

A short guide to archaeological work in Norway

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How archaeology is organised in Norway.....

Norwegian heritage law gives automatic protection to all buried deposits and buildings predating 1538 (the date of the Reformation). In the north of Norway, the date range is extended to 1900 to automatically protect Sami (Lapp) archaeological sites. Development that might affect protected deposits requires a dispensation from the National Heritage Board (Riksantikvaren). Excavation can only be undertaken by the 5 university museums (Stavanger, Bergen, Trondheim, Tromsø and Oslo) or by NIKU (the national agency responsible for medieval and later heritage) or in exceptional circumstances by one of the four maritime museums. The county teams are permitted to evaluate potential development sites, but not excavate other than to determine date and provenance.

There are many amateur local history groups in Norway, but no amateur archaeology groups such as exist in the UK.

Visa: Although Norway is not currently in the EU it is in the EEA and therefore EU and EEA citizens can work in Norway without needing a work visa. It is necessary however to register with the tax office where you will receive an Identification number and a tax card. Visas are required by non-EU/EEA applicants

Living and working in Norway: Norway has a high standard of living, a strong national identity and a general belief in achieving a good work/life balance. Taxes are moderately high as are prices. There are restrictions on the sale and availability of alcohol. There is generally a low crime rate and a high level of social responsibility. Drug use and drink driving are strongly discouraged.

Finding somewhere to live: Accommodation can be very expensive for folk seeking short term accommodation. This can be exacerbated by the fact that all of the excavating museums are located in 'student' cities. Most museums pay an allowance to cover accommodation whilst staff are in the field, but this does not normally apply to locally based housing or accommodation whilst undertaking post-ex work. Field 'housing' allowance will normally cover the cost of hostel style accommodation or equivalent.

Digging season: Due to an unforgiving winter climate, most archaeological field work is limited to the period between Easter and October. A small number of post-ex jobs carry on through the winter months.

Job adverts: The archaeology museums normally advertise in January and February for the following field season. Occasionally projects might last for the whole season (c20 weeks), but more likely for a few weeks, sometimes just a few days. Short and fixed term contracts predominate. Excavation jobs are advertised on the archaeology museum web sites. It is not normal to send CVs, but the application forms ask for details of qualification and experience of site and post-ex work (normally measured in 'weeks'). County (fylke) jobs are advertised at about the same time and normally through the national employment service (NAV). Job adverts are in Norwegian. There are a

number of Facebook pages where notice of job adverts are circulated. Advertisers do not normally reply to unsuccessful applicants.

Archaeological work website: No

Qualifications: Most Norwegian field archaeology jobs require a Master's degree or higher in an archaeology relevant subject. In exceptional circumstances a Bachelor degree might be sufficient providing it is accompanied by extensive experience. It is very unusual for someone with a non-archaeological degree to be working in archaeology. Specialist roles do exist in Norwegian archaeology, but in very small numbers. This could be seen as both a benefit and a hindrance for applicants coming from abroad. A number of specialists, to my knowledge, have managed to establish themselves through being in the right place at the right time. As in the UK some specialisms are more employable than others. A driving licence is normally required for supervisory posts.

Languages: Although English is widely spoken in Norway, competence in a Scandinavian language is normally required, particularly for report writing.

Excavation methodology: All of the archaeology museums use *Intrasis* - a GIS-based field recording system utilising total station measurement. Photogrammetry is also widely used. A combination of planum and stratigraphic excavation methodology is used. Experience of all of these methods/techniques is desirable

Pay: Wages in archaeology are high (compared to the UK), but living costs and the short digging season generally level out the differences. Pay is based on a combination of qualification and experience. All of the archaeology museums provide an allowance for accommodation and other expenses when staff are required to stay overnight, but staff are normally expected to source the accommodation themselves. Work with the county archaeology teams is normally based around daily commuting.

Gender balance: Field teams M 45% F 55%. Probably more women in senior positions than in equivalent posts in the UK.

Trade union: MAARK <https://www.forskerforbundet.no/maark>

Professional body: No, but NAM – Det Norske Arkeologmøtet is an annual conference of the Norwegian archaeology community

Web sites:

Bergen University Museum - www.uib.no/fms

Oslo University Museum - www.khm.uio.no

Trondheim University Museum - www.ntnu.edu/museum

Stavanger University Museum - <http://am.uis.no/frontpage/>

Tromsø University Museum - <https://en.uit.no/om/enhet/tmu>

Riksantikvaren - <http://www.riksantikvaren.no/en/>

NIKU - www.niku.no

Facebook groups:

Arkeologi i Norge - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/2576971112/>

Arkeologiforum.no - <https://fr-fr.facebook.com/arkeologiforum/>

Arkeologhjelpen! - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/401678819906283/>