Commercial Archaeology Sector (The Sector)

2.2.1 Commercial sector archaeologists in Ireland are generally employed by private archaeological consultancies or work independently as self-employed archaeologists. The sector is regulated through the National Monuments Acts 1930–2014, the Historical and Archaeological Heritage and Miscellaneous Provisions (HAHMP) Act 2023, the Planning and Development Acts 2000 and 2024, the Environmental Impact Assessment Amendment Regulations 2020, and various Codes of Practice, policies and guidelines, the most pertinent of which are the Framework and Principles for the Protection of Archaeological Heritage and the Policy and Guidelines for Archaeological Excavation. Ireland is also a signatory to several international conventions that provide frameworks

for the legal protection and management of archaeological heritage, such as the International Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites (the Valletta Convention) and the UNESCO Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage.²

2.2.2 The National Monuments Service (NMS) (Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage) and the National Museum of Ireland (Department of Arts, Media, Communications, Culture and Sport) are responsible for the provision of the State's archaeological service, including the regulation of archaeological practices, surveying and maintaining records of Ireland's approximately 147,000 recorded archaeological sites, preserving and promoting Ireland's portable heritage, regulating commercial archaeological practices including the issuing of licences for archaeological excavations and surveys.³ The EU/EEA Regulated Professions Database⁴ lists archaeology as a Regulated Profession in eight countries in Europe, including Ireland, where the NMS are listed as the Regulating Authority.⁵

² For a summary of the regulatory and policy framework for archaeological heritage in Ireland see Appendix 3 of Guidelines for Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment of TII National Road and Greenway Projects. PE-ARC-02009; September 2025) (<https://cdn.tii.ie/publications/PE-ARC-02009-01.pdf>) [Accessed 21 February 2026].

³ <https://www.archaeology.ie/> [accessed 19 February 2026]; <https://www.museum.ie/en-IE/Museums/Archaeology> [Accessed 19 February 2026]

⁴ A database of regulated professions defined under Directive 2005/36/EC. See <https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-further-and-higher-education-research-innovation-and-science/publications/recognition-of-professional-qualifications/> [accessed 19 February 2026].

⁵ <https://ec.europa.eu/growth/tools-databases/regprof/professions/generic/profession/8004> [Accessed 19 February 2026].

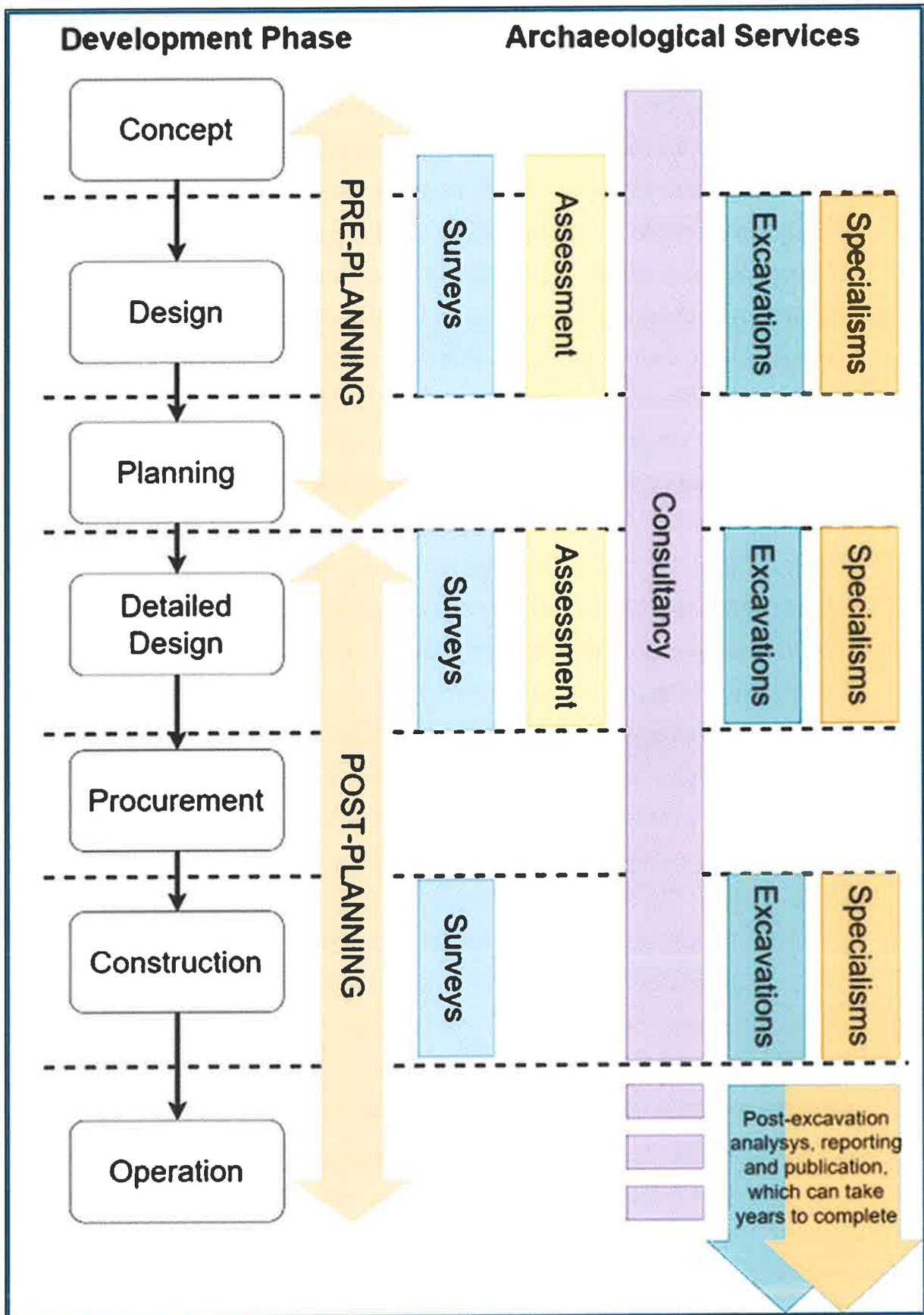


Figure 1 Archaeological Services requirements during development

2.2.3 A range of other state agencies, including Local Authorities, the Forestry Service, and branches of government involved in the planning process employ archaeologists who form, interpret and ensure the application of planning conditions to public and private developments. In addition, state agencies such as Transport Infrastructure Ireland have agreed a Code of Practice with the Minister responsible for archaeology, and employ their own archaeologists. Other codes of practice also exist with Bord na Móna and Bord Gáis.⁶ The Institute of Archaeologists of Ireland (IAI) is the professional body which promotes high standards of professional conduct and practice through its Codes of Professional Conduct, guidelines and technical reports, and represents the interests of archaeologists throughout the island of Ireland on policy that affects them and the archaeological heritage of Ireland.⁷

2.2.4 Within the legal interpretation of the provisions governing public procurement, archaeology is identified as a delay and compensation event for both traditional contracts and design-and-build contracts, where the unanticipated discovery of archaeology impacts the programme of construction works.⁸ As such compensation events arising from unanticipated archaeology are a significant risk to a construction project. These risks should be managed through assessments, including desktop studies, archaeological site investigations and archaeological excavations carried out by competent and qualified professional archaeologists. The Institute of Archaeologists of Ireland sets out best practice guidelines for archaeologists undertaking fixed price contracts,⁹ and for those procuring archaeological services.¹⁰ Since 2020, Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII), one of the largest contracting authorities for archaeological services in Ireland, has procured archaeological services by choosing the most economically advantageous (MEAT) tender based on an assessment of quality and price of bidders, ensuring that the quality of the archaeological service provider is now a key determining factor in whether archaeological companies win TII contracts.¹¹ Unite the Union's archaeology branch represents professional archaeologists who provide these services.

⁶ <https://www.archaeology.ie/advice-and-support/planning-and-guidance/codes-of-practice/> [Accessed 19 February 2026].

⁷ <https://www.iai.ie/> [Accessed 23 February 2026].

⁸ *Guidance Note 1.5.3: The Pricing Document*, Office of Government Procurement (Dublin, 2025), p.15 https://media.cwmf.gov.ie/media/documents/GN_1.5.3_PWC_Pricing_v1.4_09-01-2025.pdf [Accessed 23 February 2026].

⁹ <https://www.iai.ie/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/IAI-Best-Practice-Standard-Procedures-in-Fixed-Price-Contracts-20121.pdf> [Accessed 23 February 2026].

¹⁰ <https://www.iai.ie/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/IAI-Advice-procureurs-using-fixed-price-contracts-20121.pdf> [Accessed 23 February 2026].

¹¹ See this presentation prepared by TII in 2019 describing the benefits of a quality/ price procurement of archaeological services: <https://www.tii.ie/media/ss5jt3ka/18-t-smith-and-j-eogan-presentations.pdf> [Accessed 19 February 2026]

2.3 Commercial Archaeological Services

2.3.1 Professional archaeological services are mostly provided to assess the impacts, and mitigate the effects, of developments on archaeological cultural heritage, generally in support of planning applications (pre-planning) or to fulfil conditions attached to planning permission (post-planning). Archaeological services may be required throughout the phases of a development (Figure 1). In most cases, archaeological services are procured by competitive tender — either the lowest price wins (price-only tenders), sometimes with a pre-qualification (a tenderer meets a minimum requirement for experience, qualifications and annual turn-over), or the tender in a competition where the winning tender is judged to be the most economically advantageous based on a formula combining the tenderers' prices and responses to questions designed to assess their relative quality.

2.3.2 Professional archaeological services include various kinds of surveys, assessments, consultancy services, archaeological monitoring and excavations, post-excavation processing and analysis, and specialist services (Figure 2). Most professional archaeologists in Ireland will have been employed either directly or indirectly on archaeological excavations at some point in their careers. As archaeology in Ireland is legally protected and regulated, it frequently lies on the critical path of developments; in other words, the archaeology must be resolved before development works can proceed. This is particularly the case for archaeological excavations in advance of construction work, where delays can impact the construction programme, drive knock-on delays to other construction works, with additional unanticipated costs for both archaeological works and claims from contractors, and result in bad publicity and reputational damage for the developers and contractors. Consequently, professional archaeological services are a critically important resource for ongoing development in Ireland. As the Irish economy continues to grow there is an ever-increasing demand for archaeological services. Current wage levels make it very difficult to attract new entrants and retain the existing skill set and professional expertise required to deal with the proposed levels of

infrastructural and house construction,¹² particularly if large-scale infrastructural developments and the housing crisis are to be addressed.¹³

¹² *Project Ireland 2040: National Planning Framework*, Government of Ireland (National Planning Framework, Dublin, 2020) (<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/daa56-national-planning-framework-ireland-2040-our-plan-npf-2018/>) [Accessed 19 February 2026]; AECOM *Ireland Annual Review 2026* (<https://insights.aecom.com/insights/ireland-annual-review>) [Accessed 16 February 2026].

¹³ Government of Ireland, 'Delivering Homes, Building Communities 2025-2030. An Action Plan on Housing Supply and Targeting Homelessness' (https://assets.gov.ie/static/documents/91497c90/20251218_Delivering_HomesBuilding_Communities_18_Dec_Web_Version.pdf) [Accessed 19 February 2026]; Sinéad Ashe, 'Research Matters | Capacity constraints and Ireland's housing supply – Houses of the Oireachtas', Text (Dublin, 2025) (<https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/how-parliament-is-run/houses-of-the-oireachtas-service/library-and-research-service/research-matters/2025-02-25-capacity-constraints-and-irelands-housing-supply>) [Accessed 19 February 2026].

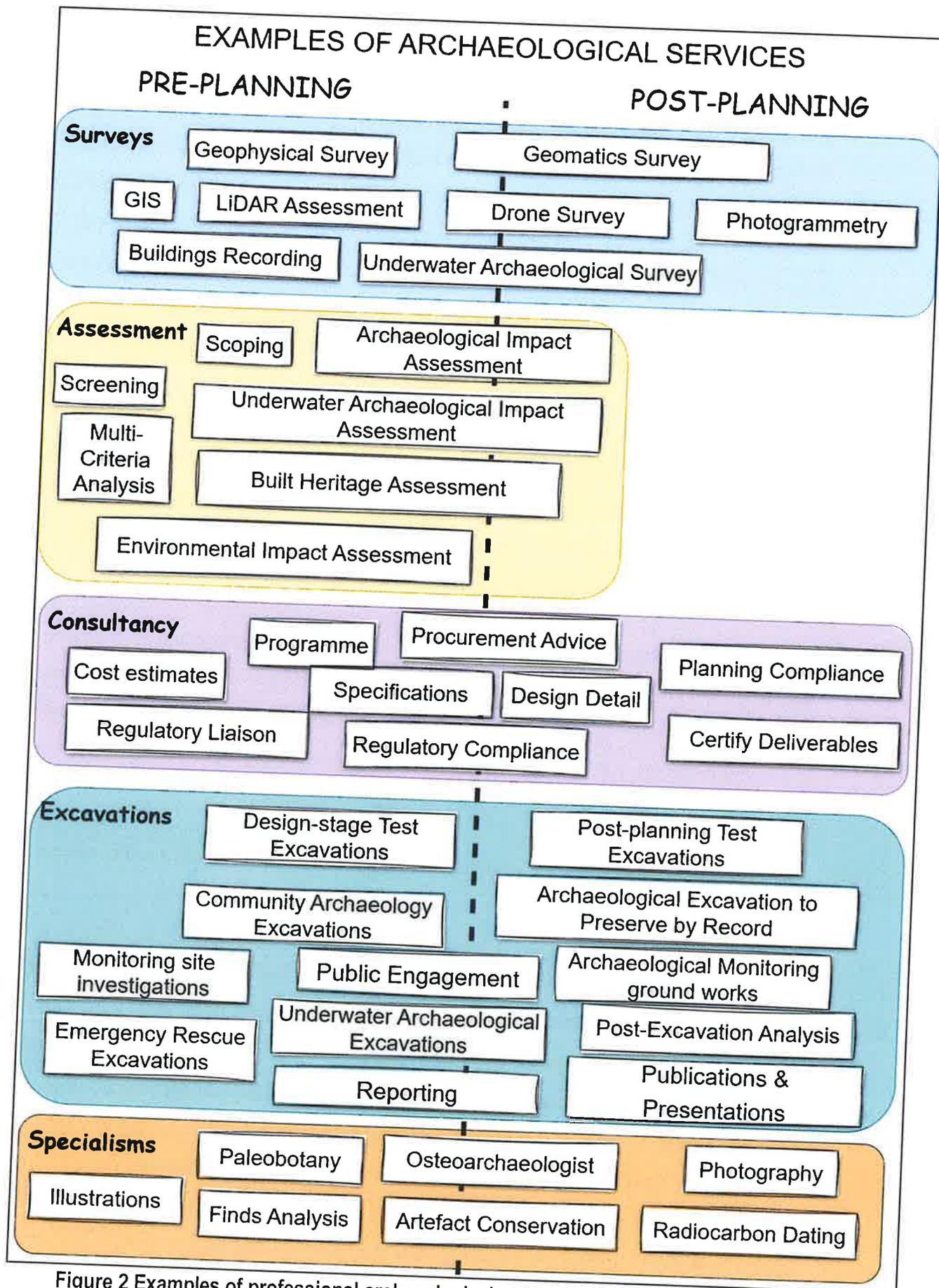


Figure 2 Examples of professional archaeological services offered in Ireland

2.4 Make-up of the Sector

- 2.4.1 There are approximately 40 archaeological companies employing archaeologists in Ireland. Of these, around eleven can be classified as medium to large size companies that employ the majority of archaeologists in the sector. Unite's Archaeological Branch has estimated the number of Archaeological Workers in 2025 to be between 250 and 300 (see Section 2.5 and Table 1 below). The four largest companies list between 19 and 59 employees on their websites, while the remaining seven medium to large size companies have between four and nine employees on their websites. Employees listed on websites tend to have more secure, longer-term contracts and do not generally include the temporary staff that are employed on short-term contracts for specific projects. The larger companies often expand rapidly for large-scale infrastructural projects, such as archaeological services on TII road schemes, taking on large numbers of staff on short-term fixed-purpose contracts to undertake archaeological excavations.
- 2.4.2 The rest of the sector is comprised of small companies consisting of between one and three people, often in partnership, or sole traders. The sole traders and many of the smaller companies often either work independently, carry out small scale excavations with small numbers of temporary employees or sometimes work in conjunction with other consultancies.
- 2.4.3 The sector has undergone dramatic changes in the previous twenty years, ranging from rapid growth driven by the construction boom of the Celtic Tiger era to a devastating collapse during the recession of 2008 to 2012, with large numbers of experienced archaeologists leaving the profession. The CHL Consulting report *Profile of the Archaeological Profession and Educational Resources in Ireland*, commissioned by the Institute of Archaeologists of Ireland in 2002, estimated that there were 650 professional archaeologists in Ireland.¹⁴ The Discovering the Archaeologists of Europe (DISCO) survey found that by 2007 there were 1,635 employed in Irish commercial archaeology.¹⁵ The next iteration of this survey (Disco II), which covered the period 2012-2014, found that this number had plummeted to 168 archaeologists working in the

¹⁴ *A Profile of the Archaeological Profession and Educational Resources in Ireland: A report to the Heritage Council and the Institute of Archaeologists of Ireland*, CHL (2002).

¹⁵ *Discovering the archaeologists of Europe: Ireland: A Report to The Institute of Archaeologists of Ireland*, by Conor McDermott and by Patrizia La Piscopia (2008), p. 14 (<http://hdl.handle.net/10197/4496>) [Accessed 19 February 2026].

commercial archaeology sector in 2012.¹⁶ In 2014, the Working Group for the Review of Pay Rates (WGRPR) report for the Institute of Archaeologists of Ireland survey estimated that there were at least 170 people employed in the sector between 2013-2014, although by no means all of these were employed for the whole of that period.¹⁷

2.5 Numbers of Archaeological Workers in the Commercial Archaeological Sector

2.5.1 Calculating the figure of archaeologists currently working in the Commercial Archaeological Sector is difficult as, unfortunately, commercial archaeological activities do not have a specific Nomenclature of Economic Activities (NACE) code. Recent revisions to Statistical Classification of Economic Activities in the European Union (2025) show that archaeological activities fall under multiple NACE codes (Appendix B: NACE codes for Archaeology).¹⁸

2.5.2 Neither the CSO census nor the Labour Force Survey provide statistics specifically relating to commercial archaeology activity or numbers. Instead, they gather statistics at section or sector level; commercial archaeology activity being one of a number of classes of activity within these sections or sectors. This was confirmed in communications between Unite's research department, the Revenue Commissioners, and the Nevin Economic Research Institute (see Appendix A: Correspondence with the Labour Court 2025). Consequently, Unite have had to utilise a range of other sources of data to illustrate the compensation and size of the sector as outlined in Table 1 below; this can be further elaborated on at any hearing/s into the matter.

2.5.3 Recovery from the collapse in the commercial archaeology sector has been slow, both in terms of the numbers of workers employed in the sector and wage recovery. In March 2024, a census was carried out by the applicant union which asked commercial archaeological employers in Ireland for the number of people they had working for them on one specific day that year. The survey asked employers a simple question: *"How many archaeologists did you employ on the*

¹⁶ *Discovering the Archaeologists of Ireland 2012–2014*, by Kerri Cleary and by Niamh McCullagh (Dublin, 2014), p. 25 (https://www.academia.edu/31444762/Discovering_the_Archaeologists_of_Ireland_2012_2014) [Accessed 19 February 2026]; figures from table 3 estimated number of archaeologists employed in large, medium and small companies or sole traders.

¹⁷ *Final report of the working group for the Review of Pay Rates (WGRPR). August 2014.*, by Martin Curtin et al. (Dublin, 2014) (<https://www.iai.ie/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/WGRPR-Final-Report.pdf>) [Accessed 19 February 2026].

¹⁸ European Commission (ed.), NACE Rev. 2.1: Statistical Classification of Economic Activities in the European Union: 2025 edition (2025 edition, Luxembourg, 2025).

20th March 2024?”. Most of the eighteen employers that responded employed fewer than 10 archaeologists, with the maximum number of employees for one company being 69 on that day. The total number of archaeological employees amongst the respondents in March 2024 was 205. Unite estimates, on the basis of the size of the companies that did not respond to the census, that the actual real number of archaeologists employed in the sector on that day probably ranged from 250-300 workers maximum. During the union’s subsequent discussions with the employers regarding the sustainability of the sector, concerns were raised that the number of archaeologists recorded in the census would be insufficient to staff future large infrastructural projects.

- 2.5.4 Since the March 2024 census day, several large infrastructural projects have commenced, requiring employers to increase their staffing considerably, with some companies recruiting from abroad. A second census was carried out by the applicant union in March 2025 to capture this increase. Like the last census, the survey asked the commercial archaeological employers one question - *“How many archaeologists did you employ on the 20th March 2025?”*. The seventeen employers who responded employed 255 archaeologists that day.
- 2.5.5 Unite also carried out an analysis of twelve archaeological companies on the 2nd November 2025 with recent Annual Returns to the Company Registration Office, which determined that these companies employed 218 staff (this information is collated in Table 1).
- 2.5.6 Additionally, looking at Excavation Bulletins for 2024, there are 114 individual authors of bulletins (see paragraph 2.6.2 of this document), of whom 31 are company owners and employers. This analysis indicates 82 licensed archaeologists were employed in the commercial archaeology sector in 2024. Assuming the number of archaeologists working in the commercial sector in 2024 was 250 to 300 (see Table 1), non-licensed Archaeological Workers employed in the commercial sector make up between 67% and 73% of all Archaeological Workers. As such, the majority of workers in the sector are non-licensed Archaeological Workers.

Table 1. Numbers of archaeologists in Ireland 2002 - 2024

Survey	Year	Number of Archaeologists Employed in Ireland
CHL Profile the Profession	2002	Estimated 650
DISCO	2008	1635
DISCO II	2014	168
IAI Working Group for the Review of Pay Rates	2014	170
UNITE Archaeology Branch Census day	2024	205 (from 18 companies that responded to the survey)
UNITE Archaeology Branch Census day 2025	2025	255 (from 17 companies that responded to the survey)
Unite analysis of Company Registration Office	2025	218 (12 main companies 02/11/2025)

2.6 Current Activity in the Sector

2.6.1 A condition of the licence or consent issued for archaeological excavations is that a summary of results is published in the Excavations Bulletin, which is a useful measure of the levels of archaeological activity in Ireland over time.¹⁹ The numbers of archaeological excavations carried out in Ireland are strongly influenced by the health of the construction sector. The rapid increase in the number of excavations in the early 2000s, reaching a high of 2,269 in 2006, mirroring the Celtic Tiger era construction boom. This was followed by a dramatic fall to a low of 600 excavations in 2015, matching the collapse in construction. Since 2015, there has been some recovery, rising to 912 excavations in 2018, but falling to 774 excavations in 2024 (Figure 3). It should be noted that some bulletins report the result of multi-year archaeological excavations, and authors may take a number of years to publish bulletins for a given year, all of which can influence the total number of bulletins for that year. However, the number of published excavation bulletins is generally accepted as reflective of the volume and fluctuations of archaeological excavation activity over time.²⁰

¹⁹ <https://excavations.ie/>. Note excavations bulletins are uploaded by the authors on a continuous basis; the figures for 2025 at the time of writing [19 February 2026] were 428, because not all authors have yet uploaded their bulletins for 2025.

²⁰ James Eogan, 'The impact of the recession on archaeology in the Republic of Ireland' in Nathan Schlanger and Kenneth Aitchison (eds), *Archaeology and the Global Economic Crisis: Multiple Impacts, Possible Solutions* (Tervuren, 2010), pp 19–24

(https://www.academia.edu/592141/The_impact_of_the_recession_on_archaeology_in_the_Republic_of_Ireland?email_work_card=title&li=0)

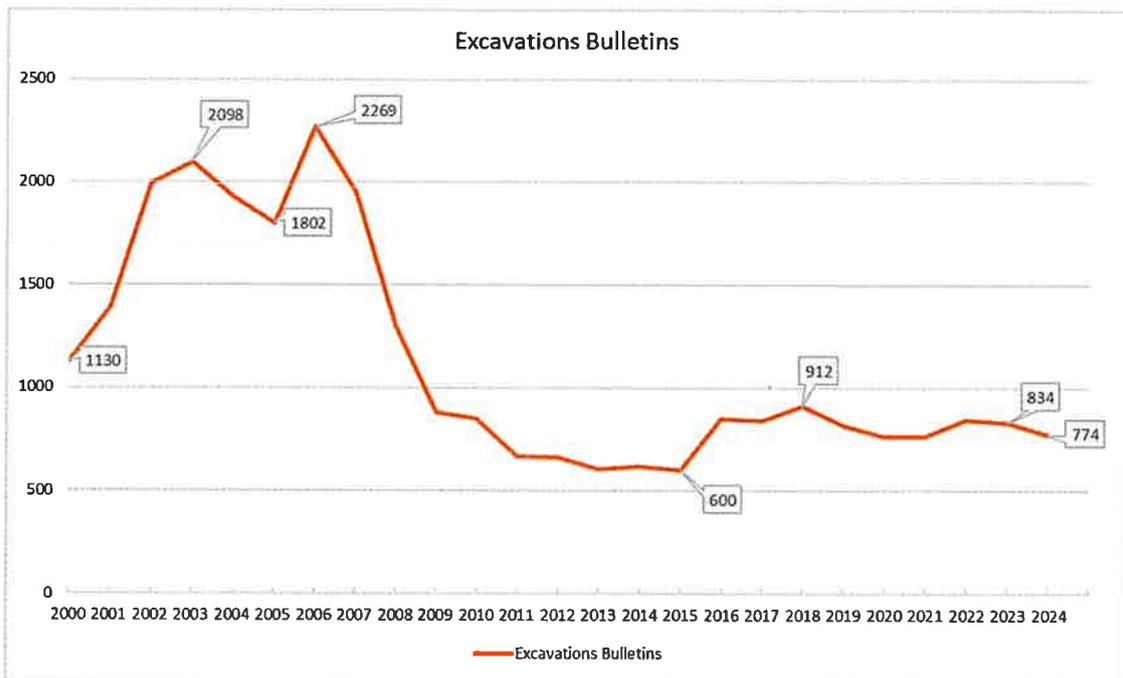


Figure 3. Published excavation bulletins indicating the level of archaeological activity from 2000 to 2024

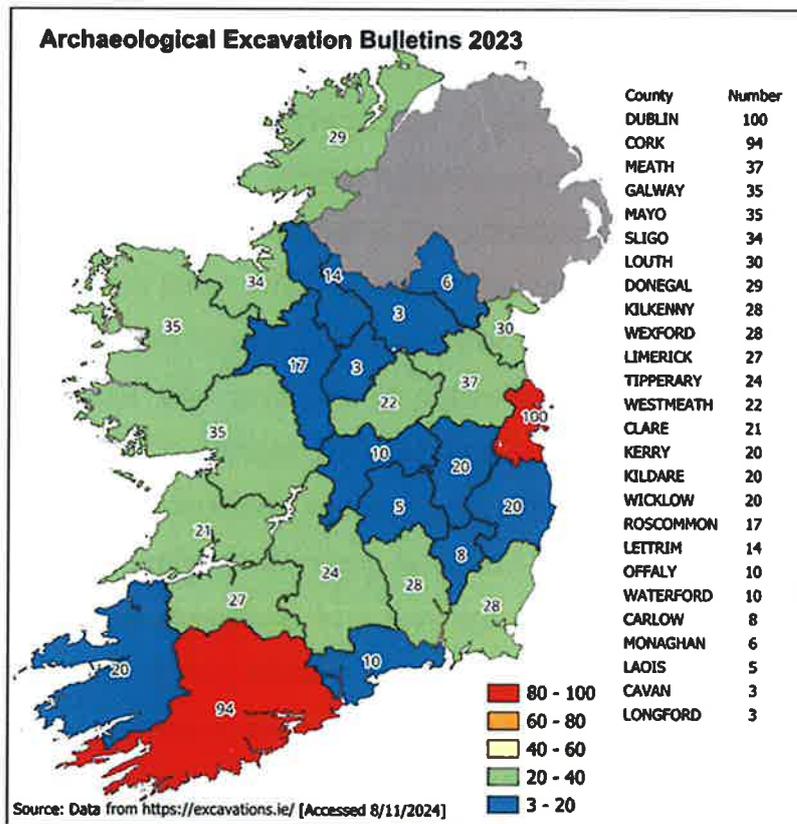


Figure 4 Excavation Bulletins (2023) by County

; Thomas Kador, 'Archaeology and the Death of the "Celtic Tiger": Maintaining a relevant curriculum at a time of crisis' in *Archaeological Review from Cambridge*, xxvi, no. 1 (2011), pp 99–117.

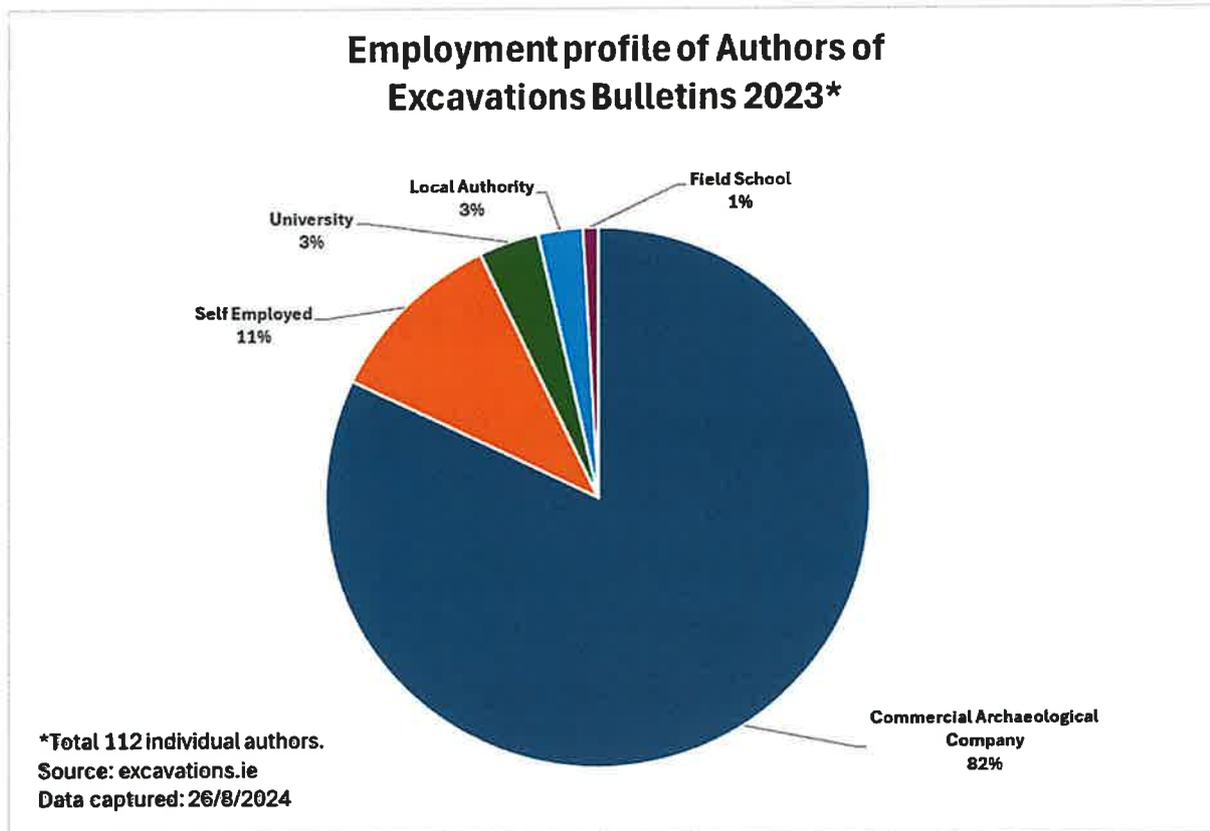


Figure 5 Excavation bulletins (2023) by employment type

2.6.2 A further analysis of excavations bulletins for 2023 provides a snapshot of the profession. The largest number of excavations tend to happen around the major urban areas of Dublin and Cork (Figure 4), which are amongst the most expensive places for archaeologists to live.²¹ The majority (82%) of the published excavation bulletins for 2023 are authored by employees of commercial archaeological companies, with a further 11% of bulletins authored by self-employed archaeologists (Figure 5). A further review of Excavation Bulletins for 2024 found a total of 114 individual authors of 706 excavation bulletins were employed by commercial archaeology companies,²² indicating that the overall findings for 2023 still apply to 2024.

²¹ Using rent as an indication of monthly living expenses, the average market rents per month for apartment in Dublin for Q3 2025 ranged from €1,935 to €3,160; in Cork city it ranges from €1,504 to €2,274 per month; the national average monthly rent for a two bed apartment was €2,080. Source: *The Daft.ie Rental Price Report: an analysis of recent trends in the Irish residential rental market 2025 Q3*, Daft.ie 2025 (https://ww1.daft.ie/report/2025-Q3-rentalprice-daftreport.pdf?d_rd=1) [Accessed 21 February 2026].

²² Review of <https://excavations.ie/>; 774 bulletins minus the bulletins published by authors employed by Universities and Public Sector, and bulletins published for counties in Northern Ireland.

2.7 Qualifications in the Sector

- 2.7.1 Archaeology is generally accepted to be a graduate profession. In 2014, 98% of archaeologists in the commercial sector had primary degrees, while 44% had Masters degrees, 9% held doctorates and a further 7% held post-doctorate qualifications.²³ A survey undertaken in 2024 by Mantra for the Institute of Archaeologists of Ireland found that 98.5% of the respondents from the IAI membership held primary degrees, while 74% had a Masters degrees or higher.²⁴
- 2.7.2 In 2023, eight third-level institutions in Ireland offered up to 53 different courses in archaeology: Atlantic Technical University (ATU), Dundalk Institute of Technology (DkIT), Queens University Belfast (QUB), Trinity College Dublin (TCD), University College Cork (UCC), University College Dublin (UCD), University of Galway (UoG, formerly NUI Galway), and University of Ulster (UU) (see Appendix C: Archaeology Courses offered on the island of Ireland).²⁵
- 2.7.3 The undergraduate degree in archaeology is a taught three to four-year programme, and the qualifications achieved are between level 7 or level 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications, depending on the degree (BA/BSc). Archaeological courses at Certificate level (NFQ level 6) and Diploma (NFQ level 7) are also offered by third-level institutions. Many of these courses offer training in field and excavation skills as part of the undergraduate degree. Postgraduate master's degrees (MA, MLitt and MSc; NFQ level 9) are generally where archaeologists develop their specialisms, taking between one and two years to complete. Doctoral degrees (PhD; NFQ level 10), which typically take between three and five years to complete and consist of original research, represent the highest level of qualification achievable. As well as additional qualifications in technical skills such as GIS and CAD, or Project Management skills, many commercial archaeologists undertake continuous professional development (CPD) through the Institute of Archaeologists of Ireland.²⁶ Any archaeologist who seeks to direct the excavation of archaeological sites must

²³ *DISCO II*, p. 17.

²⁴ *Institute of Archaeologists of Ireland - Survey Thursday, April 4, 2024*, Mantra Strategy and Institute of Archaeologists of Ireland (2024) (https://www.iai.ie/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/IAI_Survey_Data_2024.pdf) [Accessed 21 February 2026].

²⁵ Our thanks to Dr Eimear Meegan and the Discovery Programme's Frameworks for Archaeological Research for providing these figures.

²⁶ <https://www.iai.ie/cpd/> [Accessed: 21 February 2026]

first sit and pass a competency interview with the regulatory and statutory authorities.²⁷

2.7.4 An IAI survey of the four major Irish Universities teaching archaeology in 2024 – Queen’s University Belfast, University College Cork, University College Dublin, University of Galway – found that graduate numbers in archaeology have declined by 20% between 2016 and 2021, which is concerning for the future sustainability of the sector.²⁸ The applicant union believes that one of the reasons for this decline is a lack of confidence in archaeology as a viable long-term career, in particular because of relatively low wages of entrant-level archaeologists, compared to other graduates.

2.8 Grading of Archaeological Workers

2.8.1 While the only grade of archaeologist recognised in regulation is that of Licenced Archaeologist, within the sector there are four main grades of archaeologist in common usage in the sector. These are, in order of seniority, Senior Archaeologist, Site Director, Site Supervisor, and Site Assistant. The following grade descriptions are based on specifications for the Foynes to Limerick Road scheme archaeological services, advertised in October 2023.²⁹

2.8.2 **Senior Archaeologists** (project managers) oversee large scale archaeological projects, such as TII-funded road schemes, where they must have a Level 8 qualification (QQI or equivalent), be eligible for an archaeological excavation license and not have had a license revoked in the past three years, have at least five years of relevant post-graduate management experience in archaeological fieldwork and reporting, having directed at least five excavations and completed all reporting obligations, and have relevant experience managing an archaeological project valued at €300,000 or more in the last three years.

2.8.3 **Site Directors** lead project teams in the field, directing archaeological excavations. Site Directors must have the requisite qualifications, sufficient

²⁷ <https://www.archaeology.ie/advice-and-support/apply-for-a-licence-consent/excavation-licence/competency-interview/> [Accessed 21 February 2026]

²⁸ Richard Clutterbuck and Ros Ó Maoldúin, ‘Archaeology Student Numbers in Ireland: 2011 to 2021’ in *Archaeology Ireland*, 39 No. 1, no. 151 (2025), pp 39–40.

²⁹ Archaeological specifications for the Foynes to Limerick Road Scheme, including the Adare Bypass, tender published 18/10/2023; see Part 4 Service Requirement <https://www.etenders.gov.ie/epps/cft/listContractDocuments.do?d-5419-p=3&resourceId=2565315#> [Accessed 21 February 2026].

supervisory field experience, as well as being deemed competent by the statutory authorities to hold a licence under the National Monuments Acts 1930-2014. TII-funded road schemes require that the site director have a Level 7 qualification recognized by QQI or equivalent, be eligible for an archaeological excavation license, with no revocations in the past three years, have at least three years of relevant post-graduate experience in archaeological fieldwork and reporting, and have directed at least three excavations and completed all related reporting obligations.³⁰ Site Directors are responsible for preparing archaeological methodologies, are bound by the terms of their archaeological licences, are responsible for coordinating and overseeing post-excavation analyses, artifact conservation, and the creation of illustrations for each excavation site, and also serve as the principal author of reports on these sites. As such, the site director has a commitment to a project which may take up to a year and, for large-scale excavations, frequently longer to complete.

2.8.4 **Site Supervisors** oversee day-to-day excavation and recording of part of an excavation site by a team of archaeologists, operating under the direction of the licenced archaeologist (Site Director). Archaeological specifications for TII-funded road schemes require site supervisors to be fully qualified archaeologists with a minimum of two years relevant post-graduate experience of archaeological fieldwork. Site Supervisors are often employed for the post-excavation phase of projects and can be an important part of report production process.

2.8.5 **Site Assistants** are the most numerous staff on an archaeological project, undertaking excavation and recording of archaeological features and deposits that have been assigned to them by the Site Supervisor or Site Director, as well as being involved in some aspects of post-excavation work. Site Assistants almost universally hold primary degrees and have varying levels of experience on archaeological sites.

2.8.6 All other grades of archaeologists are generally variations of these four basic grades. For example, Underwater Archaeological Director and Supervisors are generally equivalent to Site Director and Site Supervisor, though likely to be paid more because with the additional qualifications and experience required

³⁰ Foynes to Limerick Road Scheme Archaeological Specifications, 2023.

for these roles and the relatively small number of underwater archaeologists in Ireland. Post-excavation managers and Geomatics Managers operate somewhere between a Project Manager and Site Director grades, whilst Site Surveyors are often equivalent to Site Supervisors in grade and pay. This may vary from company to company.

2.8.7 In 1999 the Irish Association of Professional Archaeologists (IAPA) attempted to introduce a system of grades with recommended pay rates benchmarked on Local Authority engineering pay grades (Table 2).³¹ However, these rates were not widely adopted at the time as the IAPA had no mechanism to enforce them.

Table 2: IAPA Grades and Rates 1999

Position	1998 rate (IR£) per week	1998 Rate(€) per week	Hourly Rate Adjusted for Inflation (January 2026)³²
<i>Senior archaeologist (Project manager/Survey manager)</i>	IR£675	€857.07	€ 38.43
Site director/survey director	IR£570	€723.75	€ 32.45
Site supervisor/field surveyors/senior officer assistant	IR£475	€603.13	€ 27.04
Site assistant/office administrator/project assistant/research assistant	IR£375	€476.15	€ 21.35
Archaeological worker (GO)/archaeological technician	IR£275	€349.18	€ 15.66
Specialist/illustrator	IR£10-25 per hour	€12.70 – €31.74	€22.77 - €56.93

2.8.8 Senior staff of commercial archaeological companies are generally company owners or employed on permanent contracts, and can include general managers, project managers, some excavation directors, and site supervisors (Figure 6). Most junior staff (Site Supervisors and Site Assistants) are employed on fixed-term or specified-purpose contracts for the duration of a particular project. Some site directors are also employed for fixed terms or for specific projects. Specialists can be self-employed and contracted to provide services

³¹ Final report of the working group for the Review of Pay Rates (WGRPR), p.25, table 4.3. August 2014. <https://www.lai.ie/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/WGRPR-Final-Report.pdf> [Accessed 28/2/2026]

³² Inflation calculated using the Central Statistics Office CPI Inflation Calculator (<https://visual.cso.ie/?body=entity/cpiccalculator>)

for specific projects, or permanent employees of commercial archaeological companies.

2.8.9 Different synonyms are sometimes used for some of the grades. For examples, the Site Assistant grade can be referred to as excavation assistant or junior site assistant. This is also apparent in the IAPA's 1999 recommended grades (Table 2).

2.8.10 The grade of General Operative is not generally used on commercial archaeological works. No advertisements were made for the role of General Operative between January 2025 and January 2026 (see Appendix D: Advertisements for Archaeological Workers, January 2025 to January 2026).

2.8.11 The Unite Archaeology Branch is seeking that the SEO apply a minimum hourly rate of €22.50 for non-licensed Archaeological Workers in the Commercial Archaeological Sector, the majority of whom are Assistants and Supervisors grade. The distinction between licensed Archaeological Workers and non-licensed Archaeological Workers is described in detail in Section 2.10 below. The number of licensed and non-licensed Archaeological Workers is detailed in section 2.5.6 above.

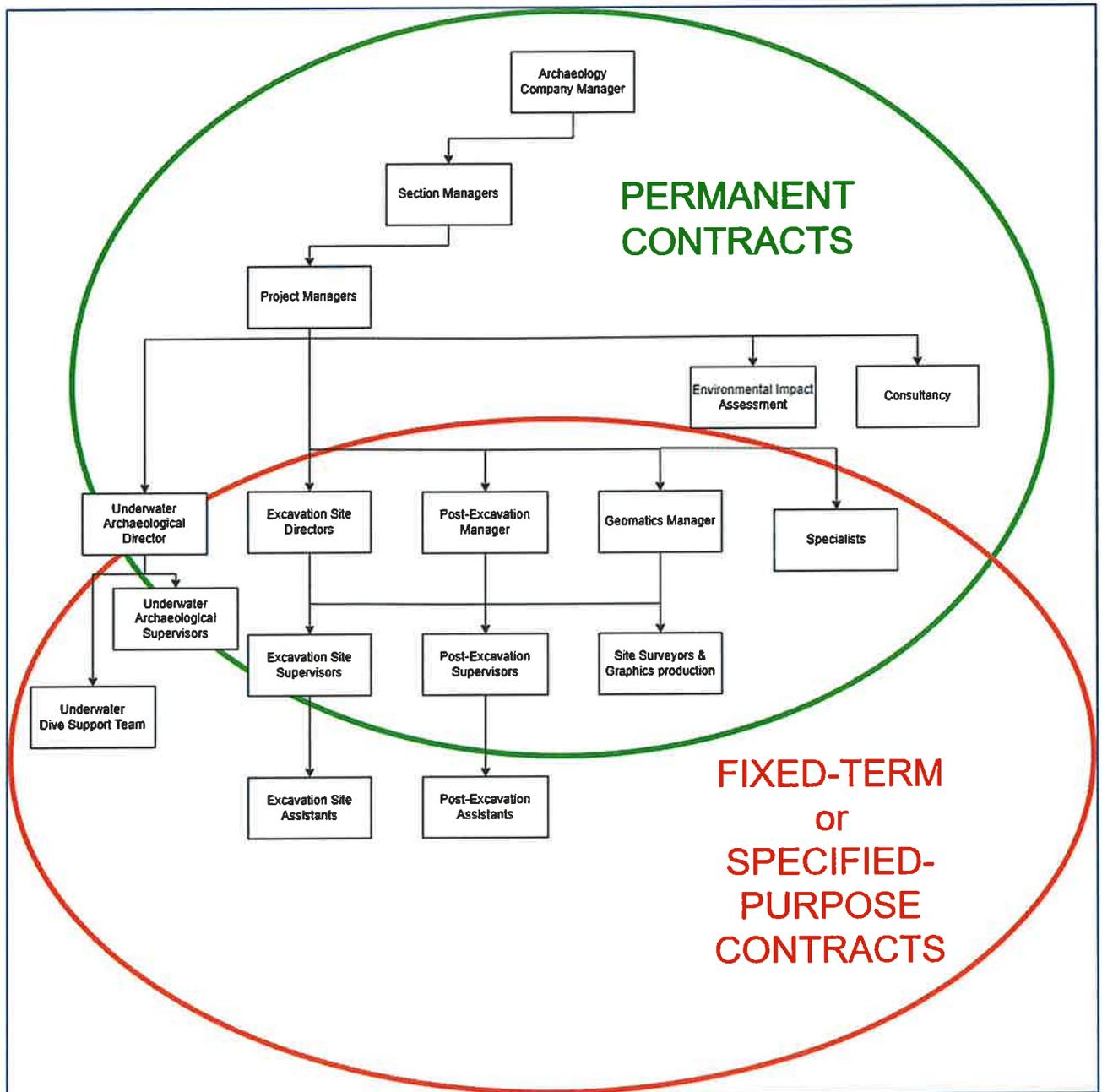


Figure 6 Example of a commercial archaeology company organisation and contracts of employment

2.8.12 For the purposes of the current SEO application, the term Archaeological Worker is used to refer to anyone undertaking work in the commercial archaeology sector and encompasses all grades and the various terms assigned to them. Unite is seeking that the SEO specifically apply to the non-licensed Archaeological Worker, which generally corresponds to those working at the grades of Site Supervisor and Site Assistant providing excavation services, but can also encompass those working in survey, assessment, consultancy and specialisms (See Figure 2). The grade of Licenced Archaeologist is the only grade of archaeologist defined in regulations, and in general refers to Site Directors and other individuals who are recognised by the statutory authorities as suitably qualified and eligible to hold archaeological licences, which permit the undertaking of archaeological monitoring, test excavation, and excavation.

2.8.13 See also this document sections 2.10 Distinction between licensed and non-licensed archaeological workers and 2.14 IAI Working Group on Pay Rates (IAI WGPR).

2.9 Skills in the Commercial Archaeological Sector

2.9.1 The skills required by non-licenced Archaeological Workers vary depending on the archaeological service required. These include skills, knowledge, practical application, critical analysis and interpretation for the following services.

- Desk-top assessments: assisting in, or undertaking, Archaeological Impact Assessments, Underwater Archaeological Impact Assessment, Environmental Impact Assessments, Built Heritage Impact Assessment.
- Surveys: assisting in, or undertaking, Geophysical Survey, Geographical Information System (GIS) analysis, LiDAR Assessment, Buildings Recording, Geomatics Survey, Drone Survey, Photogrammetry, Underwater Archaeological Survey.

- Excavations (including archaeological monitoring of groundworks, test excavations, and archaeological resolution excavations): identification, manual excavation, and recording (scale drawings, photography, written record) of archaeological deposits, features, and sites. Archaeological workers with suitable experience (e.g. supervisors) often are involved in the supervision of sites both in the absence and presence of the licence holder, as well as training and supervising junior staff.
- Post-Excavation Services: processing of artefacts and ecofacts, artefact illustration, assessment and analysis of site record, use of Computer Aided Design (CAD) or GIS for digitisation of site drawings, preparation of maps, drawings and figures, report production and editing.
- Specialist Services: artefact analysis, osteoarchaeology, zooarchaeology, environmental and archaeobotanical analysis.

2.9.2 Non-licensed archaeologists are generally expected to develop and utilise a wide range of knowledge to progress their careers:

- Archaeological periods, site types, artefact types and key reference excavations and publications and sources,
- The range and application of professional archaeological specialist services required for particular types of archaeological sites,.
- Historical periods, sources and key reference publications,
- Legislation, particularly the National Monuments Act 1930 – 2014; Historical and Archaeological Heritage and Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2023 (in the process of being commenced); Planning and Development Act 2000; Planning and Development Act 2024,
- Government and state agency guidelines for Archaeology and Built Heritage Assessment,
- Government Policies for protection, recording and excavation of archaeology, as set out in the Framework and Principles for the Protection of Archaeological Heritage and Policy and Guidelines for Archaeological Excavation,
- Local Government Development Plan policies and objectives,

- Scheduling and managing archaeological services and works, including identifying the key milestones required for particular archaeological services,
- Budget planning and control,
- Contract management,
- Quality control and management,
- Health and Safety legislation, risk assessment and management,
- Computer Aided Design and Geographical Information Systems,
- Global Positioning Systems and Total Stations geodetic surveys,
- Graphic design and digital photographic softwares,
- Cartography,
- Geophysical survey softwares and interpretation,
- Buildings survey techniques and standards,
- Landscape interpretation.

2.10 Distinction between licensed and non-licensed archaeological workers:

A distinction is drawn between Archaeological Workers who hold an excavation licence issued under the National Monuments Act, or are eligible to do so, and those who are not eligible.

2.10.1 The Procedure for Recognition of Professional Qualifications issued by the NMS sets out the criteria for archaeology as a regulated profession.³³ The *Policy and Guidelines on Archaeological Excavation* (pp10-12) also sets out the criteria for qualifying to become eligible for an excavation licence,³⁴ in other words a Site Director.

³³ <https://www.archaeology.ie/collections-and-publications/publications/information-note-procedure-for-recognition-of-professional-qualifications/> [accessed 20 February 2026]

³⁴ <https://www.archaeology.ie/app/uploads/2024/12/excavation-policy-and-guidelines-1.pdf> [accessed 20 February 2026]

2.10.2 Furthermore, archaeology is listed in the EU/EEA *Regulated Professions Database* as a regulated profession in eight countries in Europe, including Ireland.³⁵ The *Regulated Professions Database* states the National Monuments Service (NMS) is the Competent Authority to determine if an archaeologist is considered licence-eligible in Ireland.

2.11 Value of the Sector

2.11.1 An analysis of accounts returned to the Company Registration Office (CRO) illustrated a growth of the combined net worth of up to 44 Irish archaeology companies from €2.6 million in 2004 to €22.7 million in 2008, subsequently falling to €2.3 million in 2017, tracking the rise and fall in the fortunes of the archaeological sector in line with the construction sector.³⁶ A more recent analysis (24 February 2026) by Unite of archaeology company accounts submitted to the CRO established that 50% of these archaeology companies no longer operate. An analysis of the 11 largest registered archaeology companies who submitted financial statements to the CRO between 2022 and 2024 shows a combined net worth of €3.9 million in 2022, rising to €5.4 million in 2024: this represents a 38% growth over these years. Given there are up to 40 employers engaged in the commercial archaeology sector, the overall value of archaeology companies can be estimated to be over €5.4 million.

³⁵ <https://ec.europa.eu/growth/tools-databases/regprof/professions/generic/profession/8004> [accessed 20 February 2026]

³⁶ <https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/rmchapple/viz/ExcavatingIrishArchaeologyinthe21stcentury/FinancialHealthofIrishArchaeology> [accessed 08 February 2026]. Note this data was prepared by Robert M. Chapple, first published 2015 and updated 2022. For details on the methodology used to prepare these figures see Chapple, R. 2015 *Excavating Irish Archaeology in the 21st century – an imperfect portrait*, <https://rmchapple.blogspot.com/2015/09/excavating-irish-archaeology-in-21st.html> [accessed 28 February 2026]

2.12 Cost of Commercial Archaeological Services

2.12.1 There is relatively little information on the cost of archaeological services as a percentage of development costs in Ireland. However, an analysis of tenders for archaeological services published on eTenders.gov.ie provides some insights into the estimated cost of archaeological services as a percentage of estimated construction costs. The Foynes to Limerick (including the Adare Bypass) Road Scheme tender for archaeological services published in 2023 estimated all archaeological costs to be €20 million over a 54-month programme,³⁷ or approximately 4% of the estimated €455 million total construction cost for the project.³⁸ The estimated cost of archaeological services for the M28 Cork to Ringaskiddy Motorway Project published in 2019 was €12.7 million over a 36 month programme,³⁹ or 3% of the estimated €456 million cost of construction.⁴⁰ A tender for a Single Party Framework agreement published in 2023 for the provision of Archaeology Consultancy Services (in other words excluding archaeological excavation services) for the Dublin City Council Housing Development at Emmet Road, Inchicore, Dublin 8, estimated the archaeological contract to be worth €2 million for a 48-month programme, or just 1% of the estimated construction cost of €285 million for the development.⁴¹

2.12.2 The archaeological services required for projects like the Foynes to Limerick or the M28 Cork to Ringaskiddy Motorway are for archaeological assessment, excavations, post-excavation and specialist analysis, reporting and publication, and are designed specifically to manage the archaeological risks in advance of construction.

2.13 Pay levels and Duration of Contracts for Archaeological Workers

2.13.1 The following section looks at pay levels in Ireland for Archaeological Workers. It is our contention that archaeology is a relatively poorly paid profession considering the qualifications of professional archaeologists and compared to other careers in the construction and environmental sectors.

³⁷ <https://www.etenders.gov.ie/epps/cft/prepareViewCfTWS.do?resourceId=2565315> [accessed 28 February 2026]

³⁸ <https://limerickchamber.ie/project/adare-bypass/?> [accessed 28 February 2026]

³⁹ <https://irl.eu-supply.com/ctm/Supplier/PublicTenders/ViewNotice/247275> [accessed 28 February 2026]

⁴⁰ https://www.corkrdo.ie/m28-cork-to-ringaskiddy-project/?utm_source=copilot.com [accessed 28 February 2026]

⁴¹ <https://assets.gov.ie/245869/08920a7a-b7ef-4db2-9c16-397f89a010ff.pdf> [accessed 28 February 2026]

Rates of pay in Commercial Archaeology have largely remained stagnant or even regressed in the last two decades: the average rate of pay for all archaeological grades and positions advertised between January 2025 and January 2026 (57 unique advertisements) was €21.45 per hour⁴² while the average salary for an archaeologist (in other words, an average of all grades) in Ireland in 2001 recorded in the Profile of the Archaeological Profession prepared by CHL was €35,680, the equivalent of €19.03 per hour,⁴³ or when adjusted for inflation €29.69 per hour today.⁴⁴

2.13.2 The Unite Archaeology Branch consulted several sources of information for historic pay levels in commercial archaeology in Ireland after 2000. The Discovering the Archaeologists of Europe (DISCO) report published in 2008 provided figures for the peak of the economic cycle,⁴⁵ while the surveys undertaken by the IAI Working Group for the Review of Pay Rates (WGPR) in 2012-2013 captured the aftermath of the recession of 2008 to 2012.⁴⁶

2.13.3 The applicant union also undertook a wage tracker survey of their members in December 2014, June 2015, and December 2015 (Table 3). Adjusted for inflation, the rate of €11.45 per hour for a Site Assistant recorded in December 2015 would be the equivalent of €14.32 per hour in January 2026. These figures illustrate the lowest levels to which unregulated archaeological pay fell after the 2008 – 2012 recession.

Table 3. Pay Levels per hour 2007-2026

Grade	DISCO I (2007) ⁴⁷	IAI WGPR (July 2012- July 2013) ⁴⁸	Unite Wage Tracker 1 (Dec 2014)	Unite Wage Tracker 2 (June 2015)	Unite Wage Tracker 3 (Dec 2015)	Job Advertisements Min to Max (Jan 2025 – Jan 2026)
Site Director	€29	€19.32	€16.87	€16.93	€16.64	€21.33 - €33.33 ⁴⁹
Site Supervisor	€16.14	€12.03	€11.8	€11.62	€13.16	€19.20 - €24.23 ⁵⁰
Site Assistant	€14.35	€9.35	€10.55	€11.5	€11.45	€15.60 - €21.33 ⁵¹

2.13.4 For an assessment of current wages, the applicant union compiled figures for the rates commercial archaeology companies advertised for various archaeological grades between January 2025 and January 2026.⁵² A total of 78 advertisements from 13 different employers were recorded for this period. Excluding repeat advertisements for the same position, this amounted to 57 unique advertisements (see Appendix D: Advertisements for Archaeological Workers, January 2025 to January 2026). Of this dataset, the most frequently advertised position is the Site Assistant grade (27 advertisements by eight employers), offering rates ranging from €15.60 to €21.33 per hour, equivalent to €29,250 and €40,000 per annum.⁵³ The average rates offered for Site Assistant were between €16.96 and €17.32 per hour. In the same period there were just five advertisements for Site Supervisors by five employers, offering between €19.20 and €24.23 per hour. Fifteen advertisements for licence-eligible Site Directors by seven employers offered between €22.93 and €33.33 per hour. Site Assistants are more likely to be employed for fixed-term contracts, and generally make up the larger proportion of non-licensed archaeological workers on an archaeological excavation team as they are mostly carrying out the physical work required during archaeological excavations.

⁴² This survey is based on a review of archaeological positions advertised on the Archaeology Jobs in Ireland Facebook page, as well the Facebook pages and website of the IAI and various archaeological companies. This dataset contained 71 advertisements for with rates of pay for between January 2025 and January 2026, fourteen of which were repeated advertisements for the same position on different dates or on different platforms. The averages cited here are taken from the 57 unique advertisements. See Appendix D

⁴³ *A Profile of the Archaeological Profession and Educational Resources in Ireland: A report to the Heritage Council and the Institute of Archaeologists of Ireland*, p. 11, based on an average annual salary of €35,680, assuming 250 working days in the year and a working day of 7.5 hours. This report noted the figure probably overstates the average income as the survey did not include many of those working at lower grades on short-term contracts.

⁴⁴ Inflation calculated using the Central Statistics Office CPI Inflation Calculator (<https://visual.cso.ie/?body=entity/cpicalculator>) between the periods of December 2001 and January 2026.

⁴⁵ *DISCO I: Ireland*, p. 42. Note hourly rates of pay based on a 37.5 hour week and not adjusted for current inflation

⁴⁶ *Final report of the working group for the Review of Pay Rates (WGRPR)*. August 2014.

⁴⁷ Hourly rates are calculated from the reported average annual salaries recorded in *DISCO I; Ireland* from a survey undertaken in June-July 2007. Average Salaries = Site Assistant: €26,910, Supervisor = €30, 268, Site Director = €54, 373; hourly rate calculated based on 250 working days in the year and 7.5 hour working day. <https://landward.eu/disco/ireland-2006-08/>

⁴⁸ Averages calculated for the current document from the data presented in the IAI WGRPR report. The report presented the average lowest and highest hourly rate for Site Director (lowest: €17.90, highest: €20.74), Supervisor (lowest: €10.97, highest: €13.09), and Site Assistant (lowest: €9, highest: €9.70). www.iai.ie/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/WGRPR-Final-Report.pdf

⁴⁹ Based on 15 unique advertisements for Site Directors, licence eligible archaeologists, or licensed archaeologists between January 2025 and January 2026.

⁵⁰ Based on five unique advertisements for Site Supervisor or Post-excavation supervisor between January 2025 and January 2026.

⁵¹ Based on 27 unique advertisements for Site assistants, field archaeologist, archaeological assistants, post-excavation technician, and geophysical assistant between January 2025 and January 2026.

⁵² This survey is based on a review by UNITE archaeology branch of archaeological positions advertised on the Archaeology Jobs in Ireland Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/groups/39780007909/>, as well as the IAI website and Facebook pages and website of various archaeological companies.

⁵³ Assuming 250 working days in the year and 7.5 hours per days.

2.13.5 By comparison, the average annual hourly earnings of all employees in Ireland in 2017 was €22.43.⁵⁴ By the third quarter of 2025 (provisional estimate) this was €30.48:⁵⁵ an increase of 35.9%. The average hourly wage offered for non-licensed Archaeological Workers (Site Assistants and Supervisors) in 2017 was €15.75 per hour,⁵⁶ rising to €17.85 in January 2026:⁵⁷ an increase of 13.33%. This demonstrates that the rate of wage increase for non-licensed Archaeological Workers is well below the average for Ireland over most of the previous decade.

2.13.6 Since 2017, CSO inflation figures indicate that prices have risen by 25.67 per cent.

2.13.7 A further analysis of job adverts from January 2025 to January 2026 shows that of the 57 unique advertisements between January 2025 and January 2026, 19 offered permanent positions: 33% of all advertisement for this grade; 23% of advertisements did not specify a duration for the position advertised. The permanent positions advertised tend to be offered to higher grades: 100% of five ads for Consultants offered permanent positions,⁵⁸ 57% of the 15 ads for Site Directors,⁵⁹ 50% of the two ads for Managers,⁶⁰ and 40% of the five ads for Site Supervisors,⁶¹ and just 11% of the 27 ads for Site Assistants offered permanent positions.⁶² The duration of contracts offered to Site Assistants across these ads ranged from 10 days to one year, with an average duration of 70 working days offered. The non-licensed Archaeological Workers tend to have the most precarious employment.

⁵⁴ <https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/er/elca/earningsandlabourcostsannualdata2017/> [Accessed 23 February 2026].

⁵⁵ <https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-elcq/earningsandlabourcostsq22025finalq32025preliminaryestimates/> [Accessed 23 February 2026].

⁵⁶ Based on an analysis of 11 advertisements seeking Site Assistants and Supervisors made by eight different employers.

⁵⁷ Based on an analysis of 32 advertisements seeking Site Assistants and Supervisors made nine different employers.

⁵⁸ Based on an analysis of five advertisements made for Consultants between January 2025 and January 2026.

⁵⁹ Based on an analysis of 15 advertisements made for Site Directors between January 2025 and January 2026.

⁶⁰ Based on an analysis of two advertisements made for Managers between January 2025 and January 2026; the second add did not specify a duration.

⁶¹ Based on an analysis of five advertisements made for Supervisors between January 2025 and January 2026.

⁶² Based on an analysis of 27 advertisements made for Site Assistants between January 2025 and January 2026.

Grade	DISCO I (2007)	DISCO I (2007) adjusted for inflation, July 2007–Jan 2026)	Job Advertisements Min to max rates offered (Jan 2025–Jan 2026)
Site Director	€ 27.88	€ 35.73	€21.33 - €33.33
Site Supervisor	€ 15.52	€ 19.89	€19.20 - €24.23
Site Assistant	€ 13.80	€ 17.69	€15.60 - €21.33

Table 4 Comparison of Inflation adjusted 2007 rates with current advertised rates

2.13.8 Following the recession of 2008 to 2012, there was a significant reduction in wages amongst all grades of archaeological workers. Wage recovery has been slow and incremental, and in some cases, has not reached the rates of 2007, when they are adjusted for inflation (Table 4).

2.14 IAI Working Group on Pay Rates (IAI WGPR) 2014

2.14.1 The Institute of Archaeologists of Ireland (IAI), the successor to IAPA, established a working group on pay in March 2013. This working group considered the levels of pay in the sector and looked at pay rates for archaeologists in the public sector and in comparable professions, as well as pay levels recommended by the IAI's predecessor, the Irish Association for Professional Archaeologists.⁶³ In August 2014, the WGPR produced its final report which recommended hourly rates for commonly used grades at that time, including Site Assistants, Supervisors, and Site Directors (Table 5). The IAI could not legally enforce these rates of pay.

Table 5. Comparison of IAI recommended rates (2014) with current advertised rates

Grade	IAI WGPR (2014)	IAI WGPR (2014 adjusted for inflation) ⁶⁴	Job Advertisements Min to max rates offered (Jan 2025–Jan 2026)
Site Director	€26.85	€33.52	€21.33 - €33.33
Site Supervisor	€22.20	€27.70	€19.20 - €24.23
Site Assistant Grade 2	€17.50	€21.84	€15.60 - €21.33

⁶³ Final report of the working group for the Review of Pay Rates (WGRPR). August 2014. <https://www.iai.ie/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/WGRPR-Final-Report.pdf> [Accessed 28/2/2026]

⁶⁴ Inflation calculated between August 2014 and December 2025 using the Central Statistics Office CPI Inflation Calculator (<https://visual.cso.ie/?body=entity/cpiccalculator>)

Grade	IAI WGPR (2014)	IAI WGPR (2014 adjusted for inflation) ⁶⁴	Job Advertisements Min to max rates offered (Jan 2025–Jan 2026)
(>6 months experience)			
Site Assistant Grade 1 (<6 months experience)	€12.85	€16.04	

3 Economic Impact, Competitiveness and Future Demand Introduction

3.1.1 This section addresses the issues of economic impact on levels of employment and the competitiveness in the sector. Although there is no detailed breakdown of the archaeological sector itself in terms of economic impact and future demand, its close relationship to the construction sector means that data from that sector can be used as a proxy for the archaeological sector.

3.2 National Development Plans and the need for commercial archaeological services

3.2.1 The Government of Ireland's National Planning Framework under Project Ireland 2040 sets out targets for development in Ireland for the next fifteen years. This plan, revised in April 2025, predicts the population of Ireland to grow by one million people by 2040 and sets out the requirements to accommodate this growth with 50,000 new homes each year and sustainable regional development, whilst at the same time conserving and enhancing Ireland's natural and cultural heritage, which includes archaeology.⁶⁵ This framework was updated in 2025 and now includes renewed commitments to strategic priorities including housing, national road networks, public transport, airport and port development, water services, and cultural heritage, all of which require significant inputs from professional archaeologists to be achieved.⁶⁶ The plan notes that "*The protection of archaeological heritage is recognised as a core component to achieving sustainable development*". If the targets set out in Project Ireland 2040 are to be met, the construction sector in Ireland needs to expand considerably, which is already happening. The AECOM Annual Review for 2025 noted that residential development was the largest sector of the construction industry in Ireland, benefiting from both public and private investment.⁶⁷ Budget 2026 included capital provision of €5.19 billion to be complemented by investment through the Land Development Agency (LDA) and lending from the Housing Finance Agency (HFA), bringing the total capital funding for housing in 2026 to over €9 billion. The government's housing plan *Delivering Homes, Building Communities 2025-2030* sets a target of 300,000 new homes between 2025 and 2030. In the final quarter of 2025 (provisional

⁶⁵ National Planning Framework, Objective 60

⁶⁶ *Project Ireland 2040 Updated Draft Revised National Planning Framework. November 2024., National Planning Framework 2024* (<https://cdn.npf.ie/wp-content/uploads/Updated-Draft-Revised-National-Planning-Framework-subject-to-environmental-assessment.pdf>) [Accessed 19 Feb. 2026].

⁶⁷ *Ireland Annual Review 2026, AECOM 2026* (<https://publications.aecom.com/ireland-annual-review/>) [Accessed 20 February 2026].

figures published 25 February 2026), the CSO's *Production in Building and Construction Index* indicates that there was a year-on-year increase in production volume of 6.8 per cent, while civil engineering registered an increase of 12.8 per cent.⁶⁸

3.2.2 The number of multi-development houses receiving planning permission was up by 14.0% annually, from 4,101 units in Q3 2024 to 4,676 units in Q3 2025. Seasonally adjusted employment in the wider construction sector grew by 52.7 per cent since the last application for an SEO in the sector in 2017 (from 126,300 in Q1 2017 to 192,900 in Q4 2025)⁶⁹.

3.2.3 While employment opportunities have increased in the archaeological sector since 2015, there is often a difficulty in filling required positions. Overall, the context is very favourable for profitability as well as sustained employment growth.

3.3 Domestic Comparisons in earnings

3.3.1 CSO figures show that average hourly earnings rose by 4.3% to €30.48 in Q3 2025, from €29.23 in Q3 2024.⁷⁰ Construction has experienced a wage growth of 15 per cent over a three-year period from €24.15 per hour in Q3 2022 to €27.77 per hour for Q3 2025.⁷¹

3.3.2 CSO figures show that construction has experienced a wage growth (hourly earnings) of 26.4 per cent over the period from Q4 2019 to Q4 2025⁷². In the previous five-year period (2014-2019), construction wage growth was the slowest of the fourteen sectors, experiencing wage growth of only 3.3%, undoubtedly reflecting the impact of the recession of 2008 to 2012. The change in ranking of the construction sector to second for 2019 to 2024 shows the impact of the economic recovery as well as the success of SEOs in sustainably improving wages across the construction industry.

⁶⁸ <https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-pbci/productioninbuildingandconstructionindexq42025provisionalandq32025final/>, tables 1a and 1c. [Accessed 28 February 2026]

⁶⁹ Central Statistics Office, Labour Force Survey Quarterly Series, Persons aged 15-89 years in Employment, [Table QLF03](#) (accessed 27 February 2025)

⁷⁰ CSO Earnings and Labour Costs Q2 2025 (Final) Q3 2025 (Preliminary Estimates). Source: <https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-elcq/earningsandlabourcostsq22025finalq32025preliminaryestimates/> [Accessed 22 February 2026]

⁷¹ Figure 3 in CSO Earnings and Labour Costs Q2 2025 (Final) Q3 2025 (Preliminary Estimates) referenced above

⁷² Central Statistics Office, Average Earnings, Hours Worked, Employment and Labour Costs, [EHQ03](#) (accessed 27 February 2025)

3.3.3 CSO figures show that the average hourly earnings for all sectors, including other graduate professions, in Q3 2025 was €30.48, which is significantly higher than the average hourly rate of pay offered in the Commercial Archaeology Sector: €21.45 per hour for all grades advertised between January 2025 and January 2026; just €17.85 for non-licensed Archaeological Workers.⁷³ This is not an incentive for existing archaeologists with graduate and post-graduate qualifications to remain in the archaeological profession, or new entrants to become archaeologists. The proposed SEO rate of €22.50 per hour for non-licensed Archaeological Workers will in part help to address this deficit.

3.4 Economic Argument for new rates

3.4.1 As part of Project Ireland 2040, the National Development Plan Review 2025 states the Government of Ireland plans to spend €275.4 billion on major infrastructural projects through to 2035, prioritising housing, water, energy, and transport.⁷⁴ This includes €3.5 billion investment in electrical grid infrastructure, €24.33 billion in transport investment, to include €2 billion for MetroLink in Dublin, and €2.5 billion for key large scale water infrastructure projects on top of the existing €2 billion of equity for Uisce Éireann in the National Development Plan. In the housing sector, The National Development Plan Review states that record funding of €28.27 billion has been allocated to Housing between 2026 and 2030 to support the construction of 300,000 additional homes.⁷⁵

3.4.2 As noted in Section 2.5 above, the number of archaeologists recorded in the recent census in March 2025 will not be sufficient to staff these projects. Major infrastructural projects in the UK, such as the new Affordable Homes Programme which envisages spending £39 billion on new social and affordable housing in the next decade,⁷⁶ will have enormous archaeological impacts and will mean that fewer staff from the UK will be likely to travel to Ireland. In fact demand for archaeologists in the UK may attract archaeologists from the Republic to the UK for work. There is therefore a need for a sustainable supply

⁷³ Based on an analysis of 57 job advertisements made between January 2025 and January 2026.

⁷⁴ <https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-public-expenditure-infrastructure-public-service-reform-and-digitalisation/campaigns/project-ireland-2040/> [Accessed 22 February 2026]

⁷⁵ Table 6 of the National Development Plan Review (2025). Source: <https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-public-expenditure-infrastructure-public-service-reform-and-digitalisation/campaigns/project-ireland-2040/> [Accessed 22 February 2026].

⁷⁶ <https://www.pwc.co.uk/press-room/press-releases/research-commentary/2025/spending-review-2025-infrastructure-housing-energy.html> [Accessed 22 February 2026].

of well-trained archaeologists in Ireland who can complete the contracts and comply with Irish planning and EU Directives on environmental impacts. To do this, pay rates need to be at a level to retain graduate staff and to provide enough money to adequately compensate archaeologists who have to move from their home base to service projects. However, currently most archaeologists of all grades are paid a lower hourly rate than comparable grades in cognate professions, and lower than the rates proposed by the IAI in 2014 (Table 5). This is having an impact on current recruitment into the profession to meet the demand necessitated by the increase in infrastructural and housing developments, as well as on the long-term sustainability of the Commercial Archaeology Sector.

3.4.3 In Appendix E: Comparison of rates for archaeology and referenced sectors , the rates from the current Construction SEO, as well as the rates for the SEO submissions (not implemented) for the Electrical and Mechanical Engineering sectors have been collated and the category of workers correlated with the archaeological grades. The applicant union asserts that the Year 4 apprentice grade is comparable to the minimum qualification held by the overwhelming majority of Archaeological Workers, most of whom will have completed a three-year undergraduate degree before entering the sector. The rate for a Year 4 construction apprentice is currently €20.70, and will be increased to €21.36 in August 2026, which is at the upper end of the wage range (€15.60 to €21.33) for Site Assistants from January 2025 to January 2026. The Fourth Year apprentice rates for mechanical and electrical workers are even higher, at €25.14 and €21.65 respectively. It is also worth noting that construction, mechanical and electrical qualifications following apprenticeship are all NFQ Level 6, while most Archaeological Workers have a minimum NFQ Level 7 or 8 qualifications.

- 3.4.4 The agreement of a single starting pay grade is vital to securing the flow of new archaeologists into the sector, and it will also act as a floor beneath which no hourly rate for any grade of Archaeology Worker can fall. This mechanism would allow for the recruitment and retention of a well-trained archaeological work force to deal with the continued rise in development-led work. While pay rates have recovered slowly from their fall during the recession of 2008 to 2012, there is still no legally binding agreement or sectoral order in place to prevent a relapse to unsustainably low rates. To have a single, legally guaranteed base rate in the industry would encourage new entrants to the sector and help retain existing experienced archaeologists in the sector.
- 3.4.5 An SEO would also provide an assurance to employers that they are not going to be undercut on price. The archaeological sector has attempted to implement universal pay floors in the past but without success. The SEO will provide a legally enforceable and universal minimum pay rate for non-licensed Archaeological Workers which will provide the employers with an assurance that they cannot be undercut on bids where costs are a key determining factor in winning tenders. The employers can compete on price above this SEO rate if they wish, with the benefit that the SEO will now encourage high-value employees to enter and remain in the sector, and allow companies to also compete on the basis of the quality of their service. This could contribute to an overall raising of standards.

3.4.6 Archaeological employers tender for work based on price and, increasingly for projects funded as part of the National Development Plan, their ability to deliver quality services. Three of the largest archaeological employers in Ireland have invested significant resources and time in becoming certified to ISO global standards for quality management (9001:2015), environmental management (ISO 14001:2015), and health and safety management (ISO 45001:2018).⁷⁷ They are maintaining these certifications because it provides proof to their current and prospective clients that they offer a quality service. If employers want to compete on the basis of quality they need high-quality staff to enter and remain in the sector. The applicant Union contends the SEO will allow them to do this.

⁷⁷ <https://www.rubiconarchaeology.com/>; <https://ams-consultancy.com/about-ams-2/>; <https://www.iac.ie/quality-assurance-iac-achieves-iso-accreditation/> [Accessed 27 February 2026].

4 Request for the establishment of an SEO in the Commercial Archaeology Sector

4.1 Definitions of the Class, type or group of workers

4.1.1 Class, type or group of workers to whom the SEO is to apply:

- The applicant union proposes that the suggested SEO shall apply to persons employed in the Commercial Archaeology Sector as non-licensed Archaeological workers as explained above.

4.1.2 Furthermore, for the purposes of this submission, a non-licensed Archaeological Worker to whom an SEO has application is defined as any person who has entered into or works under a contract with an employer (including through an employment agency within the meaning of the Employment Agency Act, 1971, and/or the Protection of Employees (Temporary Agency Work) Act 2012, whether the contract be for manual labour or otherwise, whether it be expressed or implied, oral or in writing, and whether it be a contract of service or of apprenticeship or a contract personally to execute any work or labour.

4.2 Definition of the Sector

4.2.1 The sector to which a new SEO should have application is defined as the sector of the economy comprising the following economic activity:

- The provision of professional archaeological services to assess the impacts and mitigate the effects of developments on archaeological cultural heritage, in both a pre-planning and post-planning context. Such services include:
 - Desk-top assessments: Archaeological Impact Assessments, Underwater Archaeological Impact Assessment, Environmental Impact Assessments, Built Heritage Impact Assessment.
 - Surveys: Geophysical Survey, GIS, LiDAR Assessment, Buildings Recording, Geomatics Survey, Drone Survey, Photogrammetry, Underwater Archaeological Survey.
 - Excavations: Archaeological Monitoring of groundworks, Test excavations, Excavation in Area.
 - Post-Excavation Services: Processing, assessment and analysis, reporting, publications.

- Specialist Services: Artefact Analysis, Osteoarchaeology, Zooarchaeology, Environmental and Archaeobotanical analysis.

4.3 Categories of Worker

4.3.1 The applicant union requests that an SEO in the sector provides for the following category of worker:

- Non-licensed Archaeological Workers, i.e. workers employed in the Commercial Archaeology sector who are not eligible to hold a licence to direct archaeological excavations.

4.4 Unite Submission on rates of pay

4.4.1 The applicant union submits that the following hourly rate is provided in a new SEO:

- non-licensed Archaeological Worker €22.50 per hour

The applicant union also requests that the Labour Court consider the impact of inflation on the above rate 12 months after the establishment date of the SEO.

4.4.2 As most workers commencing employment in the Commercial Archaeology Sector have completed at least a three-year undergraduate degree in archaeology, the applicant union proposes that a suitable comparator for the proposed non-licensed Archaeological Worker rate are the hourly rates proposed for Year 4 Apprentices in comparable professions. The Year 4 Apprentice hourly rate for the implemented Construction SEO is currently €20.70, and will be increased to €21.36 in August 2026, which is close to the recommended IAI rate for Site Assistant Grade 2 (€21.65 adjusted for inflation). The Mechanical 4th year apprentice rate, based on a collective agreement, is €25.14 from August 2025. The Electrical 4th year apprentice rate, based on a collective agreement, is currently (February 2026) €21.65 and will rise to €22.34 in February 2027. It is proposed that the non-licensed Archaeological Worker rate will effectively act as a minimum rate that will apply to anyone undertaking any commercial archaeological work, as defined at paragraph 4.2.1 above.

4.5 Dispute Resolution Procedures

4.5.1 It is the applicant union's view that the following dispute resolution procedure shall apply to those covered by this SEO.

4.5.2 If a dispute occurs between workers to whom the SEO relates and their employers concerning the terms of the SEO, no strike or lock-out, or other form of industrial action shall take place until the following procedures have been complied with. All sides are obliged to fully comply with the terms of the dispute's procedure.

4.5.3 Individual Dispute

- a) The grievance or dispute shall in the first instance be raised with the employer at local level with a requirement to respond within 5 working days. Notice in writing of the dispute shall be given by the individual concerned or their trade union to the relevant organisation representing employers or to the employer directly.
- b) If the dispute is not resolved, it shall be referred to the Adjudication Service of the WRC.
- c) Either party can appeal the outcome of the Adjudication Hearing to the Labour Court.

4.5.4 Collective Dispute

- a) The grievance or disputes shall be raised in the first instance with the employer with a requirement to respond within 5 working days. Notice in writing of the dispute shall be given by the workers concerned or their trade union to the relevant organisation representing employers or to the employer directly.
- b) If a dispute is not resolved the issue shall be referred to the Conciliation Service of the WRC.
- c) If the issue remains unresolved it may be referred by either party to the Labour Court for investigation and recommendation.

4.6 Industrial Relations (Amendment) Act 2015.

- 4.6.1 This section of the submission seeks to address core considerations to which the Labour Court will have regard to under Section 15 (*Examination by Court*) and Section 16 (*Recommendations by the Court to the Minister*) of the Act. We submit that these comments align with the statutory criteria the Court is required to consider in forming recommendations.
- 4.6.2 Section 15 (1)(a)(i): The trade union of workers is substantially representative of the workers
- The applicant union believes it is substantially representative of workers in the Commercial Archaeology Sector in the Republic of Ireland. The union currently has 170 members, which represents c.66% of the workforce as explained above.
- 4.6.3 Section 15 (1)(b): To apply to all workers of the particular class, type or group and their employers.
- The application submitted by Unite refers to all non-licensed Archaeological Workers who are employed in the Commercial Archaeology Sector.
- 4.6.4 Section 15 (1)(c): A normal and desirable practice, or that it is expedient, to have separate terms and conditions relating to remuneration, sick pay schemes or pension schemes in respect of workers.
- The applicant Union would argue that it is desirable and expedient to have separate terms and conditions in relation to remuneration applied to non-licensed Archaeological Workers to workers in the commercial archaeology sector. The proposed rate will effectively act as a minimum rate of pay for the entire sector, below which wages are legally not allowed to fall.
 - The commercial archaeology sector is labour intensive and due to their universal application, an SEO would provide employers with a level playing field when tendering for work. An SEO's provision of an appropriate rate of pay will also contribute to attracting and retaining new workers, which is essential for the sustainability of the sector.

4.6.5 Section 15 (1)(d): Likely to promote harmonious relations between workers and their employers.

- The SEO would set a legally binding minimum rate of pay for non-licensed Archaeological Workers, which will effectively act as a minimum wage for all archaeological workers. This would undoubtedly contribute substantially towards ensuring harmonious relations between employers and workers in the sector.
- Employment in the sector can be precarious, with many workers in the sector being transient by nature and moving from employer to employer as work dictates. An SEO will ensure that all archaeologists in the Commercial Archaeological Sector, regardless of employer, will be entitled to at least the same minimum hourly rate of pay and prevent the exploitation of all levels of archaeologists, including new entrants. An SEO that sets an entitlement to pay and conditions of employment in a Statutory Instrument will therefore mitigate against disputes on these issues between individual workers and their employers.

4.6.6 Section 16 (2)(a): The Potential Impact on Levels of Employment and Unemployment

- Employment levels in the sector are largely determined by the level of work available and are closely linked to the health of the construction sector. The increasing demands for housing and infrastructural projects will require more new entrants to the sector. A sector that provides good quality employment, with decent and sustainable rates of pay and conditions of employment will attract new entrants. The SEO's proposed non-licensed Archaeological Worker rate should also ensure better pay for existing workers in the sector, who might otherwise be forced to leave or seek alternative employment.
- Archaeological services offered by commercial archaeological companies are frequently required for projects where archaeological impacts need to be resolved to allow the development progress, in particular for large-scale strategic developments set out in the National Development Plan. To provide these services the Irish archaeology sector will need the capacity to retain its

existing experienced workforce and attract new entrants. An SEO that sets legally binding rates of pay will assist in maintaining and growing this capacity.

- The absence of legally binding rates of pay could provide contractors from outside the State, who have a lower cost base, with a competitive advantage over Irish-based commercial archaeological companies. An SEO will ensure that all archaeological companies, including those from outside the State, must tender for work on a level playing field. This is particularly important for contractors operating in the border counties who face competition from firms based in Northern Ireland.

4.6.7 Section 16 (2)(b): The Terms of any relevant National Agreement relating to pay and conditions for the time being in existence:

- While there is currently no relevant national agreement relating to pay and conditions for archaeologists, and it is generally recognised that commercial archaeology is a graduate profession, Unite submits that the closest comparator for non-licensed archaeologists should be the construction (mechanical and electrical engineering) sector.

4.6.8 Section 16 (2)(c): The Potential Impact on Competitiveness

- The tendering process whereby archaeological contractors tender for work to the principal contractor, or directly to the contracting authority, contributes to intensifying competition between archaeological employers. The absence of legally binding terms and conditions of employment for workers employed in the sector has led to an erosion of the quality of employment conditions in the sector as competition between contractors to win work intensifies and through periods of time when work has become scarce, such as during the recession from 2008 to 2012. Where intense competition for work exists, the cost of worker remuneration has historically been critically examined by employers. An SEO that sets legally binding labour costs eliminates the opportunity to erode employment conditions as a means of securing projects.
- Activity in the sector is on course to increase to meet the targets set out in Project Ireland 2040. Investment in new technologies and training will be required to ensure the sector can continue to deliver a high-quality product. If the possibility of being undercut by competitors who factor in low

archaeological labour costs is removed, employers may focus on boosting their competitiveness by investing in new technologies, training, and by offering better quality and more efficient services when tendering for work.

4.6.9 Section 16 (2)(d): The general level of remuneration in other economic sectors in which workers of the same class, type or group are employed.

- CSO figures show that the average hourly earnings in all sectors in Q3 2025 is €30.48, which is significantly higher than the average hourly rate of pay offered in the Commercial Archaeology Sector. The average advertised rate for non-licensed Archaeological Workers is €17.85, while the average for all grades in archaeology is €21.45. It is thus clear that rates for non-licensed Archaeological workers have fallen behind wages in the economy as a whole, as well as wages in the archaeology sector.⁷⁸
- CSO Ireland's figures for the Construction Sector showed that the average hourly earnings in Q3 2025 was €27.77, which is significantly higher than the average hourly rate of pay offered in the Commercial Archaeology Sector.

4.6.10 Section 16 (2)(e): The Sectoral Employment Order shall be binding on all workers and employers

- The proposed SEO will be binding on all archaeological workers and their employers within the Commercial Archaeology Sector.
- The professional archaeological body, the Institute of Archaeologists of Ireland, is supportive of an SEO that ensures that all workers employed in the sector are covered by the terms of the SEO.

4.6.11 Section 16 (4)(a): Promote harmonious relations between workers and employers and assist in avoidance of industrial unrest

⁷⁸ Calculated as an average hourly rate for a 7.5-hour working day from 32 unique advertisements for Site Assistants/ Field Archaeologists, Archaeological Assistants, Post-Excavation Technicians (all characterized as Assistants), Site Supervisors, Post-excavation Supervisors made between January 2025 and January 2026.

- An SEO would provide a mechanism for resolving disputes that may arise at local level or national level, which would undoubtedly contribute towards industrial peace and the avoidance of industrial unrest in the sector.
- Archaeological works are required by policy, guidelines and as a condition of planning conditions and as such are critical to the successful and timely delivery of Residential, Commercial and Infrastructural projects and developments in the public and private sector. It is essential that clients and investors have confidence in the sector's ability to resolve any disputes that may arise in an orderly manner. A disputes resolution procedure that is binding on employers and workers is essential in ensuring that clients, including multi-nationals, who are considering investing in Ireland can do so in the knowledge of good industrial relations practices and avoidance of substantial delays.

4.6.12 Section 16 (4)(b)(i): Promote and preserve high standards of training and qualification

- The setting of legally binding rates of pay and conditions of employment creates a level playing field in terms of labour costs when tendering for work. This in turn eliminates the opportunity to erode employment conditions as a means of undercutting a competitor to secure a project.
- Where labour costs are set for every employer in the sector, archaeological firms must look to gain a competitive advantage elsewhere when tendering for projects. This will lead to investment in staff training and qualifications to compete on the basis of the quality of services, as referenced throughout this document.

4.6.13 Section 16 (4)(b)(ii): Ensure fair and sustainable rates of remuneration

- The current rates of pay in the archaeology sector are lower than comparable sectors, as explained above. This makes it difficult to recruit new entrants and retain existing workers, many of whom do not see the profession as a sustainable career path for them. An SEO would ensure that the rate of pay of archaeological workers is brought into line with other workers in the economy, particularly in relation to comparable sectors.

- The remuneration rate proposed by the applicant union is a fair and sustainable rate in the context of the wider economy. The average annual hourly earnings of all employees in 2017 was €22.43.⁷⁹ In Q 3 of 2025 (preliminary estimates) this was €30.48.⁸⁰ This is an increase of 35.9%. In contrast, analysing job offers for Assistant Archaeologists and Supervisors – the largest cohort of non-licensed Archaeological Workers – shows that in 2017 the average wage offered was €15.75 per hour,⁸¹ rising to €17.85 in January 2026:⁸² an increase of 13.33%. We submit that, considering the abnormally low levels of wages offered for non-licensed Archaeological Workers in the Archaeology Sector and the below-average rate of wage increase compared to other sectors, the establishment of a base rate for non-licensed Archaeological Workers of €22.50 is fair and sustainable.
- The applicant union has consulted with employers and TII, one of the largest contractors of archaeological services, when preparing the SEO application and this submission. The Union found that TII and the majority of employers supported the principle of the SEO. The applicant union has also encouraged the employers to send in their own submissions to the Labour Court regarding the establishment of a fair and sustainable rate.

⁷⁹ <https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/er/elca/earningsandlabourcostsannualdata2017/> [Accessed 23 February 2026].

⁸⁰ <https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-elcq/earningsandlabourcostsq22025finalq32025preliminaryestimates/> [Accessed 23 February 2026].

⁸¹ Based on an analysis of 11 advertisements seeking Site Assistants and Supervisors made by eight different employers.

⁸² Based on an analysis of 32 advertisements seeking Site Assistants and Supervisors made nine different employers.

5 Conclusion

5.1.1 The applicant union believes that all the appropriate indices allowing the Labour Court to support a recommendation for an SEO in the Commercial Archaeology Sector have been met. We believe that the SEO will provide the sector with ongoing stability and certainty for employers within the sector, while providing workers in the sector with a vehicle to achieve decent minimum pay standards.

5.1.2 In summary, an SEO in the Commercial Archaeological Sector is desirable for the following reasons:

- The SEO will apply to non-licensed Archaeological Workers in the sector, including, general operatives, site assistants, and supervisors. Archaeological work includes, but is not limited to, monitoring, testing, excavation, survey, post-excavation processing, desk-top assessments, specialist analysis, research and reporting.
- An SEO that sets legally binding rates of pay will contribute greatly towards harmonious relations between employers and workers in the sector. It will also provide a mechanism for resolving disputes in an orderly manner without recourse to industrial action.
- An SEO provides certainty and stability to employers, archaeological workers and ultimately the client, as it establishes legally binding minimum rates of pay.
- The setting of legally binding rates of pay will create a level playing field and eliminate the opportunity to erode employment conditions as a means of undercutting a competitor and securing a project.
- An SEO will provide certainty with regard to labour costs.
- An SEO that establishes fair and sustainable rates of pay will serve to attract people into the sector and assist in retaining them in the sector

5.1.3 We would ask the Labour Court to recommend that a Sectoral Employment Order is granted covering Non-Licensed Archaeological Workers (as defined above) to ensure fair pay for highly-qualified workers while maintaining the commercial viability of the sector.

Appendix A: Correspondence with the Labour Court 2025

Unite House
55/56 Middle Abbey Street
Dublin 1 D01 X002
Republic of Ireland
Tel: 00 353 (0)1 873 4577



Ireland Region

Labour Court Secretariat
The Labour Court
Lansdowne House
Lansdowne Road
Ballsbridge
Dublin 4

23rd December 2025

Re: Request to the Labour Court for the examination of the terms and conditions of employment in the Commercial Archaeology Sector with a view to establishing a Sectoral Employment Order (SEO) as provided for in the Industrial Relations (Amendment) Act 2015

Dear Registrar,

We apologise for the delay in returning our response to your correspondence of 24th September 2025. For ease of reference, we have included and tabulated all exchanges between Unite and the Labour Court to date.

In the next section, we respond to the points raised in your letter of 24th September in order of your numbering:

Point 1

Whilst the archaeological sector employing non-licensed commercial archaeologists does not have an individual NACE number due to the relatively small numbers of practitioners, they nonetheless, in our view, constitute a sector of the economy within the meaning of the Industrial Relations (Amendment) Act 2015 (the Act). Further details are provided at Appendix 1 of this communication.

Point 2

In response to the request for details on the qualifications, skills, and knowledge required for this economic sector, as referenced in Section 13 of the Act; although many workers hold degree or master's level academic qualifications, there is no single accrediting body specifically for commercial archaeologists and therefore no defined set of qualifications to capture the sector by. Instead, the "specific economic activity"

Susan Fitzgerald
Regional Secretary

www.unitetheunion.org/ireland

Sharon Graham
General Secretary

these workers are engaged in is determined by the nature of their work and "the specific skills and knowledge" they acquire both on the job and through academic study. We therefore seek to ensure that all workers operating in the commercial archaeology sector as non-licensed archaeological workers are recognised within the sector based on their practical experience and learned competencies. Appendix 2 of this communication provides details of the distinction between licensed and non-licensed archaeological workers.

Point 3

Non-licensed archaeologists perform essential archaeological duties critical to the operation of commercial archaeology. These include, but are not limited to:

- **Desk-top assessments:** Assisting in, or undertaking, Archaeological Impact Assessments, Underwater Archaeological Impact Assessment, Environmental Impact Assessments, Built Heritage Impact Assessment.
- **Surveys:** Assisting in, or undertaking, Geophysical Survey, GIS analysis, LIDAR Assessment, Buildings Recording, Geomatics Survey, Drone Survey, Photogrammetry, Underwater Archaeological Survey.
- **Excavations (including Archaeological Monitoring of groundworks, Test excavations, Excavation in Area):** Identification, manual excavation, and recording (scale drawings, photography, written record) of archaeological deposits, features, and sites. Archaeological workers with suitable experience (e.g. supervisors) often are involved in the supervision of sites both in the absence and presence of the licence holder, as well as training and supervision of junior staff.
- **Post-Excavation Services:** Processing of artefacts and ecofacts, artefact illustration, assessment and analysis of site record, use of computer aided design for digitisation of site drawings, report production and editing.
- **Specialist Services:** Artefact Analysis, Osteoarchaeology, Zooarchaeology, Environmental and Archaeobotanical analysis.

Point 4

To our knowledge employers within the sector are generally represented by their own internal management and in some instances by IBEC.

Point 5

Our response to this section of your correspondence is set out in Appendix 1.

(Intentionally no point 6)

Susan Fitzgerald
Regional Secretary

www.uniketheunion.org/ireland

Sharon Graham
General Secretary

Point 7

Mr Tom Fitzgerald is a person authorised by Unite the Union to furnish the Labour Court with a statutory declaration.

Point 8

Ms. Janet Murphy is the Senior Regional Administrator for Unite the Union in the Republic of Ireland and provides administrative support to Mr. Fitzgerald in such circumstances.

We hope that the above satisfactorily addresses each of the points raised. We remain happy to provide any additional clarification or documentation required by the Labour Court.

Yours sincerely,



Tom Fitzgerald
Regional Co-ordinating Officer

List of Appendices

Appendix 1	Appendix 1 is referenced as Appendix 1 in the body of this letter and is designed to answer the questions raised by the Labour Court in their correspondence of the 24th of September 2025.
Appendix 2	Appendix 2 is referenced as Appendix 2 in the body of this letter and is designed to answer the Labour Court's queries regarding full details of specific qualifications, skills, and knowledge required for a specific economic activity, as set out in point 2 of their letter of the 24th of September 2025.
Appendix 3	Appendix 3 is a copy of the Labour Court letter dated the 24th of September 2025.
Appendix 4	Appendix 4 is a copy of the Labour Court letter dated the 8th of September 2025, confirming receipt of the application.
Appendix 5	Appendix 5 is the original application submitted by Unite the Union dated the 29th of August 2025, including the cover note, application form, and statutory declaration

Susan Fitzgerald
Regional Secretary

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Sharon Graham
General Secretary

Appendix 1

Appendix 1

THE SECTOR

1. Commercial Archaeology (the Sector)

Commercial sector archaeologists in Ireland are generally employed by private archaeological consultancies or work independently and are separate to those archaeologists that work in the public sector. The sector is regulated through the National Monuments Acts 1930–2014, the Historical and Archaeological Heritage and Miscellaneous Provisions (HAHMP) Act 2023, the Planning and Development Acts 2000 and 2024, the Environmental Impact Assessment Amendment Regulations 2020, and various Codes of Practice, policies and guidelines, the most pertinent of which are the *Framework and Principles for the Protection of Archaeological Heritage*,¹ and the *Policy and Guidelines for Archaeological Excavation*.² Ireland is also a signatory to several international conventions that provide frameworks for the legal protection and management of archaeological heritage, such as the International Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites (the Valletta Convention) and the UNESCO Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage.³

The National Monuments Service (Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage) and the National Museum of Ireland (Department of Arts, Media, Communications, Culture and Sport) are responsible for the provision of the State's archaeological service, including the regulation of archaeological practices, surveying and maintaining records of Ireland's approximately 147,000 recorded archaeological sites, preserving and promoting Ireland's portable heritage, regulating commercial archaeological practices including the issuing of licences for archaeological excavations and surveys.⁴ The EU/EEA *Regulated Professions Database*⁵ lists archaeology as a Regulated Profession in eight countries in Europe, including Ireland, where the NMS are listed as the Regulating Authority.⁶

A range of other state agencies, including Local Authorities, the Forestry Service, and any branch of government involved in the planning process, employ archaeologists who

¹ Dept. of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht, and the Islands, *Framework and Principles for the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage* (Dublin, 1999) (<https://www.archaeology.ie/collections-and-publications/publications/framework-and-principles-for-the-protection-of-the-archaeological-heritage/>) [accessed 16 December 2025].

² Dept. of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht, and the Islands, *Policy and Guidelines on Archaeological Excavation* (Dublin, 1999) (<https://www.archaeology.ie/collections-and-publications/publications/policy-and-guidelines-on-archaeological-excavation/>) [accessed 16 December 2025].

³ For a summary of the regulatory and policy framework for archaeological heritage in Ireland see Appendix 3 of TII, *Guidelines for Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment of TII National Road and Greenway Projects*. PE-ARC-02009; September 2025 (PE-ARC-02009, Dublin, 2024) (<https://cdn.tii.ie/publications/PE-ARC-02009-02.pdf>) [accessed 16 December 2025].

⁴ <https://www.archaeology.ie/> [accessed 16 December 2025]; <https://www.museum.ie/en-IE/Museums/Archaeology> [accessed 16 December 2025].

⁵ A database of regulated professions defined under Directive 2005/36/EC. See <https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-further-and-higher-education-research-innovation-and-science/publications/recognition-of-professional-qualifications/> [accessed 12 December 2025].

⁶ <https://ec.europa.eu/growth/tools-databases/rogprof/professions/generic/profession/8004> [accessed 16 December 2025].

form, interpret and ensure the application of planning conditions to public and private developments. In addition, state agencies such as *Transport Infrastructure Ireland* have agreed a Code of Practice with the Minister responsible for archaeology, and employ their own archaeologists. Other codes of practice also exist with Bord na Móna and Bord Gáis.⁷ The Institute of Archaeologists of Ireland (IAI) is the professional body which promotes high standards of professional conduct and practice through its Codes of Professional Conduct, guidelines and technical reports, and represents the interests of archaeologists throughout the island of Ireland on policy that affects them and the archaeological heritage of Ireland.⁸

Within the legal interpretation of the provisions governing public procurement, archaeology is identified as a delay and compensation event for both traditional contracts and design-and-build contracts, where an instruction from the Employer is given to deal with an item of archaeological interest or human remains found on the site.⁹ Compensation events arising from archaeology are a significant risk to a construction project. These risks should be managed through appropriate assessments, including desktop studies, archaeological site investigations and archaeological excavations carried out by competent and qualified professional archaeologists. The Institute of Archaeologists of Ireland set out best practice guidelines for archaeologists undertaking fixed price contracts,¹⁰ and for those procuring archaeological services.¹¹ TII, one of the largest contracting authorities of archaeological services in Ireland has, since 2020, procured archaeological services based on a quality/ price ratio, ensuring that the quality of the archaeological service provider is now a key determining factor in whether archaeological companies win large-scale contracts.¹² Unite archaeology branch represents the professional archaeologists who provide these services.

2. Make-up of the Sector

There are approximately 40 archaeological companies employing archaeologists in Ireland. Of these, around eleven can be classified as medium to large size companies that employ the majority of archaeologists in the sector. An online search undertaken by the union in September 2024 of the websites of commercial archaeological companies in Ireland recorded a total of 180 employees listed as archaeological staff. The four largest companies list between 19 and 59 employees on their websites, while the remaining seven medium to large size companies have between 4 and 9 employees on their websites. Employees listed on websites tend to have more secure, longer-term contracts and do not generally include the temporary staff that are employed on short-

⁷ <https://www.archaeology.ie/advice-and-support/planning-and-guidance/codes-of-practice/> [accessed 16 December 2025].

⁸ <https://www.iai.ie/> [accessed 16 December 2025].

⁹ Guidance Note 1.5.3: The Pricing Document., Office of Government Procurement (Dublin, 2025), p.15 (https://media.cwmf.gov.ie/media/documents/GN_1.5.3_PWC_Pricing_v1.4_09-01-2025.pdf) [accessed 16 December 2025].

¹⁰ <https://www.iai.ie/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/IAI-Best-Practice-Standard-Procedures-in-Fixed-Price-Contracts-20121.pdf>

¹¹ <https://www.iai.ie/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/IAI-Advice-procurers-using-fixed-price-contracts-20121.pdf> [accessed 16 December 2025].

¹² See this presentation prepared by TII in 2019 describing the benefits of a quality/ price procurement of archaeological services: <https://www.tii.ie/media/59513ka/18-1-amliih-and-j-nogan-presentations.pdf> [accessed 16 December 2025].

term contracts to meet commercial demands. The larger companies often expand rapidly for large-scale infrastructural projects, such as archaeological services on TII road schemes, taking on significant numbers of temporary staff on short contracts to deal with field projects.

The rest of the sector is comprised of small companies consisting of between 1 and 3 people, often in partnership, or sole traders. The sole traders and many of the smaller companies often either work independently, carry out small scale excavations with small numbers of temporary employees or sometimes work in conjunction with other consultancies.

The sector has undergone dramatic changes in the previous twenty years, ranging from rapid growth driven by the construction boom of the Celtic Tiger to a devastating collapse during the Great Recession,¹³ with large numbers of experienced archaeologists leaving the profession. The CHL Consulting report *Profile of the Archaeological Profession and Education Resource in Ireland*, commissioned by the Institute of Archaeologists of Ireland in 2002, estimated that there were 650 professional archaeologists in Ireland.¹⁴ The Discovering the Archaeologists of Europe (DISCO) survey found that by 2007 there were 1635 employed in Irish commercial archaeology.¹⁵ The next iteration of this survey (Disco II), which covered the period 2012-2014, found that this number had plummeted to 168 archaeologists working in the commercial sector in 2012.¹⁶ In 2014, the Working Group for the Review of Pay Rates (WGRPR) report for the Institute of Archaeologists of Ireland survey estimated that there were at least 170 people employed in the sector between 2013-2014, although by no means all of these were employed for the whole of that period.¹⁷

Recovery from the collapse in the commercial archaeology sector has been slow, both in terms of the numbers of workers employed in the sector and wage recovery. In March 2024, a census was carried out by the applicant union whereby all employers in Ireland were asked to submit the number of people they had working for them on one specific day that year. The survey asked employers a simple question: "How many archaeologists did you employ on the 20th March 2024?". Most of the eighteen employers that responded employed less than 10 archaeologists, with the maximum number of employees for one company being 69 on that day. The total number of archaeological employees amongst the respondents in March 2024 was 205. Unite estimates on the basis of the size of the companies that did not respond to the census,

¹³ The Great Recession refers to the period of sharp economic decline in Ireland after 2008, leading to significant falls in the amount of archaeological activity and the number of employed archaeologists. See Section 2.4 this report.

¹⁴ *A Profile of the Archaeological Profession and Educational Resources in Ireland: A report to the Heritage Council and the Institute of Archaeologists of Ireland*, CHL (2002).

¹⁵ *Discovering the archaeologists of Europe: Ireland: A Report to The Institute of Archaeologists of Ireland*, by Conor McDermott and by Patrizia La Piscopia (2008), p. 14 (<https://researchrepository.ucd.ie/entities/publication/1e49a2a3-9e66-42e1-b1d3-84666a9e7ce3>) [accessed 16 December 2025].

¹⁶ *Discovering the Archaeologists of Ireland 2012–2014*, by Kerri Cleary and by Niamh McCullagh (Dublin, 2014), p. 25 (https://www.academia.edu/31444762/Discovering_the_Archaeologists_of_Ireland_2012_2014) [accessed 16 December 2025].

¹⁷ *Final report of the working group for the Review of Pay Rates (WGRPR). August 2014.*, by Martin Curtin et al. (Dublin, 2014) (<https://www.lal.ie/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/WGRPR-Final-Report.pdf>) [accessed 16 December 2025].

that the actual real number of archaeologists employed in the sector on that day probably ranged from 250-300 workers maximum. During the union's subsequent discussions with the employers regarding the sustainability of the sector, concerns were raised that the number of archaeologists recorded in the census would be insufficient to staff future large infrastructural projects.

Since the March 2024 census day, several large infrastructural projects have commenced, requiring employers to increase their staffing considerably, with some companies recruiting from abroad. A second census was carried out by the applicant union in March 2025 to capture this increase. Like the last census, the survey asked employers one question - "How many archaeologists did you employ on the 20th March 2025?" A total of 17 employers responded out of which 10 employers employed less than 10 archaeologists, with the maximum number of employees for one company being 115 on that day. The total number of archaeological employees amongst the respondents in March 2025 was 255.

The Nomenclature of Economic Activities (NACE) code is used to identify sectors.¹⁸ Archaeological activities can be classified under Section N (Professional, Scientific and Technical Activities), NACE class 72.20 (Social Sciences and Humanities Research and Development- research and development on humanities and arts: e.g. history and archaeology; literature and languages; philosophy),¹⁹ or Section S (Arts, Sports and Recreation), NACE class 91.22 (Historical site and monument activities - operation and preservation of archaeological sites open to visitors),²⁰ and class 91.30 (Conservation, restoration and other support activities for cultural heritage - conservation and restoration of historical and archaeological assets of all types of materials, whether the assets are movable or stationary).²¹ Neither the CSO' census nor the Labour Force Survey provide statistics specifically relating to commercial archaeology activity or numbers. Instead, they gather statistics at section or sector level; commercial archaeology activity being one of a number of classes of activity within these sections or sectors. See explanation and confirmation of this contention set out in communications between Unite's research department, the Revenue Commissioners, and the Nevin Economic Research Institute (communications attached (Appendices 1A, 1B, 1C). Consequently, Unite are required to utilise a range of other sources of data to illustrate the compensation and size of the sector as out in Table 1 below and can be further elaborated on at any hearing/s into the matter.

¹⁸ European Commission (ed.), *NACE Rev. 2.1: Statistical Classification of Economic Activities in the European Union: 2025 edition* (2025 edition, Luxembourg, 2025).

¹⁹ European Commission (ed.), *NACE Rev. 2.1: statistical classification of economic activities in the European union: 2025 edition* (2025 edition, Luxembourg, 2025), p. 325.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 378.

²¹ *Ibid.*

Table 1. Numbers of archaeologists in Ireland 2002 - 2025

Survey	Year	Number of Archaeologists Employed in Ireland
CHL Profile the Profession	2002	Estimated 650
DISCO	2008	1635
DISCO II	2014	168
IAI Working Group for the Review of Pay Rates	2014	170
UNITE Archaeology Branch Census day	2024	205 (from 18 companies that responded to the survey)
Unite analysis of Company Registration Office	2025	218 (12 main companies 02/11/2025)
UNITE Archaeology Branch Census day 2025	2025	255 (from 17 companies that responded to the survey)

Appendix 1 A

Fitzgerald, Thomas

From: Fitzgerald, Thomas
Sent: 07 August 2025 09:38
To: ODowd, Jean
Subject: FW: Archaeologists
Attachments: archaeology sector.docx

Categories: Egress Switch: Unprotected

From: McCord, Rhona <Rhona.McCord@unitetheunion.org>
Sent: 11 February 2025 16:20
To: Fitzgerald, Thomas <Thomas.Fitzgerald@unitetheunion.org>
Cc: ODowd, Jean <Jean.ODowd@unitetheunion.org>
Subject: Archaeologists

Hi Jean and Tom,

The commercial archaeologists are very much under the radar on official search engines like CSO, Revenue, CRO etc. I have reached out to Claran Nugent and Chris Smart of the Nevin Institute to see if they have any details we can use and await a response. My trawl through the 40 companies Jean sent on reveals a total of 218 employees declared but on anecdotal evidence it must be higher (see example below).

There is always going to be a problem with fluctuation given the nature of the work and the numerous factors that determine whether excavations happen or go ahead. This is reflected in the part-time nature of employment patterns.

I have attached a breakdown of those with a few definitions of the sector that might be helpful, and some pay rates from other countries. a word doc.

I have submitted an FOI email to revenue.ie to ask for a summary of the numbers paying PRSI in the commercial archaeology sector. We might need to submit in writing and there may be a small fee involved. (if that the case I will go ahead and do it). It might be the best way to get an accurate picture.

I also contact Department of Enterprise, and they weren't helpful they just suggested CRO and CSO.

I looked a bit closer into Archaeological Management Solutions, which Jean said was a big company and unfortunately it is an example of what we are up against when trying to get accurate data. AMS are registered as a micro company under the name AMS Cultural Heritage Consultancy LTD with no employees incorporated in 2022, director Ed Danaher. Then there is a new company incorporated in May 2024 called Archaeological Management Solutions (AMS) Group as a private company also director Ed Danaher there are no financial returns yet. Then there is another company registered as Ed Danaher and Associates Ltd., which submitted a financial return in March 2024 declaring a profit of €2,388,927 and clearly states that they have no employees. The previous return dated October 2021 refers to employee benefits declaring that the company operates a defined benefit pension scheme but also declares 0 employees.

I will send on more information in due course as I gather more data.

Below are 12 of the companies who registered employees in their official annual returns/financial statement according to the Company Registration Office (CRO). The total is 218 as of 11/02/2025.

Company Name **Reported Employee numbers**

Aegis Archaeology	2
Archaeologist Consultancy Service Unit	18
Archaeologist Projects	3
Courtney and Deery	24
Gahan Long	28
Irish Archaeological Consultancy	76
Icon Archaeology	2
Judith Carroll	1
Laurence Dunne	4
Rubicon Heritage Services	48
Shanarc Archaeology	8
Tohar Archaeology	4

Definitions

Educational

University College Cork: Archaeologists work in the State heritage sector, for central government bodies such as the National Monuments Service and the National Museum of Ireland, as well as for local authorities in county museums and planning offices. There is a commercial archaeology sector in Ireland that services the requirements of various development agencies. Archaeologists work in survey and excavation, in environmental impact assessment, in heritage conservation projects and tourism initiatives. A degree in Archaeology is very flexible in regard to employment, whether in the archaeological profession or some applied area such as heritage tourism.

Royal Irish Academy:

Archaeologists investigate, care for and manage material cultural heritage. In 2014 just under 850 archaeologists were working in Ireland. Archaeologists are highly qualified, with eighty-five per cent of the workforce holding a third-level or higher degree. The profession is one of the most gender-equal professions in Europe. Professional archaeologists often specialise in different aspects of the discipline—e.g. particular time periods, artefacts, monuments, landscapes and/or techniques and methodologies. There are many different types of archaeological practice: excavation, surveying, museum curation, artefact conservation, research, education and heritage management. The archaeological profession works closely with a wide range of disciplines in pursuit of a full understanding of the past, including scientists, historians and Information Technology and digital specialists.¹

¹ https://www.ria.ie/assets/uploads/2024/06/archaeology_1.pdf

Professional

National Monuments Service: The profession of Archaeologist is recognised under Schedule 1 of the Regulations as being a "regulated profession" in Ireland i.e. "the State" and the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht as being the relevant competent authority in Ireland. The decision to so recognise the profession of Archaeologist in Ireland was based on the definition of "regulated profession" set out in the Directive³ and was in line with the advice of the European Commission as to its applicability to that profession as it operates in Ireland (the Commission being the EU body charged with ensuring implementation.)⁴

Pay rates comparisons

Average rates not broken down into grades.

UK £30 per hour (€36)

Germany €32

Belgium €32

Italy €23

France €35

Austria €26

Spain €21

Netherlands €29⁴

³ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:02005L0036-20190415&qid=1565866742825&from=EN>

³ <https://www.archaeology.ie/sites/default/files/media/publications/info-note-qualifications-directive-regulations.pdf>

⁴ Economic Research Institute <https://www.ereri.com/>

Appendix 1 B

Fitzgerald, Thomas

From: Fitzgerald, Thomas
Sent: 07 August 2025 09:39
To: ODowd, Jean
Subject: FW: Update Commercial Archaeology Sector in Republic of Ireland

Categories: Egress Switch: Unprotected

From: McCord, Rhona <Rhona.McCord@unitetheunion.org>
Sent: 12 February 2025 11:47
To: ODowd, Jean <Jean.ODowd@unitetheunion.org>
Cc: Fitzgerald, Thomas <Thomas.Fitzgerald@unitetheunion.org>
Subject: Update Commercial Archaeology Sector in Republic of Ireland

See response below from Revenue. It is likely that people are under a variety of codes, like heritage tourism, construction etc and there is no method to separate them. I think the best we can do is going to be based on the financial returns of the companies so currently that is the 218 people they have declared as employees. We may yet get something back from NEAI.

Rhona

From: Revenue Freedom of Information <FOI@revenue.ie>
Sent: 12 February 2025 11:03
To: McCord, Rhona <Rhona.McCord@unitetheunion.org>; Revenue Freedom of Information <FOI@revenue.ie>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] RE: [External] Commercial Archaeology Sector in Republic of Ireland

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Dear Rhona,

Thank you for your email.

I forwarded your query to the relevant area.

They have come back to us to advise that they unfortunately have no records relating to this. They only have sectorial breakdowns available based on the NACE coding of employers. However, there's no NACE code which relates to archaeology.

Kind regards,

Kevin

FOI Unit

From: McCord, Rhona <Rhona.McCord@unittetheunion.org>
Sent: Tuesday, February 11, 2025 1:51 PM
To: Revenue Freedom of Information <FOI@revenue.ie>
Subject: [External] Commercial Archaeology Sector in Republic of Ireland

Hi

I'm wondering if I can have access to a summary of the numbers employed/paying PRSI in the commercial archaeology sector in the Republic of Ireland for research purposes.

Rhona McCord
Researcher
Unite the Union ROI

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Tabhair do d'aire nach bhféadann Oifig na gColmáinéirí Ioncaim aon dearbhú a thabhairt go bhfuil aon sonraí pearsanta agus fogair a chuirtear i ngnáth-théacs trí ríomhphost caighdeánach go huile is go hiomlán slán. Meastar go bhfuil glaotha ag custaiméirí a roghnaíonn an cainéal seo a úsáid le haon riosca balnteach. I measc na modhanna eile cumarsáide a chuireann na Colmáinéirí Ioncaim ar fáil tá an post caighdeánach agus an rogha ár seirbhís chriptithe M'Fhiosruithe a úsáid. Tá an tseirbhís seo ar fáil taobh istigh de moChúrsaí agus ROS. Féadtar clárú le haghaidh moChúrsaí agus ROS ar shuíomh Idirlín na gColmáinéirí Ioncaim.

Appendix 1 C

Fitzgerald, Thomas

From: Fitzgerald, Thomas
Sent: 07 August 2025 09:39
To: ODowd, Jean
Subject: FW: Archaeology

Categories: Egress Switch: Unprotected

From: McCord, Rhona <Rhona.McCord@unitetheunion.org>
Sent: 19 February 2025 17:10
To: Fitzgerald, Thomas <Thomas.Fitzgerald@unitetheunion.org>
Subject: FW: Archaeology

FIY see below.

From: Claran Nugent <claran.nugent@nerinstitute.net>
Sent: 19 February 2025 16:38
To: McCord, Rhona <Rhona.McCord@unitetheunion.org>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] RE: Charity Sector

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Hi Rhona,

There's no publicly available data specific to Archaeologists. In the Labour Force Survey data they're grouped with a bunch of other sectors in 'other activities', likely to do with the small size of the sector. Even in the Census detail on Archaeologists alone doesn't show up. The best course of action would be to take data from the main commercial archaeologist companies who have made a financial return to the CRO declaring their employees for the previous 12 months. It'll be an underestimate but should give you an idea as to the minimum number of employees.

Best,
Clarán Nugent
Economist
NERI

From: McCord, Rhona <Rhona.McCord@unitetheunion.org>
Sent: 06 February 2020 15:26
To: Clarán Nugent <Claran.Nugent@nerinstitute.net>
Subject: Charity Sector

Hi Claran,

Rhona at Unlte the Union here. I'm wondering if you can point me in the direction of any information or research on wages and conditions in the charity sector. I have a member who is trying to put forward a case for a wage increase but it is very difficult to get any decent statistics and there is a general acceptance that work in this sector is low paid or voluntary. Can you point me in the direction of any research in regard to this? Any help on this will be of benefit.

All the best,

Rhona McCord
Community Coordinator & Research
Unite the Union Rol

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Appendix 2

Appendix 2

QUALIFICATIONS, GRADES, SKILLS, KNOWLEDGE & DISTINCTION BETWEEN LICENSED AND NON-LICENSED ARCHAEOLOGICAL WORKERS

1. Qualifications

Archaeology is generally accepted to be a graduate profession. In 2014, 98% of archaeologists in the commercial sector had primary degrees, while 44% had Masters degrees, 9% held doctorates and a further 7% held post-doctorate positions.¹ A survey undertaken in 2024 by Mantra for the Institute of Archaeologists of Ireland found that 98.5% of the respondents from the IAI membership held primary degrees, while 74% had a Masters degrees or higher.²

In 2023, eight third-level institutions in Ireland offered up to 53 different courses in archaeology: Atlantic Technical University (ATU), Dundalk Institute of Technology (DkIT), Queens University Belfast (QUB), Trinity College Dublin (TCD), University College Cork (UCC), University College Dublin (UCD), University of Galway (UoG, formerly NUI Galway), and University of Ulster (UU) (Table 1).³

Table 1 Archaeology Courses offered on the island of Ireland⁴

Institution	NFQ Level 6 (Certificate)	NFQ Level 7 (Certificate & Diploma)	NFQ Level 8 (Degree)	NFQ Level 9 (Masters)	NFQ Level 10 (PhD)
ATU	Yes				
DkIT			Yes		
QUB			Yes	Yes	Yes
TCD			Yes	Yes	Yes
UCC			Yes	Yes	Yes
UCD			Yes	Yes	Yes
UoG (formerly NUIG)		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
UU				Yes	Yes

The undergraduate degree in archaeology is a taught 3-4 year programme, and the qualifications achieved are between level 7 or level 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications, depending on the degree (BA/BSc). Archaeological courses at

¹ DISCO II, p. 17.

² Institute of Archaeologists of Ireland - Survey Thursday, April 4, 2024, Mantra Strategy and Institute of Archaeologists of Ireland (2024) (https://www.iai.ie/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/IAI_Survey_Data_2024.pdf) (20 Jan. 2025).

³ Our thanks to Dr Elmeear Meegan and the Discovery Programme's Frameworks for Archaeological Research for providing these figures.

⁴ Figures taken from the Discovery Programme's Frameworks for Archaeological Research.

Certificate level (NFQ level 6) and Diploma (NFQ level 7) are also offered by third-level institutions. Many of these courses offer training in field and excavation skills as part of the undergraduate degree. Postgraduate master's degrees (MA, MLitt and MSc; NFQ level 9) are generally where archaeologists develop their specialisms, taking between one and two years to complete. Doctoral degrees (PhD; NFQ level 10), which typically take between three and five years to complete and consist of original research, represent the highest level of qualification achievable. As well as additional qualifications in technical skills such as GIS and CAD, or Project Management skills, many commercial archaeologists undertake continuous professional development (CPD) through the Institute of Archaeologists of Ireland.⁶ Any archaeologist who seeks to direct the excavation of archaeological sites, must first sit and pass a competency interview with the regulatory and statutory authorities (see below).⁶

An IAI survey of the four major Irish Universities teaching archaeology in 2024 – Queen's University Belfast, University College Cork, University College Dublin, University of Galway – found that graduate numbers in archaeology have declined by 20% between 2016 and 2021, which is concerning for the future sustainability of the sector.⁷ The applicant union believes that one of the reasons for this decline is a lack of confidence in archaeology as a viable long-term career, in particular because of relatively low wages of entrant-level archaeologists, compared to other graduates.

2. Grades in the Sector

There are four main grades of archaeologist in common usage in the sector. These are, in order of seniority, Senior Archaeologist, Site Director, Site Supervisor, and Site Assistant. The SEO application primarily applies to the grades of Site Supervisor and Site Assistant. The following grade descriptions are based on specifications for the Foynes to Limerick Road scheme archaeological services, advertised in October 2023:⁸

Senior Archaeologists (project managers) oversee large scale archaeological projects, such as TII-funded road schemes, where they must have a Level 8 qualification (QQI or equivalent), be eligible for an archaeological excavation license and not have had a license revoked in the past three years, have at least five years of relevant post-graduate management experience in archaeological fieldwork and reporting, having directed at least five excavations and completed all reporting obligations, and have relevant experience managing an archaeological project valued at €300,000 or more in the last three years.

Site Directors lead project teams in the field, directing archaeological excavations. Site Directors must have the requisite qualifications, sufficient supervisory field

⁶ <https://www.iai.ie/cpd/> [Accessed: 10/01/2025]

⁶ <https://www.archaeology.ie/sites/default/files/media/publications/Excavation-Licence-Interview-application-form.doc> [Accessed: 10/01/2025]

⁷ Richard Clutterbuck and Ros Ó Maoldúin, 'Archaeology Student Numbers in Ireland: 2011 to 2021' in *Archaeology Ireland*, no. 39 1, Issue 151 Spring (2025), pp 39-40.

⁸ Archaeological specifications for the Foynes to Limerick Road Scheme, including the Adare Bypass, tender published 18/10/2023; see Part 4 Service Requirement <https://www.tenders.gov.ie/epps/cft/latContractDocuments.do?d-5419-p=3&resourceId=2565315#>, [Accessed 2/12/2024].

experience, as well as being deemed competent by the statutory authorities to hold a licence under the National Monuments Act 1930-2004. TII-funded road schemes require that the site director have a Level 7 qualification recognized by QQI or equivalent, be eligible for an archaeological excavation license, with no revocations in the past three years, and have at least three years of relevant post-graduate experience in archaeological fieldwork and reporting and directed at least three excavations and completed all related reporting obligations.⁹ Site Directors are responsible for preparing archaeological methodologies, are bound by the terms of their archaeological licences, are responsible for coordinating and overseeing post-excavation analyses, artifact conservation, and the creation of illustrations for each excavation site and also serve as the principal author of reports on these sites. As such, the site director has a commitment to a project which may take up to a year and, for large-scale excavations, frequently longer to complete.

Site Supervisors oversee day-to-day excavation and recording of part of an excavation site by a team of archaeologists, operating under the direction of the licenced archaeologist (Site Director). Archaeological specifications for TII-funded road schemes require site supervisors to be fully qualified archaeologists with a minimum of two years relevant post-graduate experience of archaeological fieldwork. Site Supervisors are often employed for the post-excavation phase of projects and can be an important part of report production process.

Site Assistants are the most numerous staff on an archaeological project, undertaking excavation and recording of archaeological features and deposits that have been assigned to them by the Site Supervisor or Site Director, as well as being involved in some aspects of post-excavation work. Site Assistants almost universally hold primary degrees and have varying levels of experience on archaeological sites.

All other grades of archaeologists are generally variations of these four basic grades. For example, Underwater Archaeological Director and Supervisors are generally equivalent to Site Director and Site Supervisor, though likely to be paid more because with the additional qualifications and experience required for these roles and the relatively small number of underwater archaeologists in Ireland. Post-excavation managers and Geomatics Managers operate somewhere between a Project Manager and Site Director grades, whilst Site Surveyors are often equivalent to Site Supervisors in grade and pay.

Senior staff of commercial archaeological companies are generally employed on permanent contracts, including general managers, project managers, some excavation directors, and site supervisors. Most junior staff (Site Supervisors and Site Assistants) are employed on fixed-term or specified-purpose contracts for the duration of a particular project. Some site directors are also employed for fixed terms or for specific

⁹ Foynes to Limerick Road Scheme Archaeological Specifications, 2023.

projects. Specialists can be self-employed and contracted to provide services for specific projects or permanent employees of commercial archaeological companies.

Different synonyms are sometimes used for some of the grades. For examples, the Site Assistant grade can be referred to as excavation assistant or junior site assistant. In the past, a grade of General Operative was used to describe new entrant archaeologists or unqualified labourers who formed a relatively small proportion of the site staff and were generally only employed for excavations of specific sites. General Operatives are now rarely used on commercial archaeological projects, particularly where quality is a significant determining factor in the tender assessment. Similarly, certain projects have used Trainee Archaeologists in the past, and the grade was included in the IAI's Working Group for the Review of Pay Rates in 2014. However, these were only recommendations, and the archaeological industry as a whole did not implement these rates or grades.

For the purposes of the current SEO application, the term Archaeological Worker is used to refer to anyone undertaking work in the commercial archaeology sector and encompasses all grades and the various terms assigned to them.

3. Skills

The skills required by non-licensed archaeologists vary depending on the archaeological service required. These skills include skills, knowledge, practical application, critical analysis and interpretation for the following services:

- **Desk-top assessments:** Assisting in, or undertaking, Archaeological Impact Assessments, Underwater Archaeological Impact Assessment, Environmental Impact Assessments, Built Heritage Impact Assessment;
- **Surveys:** Assisting in, or undertaking, Geophysical Survey, GIS analysis, LIDAR Assessment, Buildings Recording, Geomatics Survey, Drone Survey, Photogrammetry, Underwater Archaeological Survey;
- **Excavations (including Archaeological Monitoring of groundworks, Test excavations, Excavation in Area):** Identification, manual excavation, and recording (scale drawings, photography, written record) of archaeological deposits, features, and sites. Archaeological workers with suitable experience (e.g. supervisors) often are involved in the supervision of sites both in the absence and presence of the license holder, as well as training and supervision of junior staff;
- **Post-Excavation Services:** Processing of artefacts and ecofacts, artefact illustration, assessment and analysis of site record, use of computer aided design for digitisation of site drawings, report production and editing;
- **Specialist Services:** Artefact Analysis, Osteoarchaeology, Zooarchaeology, Environmental and Archaeobotanical analysis.

4. Knowledge

- Archaeological periods, site types, artefact types and key reference excavations and publications and sources;
- The range and application of professional archaeological specialist services required for particular types of archaeological sites;
- Historical periods, sources and key reference publications;
- Legislation: particularly the National Monuments Act 1930 – 2014; Historical and Archaeological Heritage and Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2023 (in the process of being commenced); Planning and Development Act 2000; Planning and Development Act 2024;
- Government and state agency guidelines for Archaeology and Built Heritage Assessment;
- Government Policies for protection, recording and excavation of archaeology, as set out in the Framework and Principles for the Protection of Archaeological Heritage and Policy and Guidelines for Archaeological Excavation;
- Local Government Development Plan policies and objectives;
- Scheduling and managing archaeological services and works, including identifying the key milestones required for particular archaeological services;
- Budget planning and control;
- Contract management;
- Quality control and management;
- Health and Safety legislation, risk assessment and management;
- Computer Aided Design and Geographical Information Systems;
- Global Positioning Systems and Total Stations geodetic surveys;
- Graphic design and digital photographic softwares;
- Cartography;
- Geophysical survey softwares and interpretation;
- Buildings survey techniques and standards;
- Landscape Interpretation.

5. Distinction between licensed and non-licensed archaeological workers

Licensed archaeological workers

The primary distinction between licensed and non-licensed archaeological workers is whether they are considered eligible to hold an excavation licence issued under Section 26 of the National Monuments Act. Archaeology is listed in the EU/EEA *Regulated Professions Database* as a regulated profession in eight countries in Europe, including Ireland.¹⁰ The *Regulated Professions Database* states the National

¹⁰ <https://ec.europa.eu/growth/tools-databases/regprof/professions/generic/profession/8004> [accessed 15 December 2025]

Monuments Service (NMS) is the Competent Authority to determine if an archaeologist is considered licence-eligible in Ireland.

Procedure for Recognition of Professional Qualifications Issued by the NMS sets out the criteria for archaeology as a regulated profession.¹¹

The *Regulated Professions Database* states the minimum qualification level for archaeologist in Ireland is PS3 - Diploma of post-secondary level (3-4 years) Art. 11 d.

The *Policy and Guidelines on Archaeological Excavation* (pp10-12) sets out the criteria for qualifying to become licence eligible:¹²

2.3 Policy in relation to deciding whether or not to issue a licence to carry out an archaeological excavation

(a) that the proposed archaeological excavation is justified or necessary

(b) that they [the applicant for the licence] are competent to carry out the archaeological excavation

Persons who have not previously held an archaeological excavation licence
Prior to any applications by such persons being considered by the Department of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands [now the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage], their competency will be assessed by means of interview by a panel established by the Department... The criteria for eligibility of persons who have not previously held archaeological excavation licences for interview by this panel will be the holding of an academic qualification with a substantial archaeological content and relevant archaeological excavation experience in a supervisory capacity.

Persons who last held an archaeological excavation licence ten years or more ago

Such persons will also be required to have their competency assessed by means of interview by the panel prior to any applications by them being considered by the Department of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands.

Other applicants

The Department of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands [now the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage] will take into account evidence of the competency of other applicants who have previously held archaeological excavation licences when assessing applications made by them. That evidence may include relevant experience and previous standards of work.

Such persons may be required to submit themselves for interview by the panel if there are grounds for believing that their competency should be reviewed in

¹¹ <https://www.archaeology.ie/collections-and-publications/publications/information-note-procedure-for-recognition-of-professional-qualifications/> [accessed 15 December 2025]

¹² <https://www.archaeology.ie/app/uploads/2024/12/excavation-policy-and-guidelines-1.pdf> [accessed 15 December 2025]

general or in relation to the conduct of a specific proposed archaeological excavation.

Assessment of the competency of interviewees.

The panel will assess the competency of interviewees with regard to the following headings:

- (i) knowledge of Irish archaeology (including material culture)
- (ii) knowledge and experience of relevant archaeological excavation and survey techniques
- (iii) knowledge and recognition of archaeological objects
- (iv) knowledge and experience of appropriate responses to problems of storage and conservation of archaeological objects uncovered in the course of excavation
- (v) knowledge and experience of post excavation analysis
- (vi) knowledge, experience and skills in the preparation of material for publication
- (vii) knowledge of relevant legislation

Non-licensed archaeological workers

Non-licensed commercial archaeological workers encompass all individuals working in the commercial archaeology sector who do not hold an archaeological excavation licence as defined in the section above addressing the distinction between licensed and non-licensed archaeological workers. This category therefore includes all archaeological workers who are not deemed eligible to hold, or who do not currently hold, an excavation licence issued under the National Monuments Acts.

Non-licensed archaeological workers can include all grades described in section 2 above. While these workers do not carry the statutory responsibilities associated with holding an excavation licence, they nonetheless possess substantial qualifications, skills, knowledge and experience and undertake essential archaeological functions across all stages of archaeological projects as detailed at sections 1, 3 and 4 above.

For the purposes of this SEO application, non-licensed archaeological workers are therefore understood to constitute the majority of the commercial archaeological workforce.

Appendix 3

The Labour Court
Lansdowne House
Lansdowne Road, Ballsbridge
Dublin 4, D04 A3A8
Tel: (+353) 1 613 6666
or 0018 613 666



An Chóirt Oibreachais
Áras Lansdún, Bóthar Lansdún
Droichead na Dothra
Baile Átha Cliath 4, D04 A3A8
Email: info@labourcourt.ie
Website: www.labourcourt.ie

Tom Fitzgerald
Unite House
55/56 Middle Abbey Street
Dublin 1 D01 X002

By Post

24 September 2025

Re: Request to the Labour Court for the examination of the terms and conditions of employment in the commercial archaeology sector with a view to establishing a Sectoral Employment Order (SEO)

Dear Mr Fitzgerald,

I refer to the application received from Unite the Union dated the 29th of August 2025 in relation to a request to the Labour Court, for the examination of the terms and conditions of employment in the commercial archaeology sector, with a view to establishing a Sectoral Employment Order (SEO) in accordance with Section 14 of the *Industrial Relations (Amendment) Act 2015* ("the Act").

The Court met in relation to the application on 22nd of September 2025. The Court has requested further information and asked the following questions in relation to the application:

- 1) Having regard to the definition of "economic sector" in Section 13 of the Act, please provide full details on how the commercial archaeology sector is a sector in accordance with the definition in the Act? Please include full details of the specific economic activity of the sector concerned.
- 2) Please provide full details of the specific qualifications, skills or knowledge required for the specific economic activity of the sector?

3) Please provide full details on the class, type or group of workers to which the request relates ie. non-licenced commercial archaeological workers, and provide full detail on this classification of workers, including details of the work performed by these workers?

4) Please provide full details on the declarant's means of knowledge of the representation arrangements of employers in the sector to which this application relates?

5) Please provide full details on the declarant's means of knowledge of the information and matters referred to in paragraph F. of the Statutory Declaration?

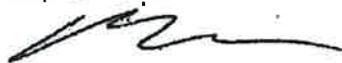
7) Please confirm that Mr. Tom Fitzgerald is a person authorised by Unite the Union to furnish the Court with a statutory declaration?

8) Can you clarify the role of Janet Murphy in the application.?

Please find enclosed a copy of the Labour Court (Sectoral Employment Order) Rules 2016, which can also be located on the Labour Court website. You should note that all information and documentation received during this application will, unless specifically requested otherwise, be published on the Court's website.

Once you have responded in relation to the above, the Court will further consider the application.

Yours sincerely



Maura McKenna
Registrar



Industrial Relations (Amendment) Act 2015

Labour Court (Sectoral Employment Orders) Rules 2016

Interpretation

In these Rules: -

"the Act" means the Industrial Relations (Amendment) Act 2015.

"applicant" means a trade union of workers and a trade union or organisation of employers that requests an examination of terms and conditions of employment in accordance with section 14 of the Act;

"Court" means the Labour Court.

"sector" means an economic sector within the meaning of section 13 of the Act.

A word or expression used in these Rules which is also used in the Act has the same meaning in these Rules as it has in the Act unless a contrary intention appears

The Interpretation Act 2005 applies to these Rules

These Rules may be cited as "Labour Court (Sectoral Employment Orders) Rules 2015-2016."

Application to Examine Terms and Conditions of Employment

1. A request to the Court to examine the terms and conditions of employment in a sector pursuant to section 14 of the Act shall be made on an application form provided for that purpose and shall state: -

(a) The name and address of the applicant;

(b) The sector to which the request relates;

- (e) The class, type or group of workers to which the request relates;
- (d) Details of the arrangements (if any) by which terms and conditions relating to remuneration and any sick pay scheme or pension scheme, of the workers in the sector to which the request relates are determined;
- (e) Where the applicant is a trade union of workers, the name and address of any other trade union of workers that is representative of workers in the sector to which the request relates;
- (f) Where the applicant is a trade union of workers, the name and address of any trade union of employers or organisation of employers that is representative of employers in the sector to which the request relates;
- (g) Where the applicant is a trade union of employers or an organisation of employers, the name and address of any trade union of workers that is representative of workers in the sector to which the request relates;

2. Where a request is made to the Court jointly by more than one applicant each applicant shall complete a separate form.

3. Every applicant that is a trade union of workers shall furnish the Court with a Statutory Declaration within the meaning of the Statutory Declarations Act 1938, made by a person authorised in that behalf by the trade union, containing the following particulars: -

- (a) The name of the applicant trade union
- (b) The position held by the declarant;
- (c) The registered address of the applicant trade union within the State
- (d) The number of workers of the class type or group to which the agreement relates who are members of the trade union of workers on whose behalf the request is made
- (e) The number of workers of the class type or group to which the request relates who are normally employed in the sector to which the request relates
- (f) The declarant's means of knowledge of the matters referred to at paragraphs (d) and (e)

4. Every applicant that is a trade union of employers or an organisation of

employers shall furnish the Court with a Statutory Declaration within the meaning of the Statutory Declarations Act 1938, made by a person authorised in that behalf by the trade union, or the organisation, containing the following particulars:-

- (a) The name of the applicant
- (b) The position held by the declarant;
- (c) The registered address of the applicant within the State;
- (d) The number of workers of the class type or group to which the request relates who are normally employed by the employers who are members of the trade union of employers or the organisation of employers on whose behalf the Declaration is made;
- (e) The number of workers of the class type or group to which the request relates who are normally employed in the sector to which the request relates;
- (f) The declarant's means of knowledge of the matters referred to at paragraphs (d) and (e).

Provision of Further Information and Evidence

5. Before proceeding to consider the request the Court may require an applicant, or any other person, to furnish:-

- (a) Such additional information as it may require;
- (b) Such further evidence as it may require in support of the statements contained in the application form or in the Statutory Declaration provided in support of the request;

Publication of Notice

6. For the purpose of compliance with section 15(2) of the Act the Court shall, as soon as may be after it receives a request to conduct an examination under that section, publish a notice in at least one newspaper in general circulation within the State, of its intention to conduct an examination and inviting representations under Section 15 (3) of the Act from all interested parties

Making Representations

7. Representations made in accordance with section 15(3) of the Act shall be made in writing within 28 days of the publication of the notice referred to at Rule 6.

Information

8. All documentation received by the Court under Rules 1 to 5 and 7 shall, unless specifically requested otherwise, be published by the Court on its website..

9. All parties furnishing documents to the Court must ensure that they not include any sensitive personal data within the meaning of the Data Protection Acts 1988 and 2003

Labour Court (Sectoral Employment Orders) Rules 2015 are hereby revoked.

Appendix 4

The Labour Court
Ringsdowne House
Ringsdowne Road, Ballsbridge
Dublin 4, D04 A3A8

Telephone: (+353) 1 613 6666
or 0818 613 666



THE LABOUR COURT

An Chúirt Oibreachais
Áras Lansdún, Bóthar Lansdún
Droichead na Dothra
Baile Átha Cliath 4, D04 A3A8

Email: info@labourcourt.ie
Website: www.labourcourt.ie

Mr Tom Fitzgerald
Regional Coordinating Officer
Unite the Union
Unite House
55/56 Middle Abbey Street
Dublin 1 D01 X002

8th September 2025

Dear Mr Fitzgerald,

I acknowledge receipt of your request to the Labour Court for an examination of the terms and conditions of employment in the Commercial Archaeology Sector with a view to establishing a Sectoral Employment Order (SEO) as provided for in the Industrial Relations (Amendment) Act 2015.

The Labour Court will be in contact with you in relation to this in due course.

Yours sincerely,

Ceola Cronin,

Court Secretary.

Appendix 5

Unite House
55/56 Middle Abbey Street
Dublin 1 D01 X002
Republic of Ireland
Tel: 00 353 (0)1 873 4577



Ireland Region

Labour Court Secretariat
The Labour Court
Lansdowne House
Lansdowne Road
Ballsbridge
Dublin 4

29th August 2025

Re: Request to the Labour Court for the examination of the terms and conditions of employment in the Commercial Archaeology Sector with a view to establishing a Sectoral Employment Order (SEO) as provided for in the Industrial Relations (Amendment) Act 2015

To Whom It May Concern,

In accordance with Section 14 of the Industrial Relations (Amendment) Act 2015, I wish to submit an application on behalf of Unite the Union for the examination of the terms and conditions of employment in the Commercial Archaeological Sector, with a view to establishing a Sectoral Employment Order (SEO).

We believe that we meet the key threshold requirements provided for under Section 15 of the Act concerning the above request, as follows:

Section 15 (1)(a)(ii): We believe are substantially representative of the workers who would be covered by the SEO.

Section 15 (1) (B): We believe the request should apply to all workers of the type set out in the application form, specifically Non-licenced Archaeological Workers.

Section 15(1)(C): Currently, pay conditions are established at an individual enterprise level, which we believe does not provide the necessary clarity for workers regarding rates of pay. This approach can also lead to inconsistencies and a lack of cohesion among employers in terms of the correct pay rates to provide.

Susan Fitzgerald
Regional Secretary

www.unittetheunion.org/Ireland

Sharon Graham
General Secretary

Section 15(1) D): It is Unite's view, and that of our members, that clarity on rates of pay in the sector needs to be achieved. Our preferred option to achieve this is on a sector-wide basis rather than at enterprise-level. We believe pursuing this at enterprise level could give rise to industrial relations unrest, where pay established at sectoral level, with legal application, would do the opposite.

Please find enclosed:

- 1. Labour Court SEO application**
- 2. Statutory Declaration**

Thank you in advance for your assistance with this.

Yours sincerely,



**Tom Fitzgerald
Regional Coordinating Officer
Unite the union**

**Susan Fitzgerald
Regional Secretary**

www.uniteunion.org/ireland

**Sharon Graham
General Secretary**



THE LABOUR COURT

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS (AMENDMENT) ACT 2015

APPLICATION FOR A REQUEST to EXAMINE THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT IN A SECTOR

Name of applicant:	Unite the Union
Address:	55/56 Middle Abbey Street, Dublin 1, D01X002
Contact Number:	018734577
Email Address:	Janet.murphy@unitetheunion.org
Sector:	Commercial Archaeology Sector
Class, type or group of workers to which the request relates: Non-licenced Commercial Archaeological Workers (i.e. archaeological workers who are not licence-eligible)	
Please enter details of the arrangements (if any) by which terms and conditions relating to remuneration and any sick pay scheme or pension scheme, of the workers in the sector to which the request relates are determined: Pay and conditions are established at individual enterprise level	
Where the applicant is a trade union of workers, please enter the name and address of any other trade union of workers that is representative of workers in the sector to which the request relates: Not applicable	
Where the applicant is a trade union of workers, please enter the name and address of any trade union of employers or organisation of employers that is representative of employers in the sector to which the request relates: IBEC 84/86 Lower Baggot Street Dublin 2 D02 H720	

Signature of Applicant: Janet Murphy

Date: 29/8/2025

**IN THE MATTER OF AN
APPLICATION PURSUANT TO
SECTION 14 OF INDUSTRIAL
RELATIONS (AMENDMENT) ACT 2015
CONCERNING AN APPLICATION BY
UNITE THE UNION FOR A SECTORAL
EMPLOYMENT ORDER IN THE
COMMERCIAL ARCHAEOLOGY
SECTOR**

STATUTORY DECLARATION

**IN THE MATTER OF AN APPLICATION PURSUANT TO SECTION 14 OF
INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS (AMENDMENT) ACT 2015 CONCERNING AN
APPLICATION BY UNITE THE UNION FOR A SECTORAL EMPLOYMENT
ORDER IN THE COMMERCIAL ARCHAEOLOGY SECTOR**

STATUTORY DECLARATION

I, Tom Fitzgerald, do solemnly and sincerely declare that:

- A. The name of the applicant trade union is Unite the Union.**
- B. I am a Regional Coordinating Officer of Unite the Union.**
- C. The registered address of Unite the Union is 55-56 Middle Abbey Street, Dublin 1.**
- D. There are 170 workers who are members of Unite the Union to which this agreement relates, and the request is made on their behalf.**
- E. There are circa 225 / 270 Non-licensed Commercial Archaeological Workers (i.e. archaeological workers who are not licence-eligible) who are normally employed in the commercial archaeology sector, to which this request relates.**
- F. The declarant's means of knowledge of the matters referred to at paragraphs (d) and (e) come from census's conducted amongst Unite members and employers in the sector and consultation with a range of sources including the Central Statistics Office, the Nevln Institute (further and more detailed submissions available).**

I make this solemn declaration conscientiously believing the same to be true and by virtue of the Statutory Declarations Act 1938.

Signed

Declared before me Patrick Donaghy PD [name in capitals] a Practising Solicitor public [commissioner for oaths] [peace commissioner] [person authorised by Section 72 of the Solicitors (Amendment) Act 1994 to take and receive statutory declarations] by Tom Fitzgerald

[who is personally known to me],

or

[who is identified to me by Andrew Turner who is personally known to me]

[whose identity has been established to me before the taking of this Declaration by the production to me of

passport no. issued on by the authorities of , which is an authority recognised by the Irish Government]

or

national identity card no. issued on by the authorities of [which is an EU Member State, the Swiss Confederation or a Contracting Party to the EEA Agreement]

or

[Aliens Passport no. (document equivalent to a passport) issued on by the authorities of which is an authority recognised by the Irish Government]

or

refugee travel document no. issued on
by the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform]

or

travel document (other than refugee travel document) issued on
by the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform

at 13/16 Lane Street, Dublin 2

this 28th day of August 2025



Patrick Donaghy
Receiving S.O. for

[signature of witness]"

PATRICK DONAGHY B.COMM., DIP. I.S.
PATRICK DONAGHY & COMPANY.
SOLICITORS

Appendix B: NACE codes for Archaeology

Level 1: Section	Level 2: NACE Class
Section N (Professional, Scientific and Technical Activities),	<u>NACE class 72.20: Social Sciences and Humanities Research and Development</u> – research and development on humanities and arts: e.g. history and archaeology ; literature and languages; philosophy)
Section S (Arts, Sports and Recreation	<u>NACE class 91.22: Historical site and monument activities</u> – operation and preservation of archaeological sites open to visitors).
	<u>NACE class 91.30: Conservation, restoration and other support activities for cultural heritage</u> – conservation and restoration of historical and archaeological assets of all types of materials, whether the assets are movable or stationary)

Reference: European Commission (ed.), NACE Rev. 2.1: Statistical Classification of Economic Activities in the European Union: 2025 edition (2025 edition, Luxembourg, 2025).

Appendix C: Archaeology Courses offered on the island of Ireland

Institution	NFQ Level 6 (Certificate)	NFQ Level 7 (Certificate & Diploma)	NFQ Level 8 (Degree)	NFQ Level 9 (Masters)	NFQ Level 10 (PhD)
ATU	Yes				
DkiT			Yes		
QUB			Yes	Yes	Yes
TCD			Yes	Yes	Yes
UCC			Yes	Yes	Yes
UCD			Yes	Yes	Yes
UoG (formerly NUIG)		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
UU				Yes	Yes

Source: Figures taken from the Discovery Programme's *Frameworks for Archaeological Research (FAR)* Sectoral Survey. See also R. Clutterbuck and R. Ó Maoldúin. 2025. *Archaeology Student Numbers in Ireland: 2011 to 2021*. *Archaeology Ireland* Vol. 39 No. 1 pp. 39-40.

Appendix D: Advertisements for Archaeological Workers, January 2025 to January 2026

Source	Date Advertised	Employer	Position Advertised	Location of work	Rate offered	Duration of work	Accommodation Provided?	Expenses/extras offered?	Min Hourly Rate € ⁸³	Max Hourly Rate €	Max duration in working days
Archaeological Jobs in Ireland Facebook	17-Jan-2025	ACAS	Site Assistants	Dublin City Centre	€700 to €800	c.6 weeks	Unspecified	unspecified	€18.67	€21.33	30
Archaeological Jobs in Ireland Facebook	22-Jan-2025	ACSU	Archaeological Assistants	Dublin North	€700 per week	6-8 weeks	Unspecified	€50 per week	€18.67	€18.67	40
Archaeological Jobs in Ireland Facebook	20-May-2025	ACSU	Site Assistants	Clondalkin, Co. Dublin	€700 per week	Unspecified	Unspecified	€50 per week	€18.67	€18.67	Unspecified
Archaeological Jobs in Ireland Facebook	11-Feb-2025	ACSU	Site Assistants	Limerick City	€700 per week	6-8 weeks	Unspecified	€50 per week	€18.67	€18.67	40
https://www.iai.ie/jobs/	4-Nov-2025	AMS	EIA Consultant	Kilrush, Co Clare	€42,848 to €49,275	permanent	Unspecified	unspecified	€22.85	€26.28	Permanent
Archaeological Management Solutions AMS Facebook	2-May-2025	AMS	Geophysical assistant	Hybrid	€34,320-€35,349.60	Unspecified	Unspecified	unspecified	€18.30	€18.85	Unspecified

⁸³ Assuming a 7.5 hour working day.

Source	Date Advertised	Employer	Position Advertised	Location of work	Rate offered	Duration of work	Accommodation Provided?	Expenses/extras offered?	Min Hourly Rate € ⁸³	Max Hourly Rate €	Max duration in working days
https://www.iai.ie/jobs/	12-Jan-2026	AMS	Osteoarchaeologist	Kilrush, Co Clare	€40,040 – €45,760 depending on experience	6 months with possible extensions	Unspecified	unspecified	€21.35	€24.41	125
Archaeological Management Solutions AMS Facebook	30-Jan-2025	AMS	Post-ex Supervisor	Kilrush, Co Clare	€36,400-€40,040	12 months	Unspecified	unspecified	€19.41	€21.55	250
Archaeological Management Solutions AMS Facebook	30-Jan-2025	AMS	Post-ex Tech.	Kilrush, Co Clare	€31,200-€34,200	12 months	Unspecified	unspecified	€16.64	€18.24	250
https://www.iai.ie/jobs/	13-Jan-2026	AMS	Post-Excavation (PX) Technician –AMS	Kilrush, Co Clare	€31,200 – €34,320 depending on experience	6 months with possible extensions	Unspecified	unspecified	€16.64	€18.30	125
Archaeological Management Solutions AMS Facebook	1-May-2025	AMS	Site director	Ireland	€45,760-€47,132	Unspecified	Unspecified	unspecified	€24.41	€25.14	Unspecified
Archaeological Jobs in Ireland Facebook	7-Feb-2025	Archaeology Plan	Site Assistant	Ballyfermot, Dublin.	€675 per week	Unspecified	No	€25 per week	€18.00	€18.00	Unspecified

Source	Date Advertised	Employer	Position Advertised	Location of work	Rate offered	Duration of work	Accommodation Provided?	Expenses/ extras offered?	Min Hourly Rate € ⁸³	Max Hourly Rate €	Max duration in working days
Archaeological Jobs in Ireland Facebook	27-Jan-2025	Archaeology Plan	Site Assistant	Shankill, Co. Dublin.	€675 per week	minimum 3 months	No	€25 per week	€18.00	€18.00	60
https://www.iai.ie/jobs/	6-Aug-2025	Gregory Archaeology	Licence eligible archaeologists	Dublin, Wicklow, Kilkenny, Tipperary, Midlands	€1250 per week	Unspecified	Unspecified	unspecified	€33.33	€33.33	Unspecified
Archaeological Jobs in Ireland Facebook	9-Jul-2025	Gregory Archaeology	Licence eligible archaeologist	Dublin-Wicklow, Kilkenny - Tipperary	€1250 pw depending on experience	unspecified	Unspecified	unspecified	€33.33	€33.33	Unspecified
Archaeological Jobs in Ireland Facebook	17-Nov-2025	Gregory Archaeology	Licence eligible archaeologist	Dublin-Wicklow, Kilkenny - Tipperary and Midlands	€800 per week	unspecified	Unspecified	unspecified	€21.33	€21.33	Unspecified

Source	Date Advertised	Employer	Position Advertised	Location of work	Rate offered	Duration of work	Accommodation Provided?	Expenses/ extras offered?	Min Hourly Rate € ⁸³	Max Hourly Rate €	Max duration in working days
Archaeological Jobs in Ireland Facebook	23-Apr-2025	Gregory Archaeology	License eligible archaeologist	Midlands East and Southeast	€1000 per week depending on experience	unspecified	Unspecified	unspecified	€26.67	€26.67	Unspecified
IAC Archaeology Facebook	2-Oct-2025	IAC Archaeology	Archaeological project supervisor	Hybrid	€40,000-€45,000 per annum	unspecified	Unspecified	50	€21.33	€26.67	Unspecified
IAC Archaeology Facebook	10-Jul-2025	IAC Archaeology	Cultural Heritage Consultant	Wicklow	€34,000-€38,000 per annum	Full time	Unspecified	unspecified	€18.13	€20.27	Permanent
https://www.iac.ie/	15-Feb-2025	IAC Archaeology	Licence-eligible Archaeologist/ Site Director	Leinster, Greater Dublin Area	€43,000-€50,000 per annum	Full time	Unspecified	Unspecified	€22.93	€26.67	Permanent
https://www.iai.ie/jobs/	18-Aug-2025	IAC Archaeology	Licensed Archaeologist/ Site Director	Leinster, Dublin greater area	€43,000 to €50,000 per annum	Permanent Full-Time Position	Unspecified	Employee Assistance Programme	€22.93	€26.67	Permanent

Source	Date Advertised	Employer	Position Advertised	Location of work	Rate offered	Duration of work	Accommodation Provided?	Expenses/ extras offered?	Min Hourly Rate € ⁸³	Max Hourly Rate €	Max duration in working days
IAC Archaeology Facebook	1-Oct-2025	IAC Archaeology	Report writer and editor	Hybrid	€40,000-€45,000 per annum	unspecified	Unspecified	unspecified	€21.33	€26.67	Unspecified
https://www.iai.ie/jobs/	12-Aug-2025	IAC Archaeology	Senior Archaeology and Cultural Heritage Consultant	Ireland	€47,000 to €50,000 per annum	Permanent Full-Time Position	Unspecified	Employee Assistance Programme	€25.07	€26.67	Permanent
IAC Archaeology Facebook	4-Feb-2026	IAC Archaeology	Site assistant	Abbotstown,	€600 per week	10 weeks	Unspecified	€110 per week	€16.00	€16.00	10
IAC Archaeology Facebook	17-Sep-2025	IAC Archaeology	Site assistant	Blessington	€600 per week	4-6 months	Unspecified	€110 per week	€16.00	€16.00	125
IAC Archaeology Facebook	6-Jan-2025	IAC Archaeology	Site assistant	Celbridge and Dunboyne	€600 per week	7-8 weeks	Unspecified	€110 per week	€16.00	€16.00	40
IAC Archaeology Facebook	15-Jan-2025	IAC Archaeology	Site assistant	Donabate	€600 per week	8-10 weeks	Unspecified	€110 per week	€16.00	€16.00	50
IAC Archaeology Facebook	6-Feb-2025	IAC Archaeology	Site assistant	Donabate & Celbridge	€600 per week	8-10 weeks	Unspecified	€110 per week	€16.00	€16.00	40

Source	Date Advertised	Employer	Position Advertised	Location of work	Rate offered	Duration of work	Accommodation Provided?	Expenses/extras offered?	Min Hourly Rate € ⁸³	Max Hourly Rate €	Max duration in working days
IAC Archaeology Facebook	11-Feb-2025	IAC Archaeology	Site assistant	Donabate & Celbridge	€600 per week	8 weeks	Unspecified	€110 per week	€16.00	€16.00	40
IAC Archaeology Facebook	7-Aug-2025	IAC Archaeology	Site assistant	Dublin	€600 per week	4 months	Unspecified	€110 per week	€16.00	€16.00	83
IAC Archaeology Facebook	14-Jan-2026	IAC Archaeology	Site assistant	Dunboyne, Donabate, Abbotstown	€600 per week	9-10 weeks	Unspecified	€110 per week	€16.00	€16.00	10
IAC Archaeology Facebook	18-Nov-2025	IAC Archaeology	Site assistant	Stamullen	€600 per week	12 weeks	Unspecified	€110 per week	€16.00	€16.00	60
IAC Archaeology Facebook	15-Jan-2025	IAC Archaeology	Site assistant	Tallaght	€600 per week	5 weeks	Unspecified	€110 per week	€16.00	€16.00	25
IAC Archaeology Facebook	17-Sep-2025	IAC Archaeology	Site assistant	Tallaght	€600 per week	4-6 months	Unspecified	€110 per week	€16.00	€16.00	125
IAC Archaeology Facebook	7-Oct-2025	IAC Archaeology	Site assistant	Wicklow, Drogheda, and Stamullen	€600 per week	20 weeks	Unspecified	€110 per week	€16.00	€16.00	100

Source	Date Advertised	Employer	Position Advertised	Location of work	Rate offered	Duration of work	Accommodation Provided?	Expenses/extras offered?	Min Hourly Rate € ⁸³	Max Hourly Rate €	Max duration in working days
https://www.iai.ie/jobs/	17-Oct-2025	IAC Archaeology	Site Assistant/Field Archaeologist	Blessington	€600 per week	4-6 months	Unspecified	€110 per week	€16.00	€16.00	125
IAC Archaeology Facebook	6-Feb-2025	IAC Archaeology	Site Assistants	Celbridge and Donabate, Dublin	€600 per week	8-10 weeks	Unspecified	€110 per week	€16.00	€16.00	50
IAC Archaeology Facebook	13-Feb-2025	IAC Archaeology	Site director	Leinster	€43,000-€50,000 per annum	Full time	Unspecified	unspecified	€22.93	€26.67	Permanent
IAC Archaeology Facebook	1-May-2025	IAC Archaeology	Site director	Leinster	€43,000-€50,000 per annum	Full time	Unspecified	unspecified	€22.93	€26.67	Permanent
IAC Archaeology Facebook	13-Mar-2025	IAC Archaeology	Site supervisor	Leinster	€720-780 per week	6 month	Unspecified	€50 per week	€19.20	€20.80	125
Archaeological Jobs in Ireland Facebook	29-Aug-2025	Icon Archaeology Ltd	Part time	Leinster	€180 per day	Unspecified	Unspecified	Unspecified	€24.00	€24.00	Unspecified
Archaeological Jobs in Ireland Facebook	28-Jun-2025	Icon Archaeology Ltd	Site Supervisor	Ashbourne, Meath	€800-€900 per week	unspecified	Unspecified	unspecified	€21.33	€24.00	Unspecified

Source	Date Advertised	Employer	Position Advertised	Location of work	Rate offered	Duration of work	Accommodation Provided?	Expenses/extras offered?	Min Hourly Rate € ⁸³	Max Hourly Rate €	Max duration in working days
Archaeological Jobs in Ireland Facebook	10-Jan-2025	Mizen Archaeology	Site Assistants	Kinsale, Co. Cork	€36,000-€39,000 per annum	Permanent	When outside of Cork	When outside of Cork	€19.20	€20.80	Permanent
Archaeological Jobs in Ireland Facebook	10-Jan-2025	Mizen Archaeology	Site Directors	Kinsale, Co. Cork	€46,800-€54,600 per annum	Permanent	When outside of Cork	When outside of Cork	€24.96	€29.12	Permanent
Archaeological Jobs in Ireland Facebook	10-Jan-2025	Mizen Archaeology	Site Supervisors	Kinsale, Co. Cork	€41,600-€44,200 per annum	Permanent	When outside of Cork	When outside of Cork	€22.19	€23.57	Permanent
https://www.iai.ie/jobs/	22-Jul-2025	RSK Group	Senior Archaeology and Built Heritage Consultant	Dublin	€45,767.80 - €59,527.72 per annum	Permanent Full-Time Position	Unspecified	unspecified	€24.41	€31.75	Permanent
Archaeological Jobs in Ireland Facebook	6-Mar-2025	Rubicon Heritage Services Ltd	Head of Consultancy	Unspecified; presumably Cork	€60,000+ per annum	Permanent	No	unspecified	€32.00	€32.00	Permanent
Archaeological Jobs in Ireland Facebook	5-Mar-2025	Rubicon Heritage Services Ltd	Licensed archaeologist	Unspecified; presumably Cork	€46,000-€55,000 per annum	unspecified	No	unspecified	€24.53	€29.33	Unspecified

Source	Date Advertised	Employer	Position Advertised	Location of work	Rate offered	Duration of work	Accommodation Provided?	Expenses/extras offered?	Min Hourly Rate € ⁸³	Max Hourly Rate €	Max duration in working days
Rubicon Facebook	29-Oct-2025	Rubicon Heritage Services Ltd	Project Manager	Cork	€50,000 per annum	Full time	Unspecified	unspecified	€26.67	€26.67	Permanent
Archaeological Jobs in Ireland Facebook	10-Mar-2025	Rubicon Heritage Services Ltd	Site Assistant	Cork but travelling	€34,320-€37,440 per annum	Permanent	For away work	For away work	€18.30	€19.97	Permanent
Archaeological Jobs in Ireland Facebook	1-Jul-2025	Rubicon Heritage Services Ltd	Site Director-Licensed Archaeologist	Ireland	€46,000-€55,000 per annum	Permanent	Unspecified	unspecified	€24.53	€29.33	Permanent
Archaeological Jobs in Ireland Facebook	25-Aug-2025	Rubicon Heritage Services Ltd	Site Director-Licensed Archaeologist	Ireland	€51,000-€55,000 per annum	Permanent	Unspecified	unspecified	€27.20	€29.33	Permanent
Archaeological Jobs in Ireland Facebook	11-Mar-2025	Rubicon Heritage Services Ltd	Site Supervisor	Cork but travelling	€38,325-€45,422 per annum	Permanent	For away work	For away work	€20.44	€24.23	Permanent
Archaeological Jobs in Ireland Facebook	15-Jan-2025	Shanarc	Post Excavation Assistant	Kilkenny City	€29,250 per annum	Permanent Full-Time Position	Unspecified	unspecified	€15.60	€15.60	Permanent

Source	Date Advertised	Employer	Position Advertised	Location of work	Rate offered	Duration of work	Accommodation Provided?	Expenses/extras offered?	Min Hourly Rate € ⁸³	Max Hourly Rate €	Max duration in working days
Archaeological Jobs in Ireland Facebook	27-Jan-2025	Shanarc	Site Assistant	Ballymurin, Co. Wexford	€700 per week	10 weeks	Yes	unspecified	€18.67	€18.67	50
Archaeological Jobs in Ireland Facebook	14-Jan-2025	Shanarc	Site Director	Kilkenny City	€47,000 to €56,000 per annum	Permanent Full-Time Position	No	Yes	€25.07	€29.87	Permanent
https://www.iai.ie/jobs/	17-Nov-2025	UCD School of Archaeology	Project Researcher	Dublin	€46,700 per annum	12 months	Unspecified	unspecified	€24.91	€24.91	250

Appendix E: Comparison of rates for archaeology and referenced sectors

Grade	Current Advertised Archaeological Wage Range (Jan 2025 – Jan 2026)	IAI Working Group For The Review Of Pay Rates (Aug 2014, 1 st Aug 2025 – 1 st Aug 2026) ⁸⁴	Construction Seo (showing rates that came into effect on 5 th Aug 2024 – 1 st Aug 2026)	Electrical Contractor (Collective agreement between Connect and CIF) ⁸⁵	Mechanical Engineering Sector (Collective agreement between Unite and MEBSCA) ⁸⁶	Mechanical Engineering Sector (Collective agreement between Connect and MEBSCA) ⁸⁷
	€21.33-€33.33 (Site Director)	€33.22 (€26.85 in 2014) (Site director)				
Category 3			€22.24 - €23 - €23.74 (craftsperson)	€28.04 (Feb 2026) (6 th year out of time)	€29.05 (Aug 2025) (6 th year out of time)	€29.07 (May 2025) (10 th year out of time)
Category 2	€19.20-€24.23 (Supervisor)	€27.46 (€22.20 in 2014) (Supervisor)	€21.59 - €22.32 - €23.03 (Category A >4yrs)	€27.60 (Feb 2026) (3 rd year out of time)	€28.68 (Aug 2025) (3 rd year out of time)	€28.36 (May 2025) (3 rd year out of time)

⁸⁴ Inflation calculated using the Central Statistics Office CPI Inflation Calculator (<https://visual.cso.ie/?body=entity/cpi/calculator>)

⁸⁵ <https://connectunion.ie/information/pocket-books/> [accessed 2/03/2026]

⁸⁶ <https://unitetheunionireland.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/mechanical-rates-2325.pdf> [accessed 2/03/2026]

⁸⁷ <https://connectunion.ie/information/pocket-books/> [accessed 2/03/2026]



Grade	Current Advertised Archaeological Wage Range (Jan 2025 – Jan 2026)	IAI Working Group For The Review Of Pay Rates (Aug 2014, rates shown adjusted for inflation to Jan 2026) ⁸⁴	Construction Seo (showing rates that came into effect on 5 th Aug 2024 – 1 st Aug 2025 – 1 st Aug 2026)	Electrical Contractor (Collective agreement between Connect and CIF) ⁸⁵	Mechanical Engineering Sector (Collective agreement between Unite and MEBSCA) ⁸⁶	Mechanical Engineering Sector (Collective agreement between Connect and MEBSCA) ⁸⁷
Category 1	€15.60-€21.33 (Site Assistant)	€21.65 (€17.50 in 2014) (Site Assistant Grade 2, > 6 months experience)	€20.03 - €20.71 - €21.37 (Category B >2yrs)	€27.06 (Feb 2026) (1 st year out of time)	€27.93 (Aug 2025) (newly qualified)	€27.63 (May 2025) (newly qualified)
Year 4 Apprentice	€15.60-€21.33 (Site Assistant)	€21.65 (€17.50 in 2014) (Site Assistant Grade 1, <6 months experience)	€20.02 - €20.70 - €21.36 (90% of Craft Rate)	€21.65 (February 2026)	€25.14 (August 2025)	€24.87 (May 2025)