

An aerial photograph of an archaeological excavation site. Several workers wearing yellow hard hats and high-visibility vests are visible. One worker is kneeling and working on a stone wall, another is standing and looking at a clipboard, and others are scattered around the site. The site features large, rectangular stone blocks arranged in a grid-like pattern, with some areas being excavated into pits. The ground is dry and sandy.

***Why Study Archaeology?***  
**Assessing Diversity in Undergraduate Archaeological  
Degree Programs at KU**

TLHE SEP2019  
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Department of Cross-Cultural and Regional Studies

# Background:

- While archaeology as a discipline has made significant progress in terms of gender representation, many scholars correctly note the persistent under-representation of minority ethnic groups
- Socioeconomic status may also play a role in the type of student who decides to pursue a degree in archaeology

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**Culture professionals network** This article is more than 3 years old

## Archaeology must open up to become more diverse

Archaeology classrooms are becoming more representative, but we need practitioners with more varied backgrounds and perspectives

*Raksha Dave*  
public archaeologist and founding member of DigVentures

Mon 23 May 2016 13.30 BST

f t e 346 16



<https://www.theguardian.com/culture-professionals-network/2016/may/23/archaeology-must-open-up-become-more-diverse>

# Gender balance (UK):

Age	<20		20-29		30-39		40-49		50-59		60+	
Gender	f	m	f	m	f	m	f	m	f	m	f	m
United Kingdom	0	0	74	20	149	130	97	155	1	109	19	35

From: Aitchison et al. (2014: 26)

**Male archaeologists: 449 (57%)**

**Female archaeologists: 340 (43%)**

# Gender balance (Denmark):

Age	<20		20-29		30-39		40-49		50-59		60+	
Gender	f	m	f	m	f	m	f	m	f	m	f	m
Denmark	0	0	0	0	9	9	13	5	8	9	2	4

From: Aitchison et al. (2014: 26)

**Male archaeologists: 27 (46%)**

**Female archaeologists: 32 (54%)**

# Minority representation (UK):

- 99.2 % of archaeologists are white and 98.2 % are not disabled (Aitchison and Rocks-Macqueen 2013: 99, 100).
- UK 2011 UK census demonstrated that 86 % of the UK population are white (Office of National Statistics 2012) and 82.1 % did not have an activity-limiting health problem or disability (Office of National Statistics 2013).
- While the number of white Britons is falling, the number of white archaeologists increased from 99 % in 2002 to 99.2 % in 2013 (Aitchison and Rocks-Macqueen 2013: 99).

# Background:

- A new “Near Eastern Archaeology” BA programme will begin at KU in 2020/2021
- Within the ToRS department, however, enrolment in the archaeology track is down

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**NEAR EASTERN ARCHAEOLOGY**

### Main Fields of Study

Archaeology in the Ancient Near East: Egypt, Levant, Anatolia, Mesopotamia, Ancient Iran and peripheral areas from 20,000 BCE – 19th cent. CE. The program includes a general introduction to the discipline of archaeology, with detailed studies of archaeological evidence from different periods (prehistoric, historical and islamic) in the Ancient Near East.

### Study Programmes

- [Bachelor's Programme \(in Danish\)](#)
- [Master's Programme \(in Danish\)](#)
- [Elective Programme, BA-level \(in Danish\)](#)

### Contact

You are always welcome to contact the international student counsellor at the department:

Karen Blixens Plads 8  
Building 10, 3rd floor  
Room 10.3.47  
2300 Copenhagen S  
Tel. (+45) 51 30 07 90  
E-mail: [tors-international@hum.ku.dk](mailto:tors-international@hum.ku.dk)  
[Opening hours](#)

For general information about the conditions for international students at the University of Copenhagen, you should contact [The International Office](#).

### Curricula

# Research question:

- Does gender, ethnicity or socioeconomic status play a role in the type of student who chooses to study archaeology?



# Objectives:

- To characterize the types of students that pursue undergraduate degrees in archaeology
- This research can be used to find new ways of recruiting students to archaeology that may otherwise not have considered such a career path



# Methods:

The screenshot displays a Google Forms interface for a survey titled "ToRS archaeology BA survey". The top navigation bar includes a "Send" button and a "Responses" tab with a count of 11. The main content area features a large photograph of an archaeological excavation site with workers in safety gear. Below the photo, a text box contains the following message:

Section 1 of 6

ToRS archaeology BA survey

Hi, I'm conducting this survey as part of my Teaching and Learning in Higher Education (TLHE) training course project. I'd like to know a little bit about your backgrounds and why you chose to study archaeology at ToRS. All information you provide will remain confidential.

Thank you!  
Scott

- Google Forms 10-question survey
- Sent to all currently enrolled Near Eastern Archaeology undergraduate students at ToRS (N=24)

# Results:

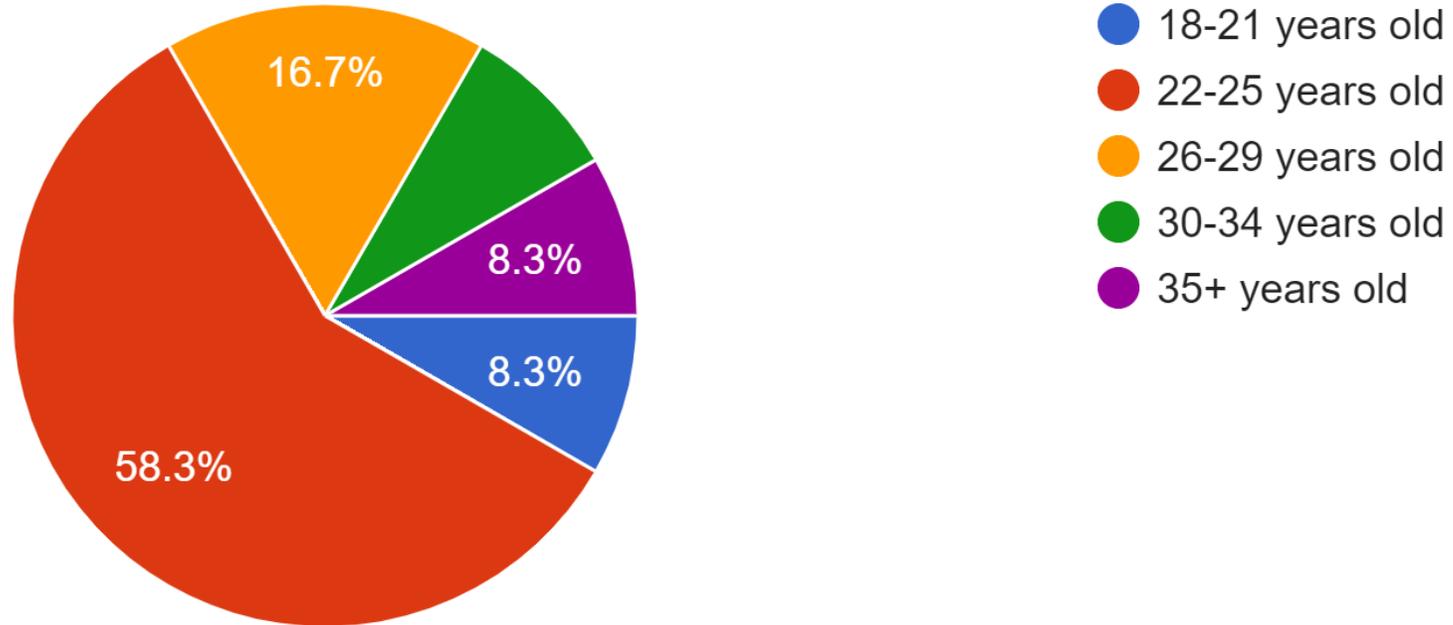
- Only 12 respondents so far 😞



# Results:

(1) Age category

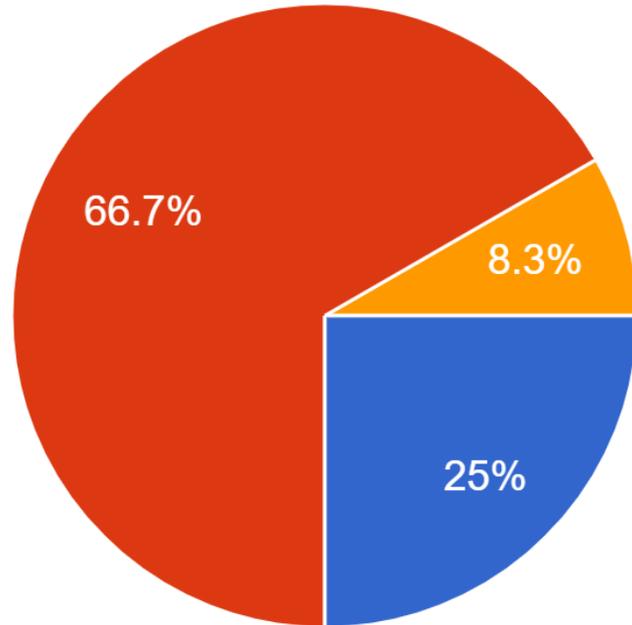
12 responses



# Results:

(2) Gender

12 responses



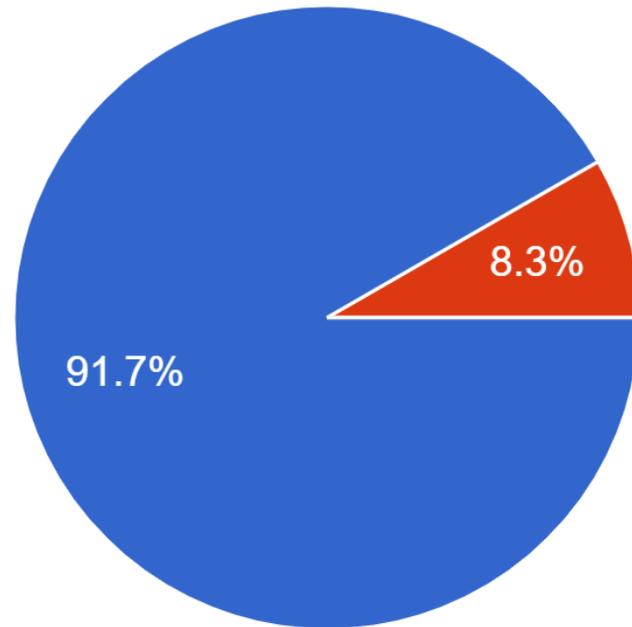
- Male
- Female
- Other
- Prefer not to say



# Results:

(3) Were you born in Denmark?

12 responses



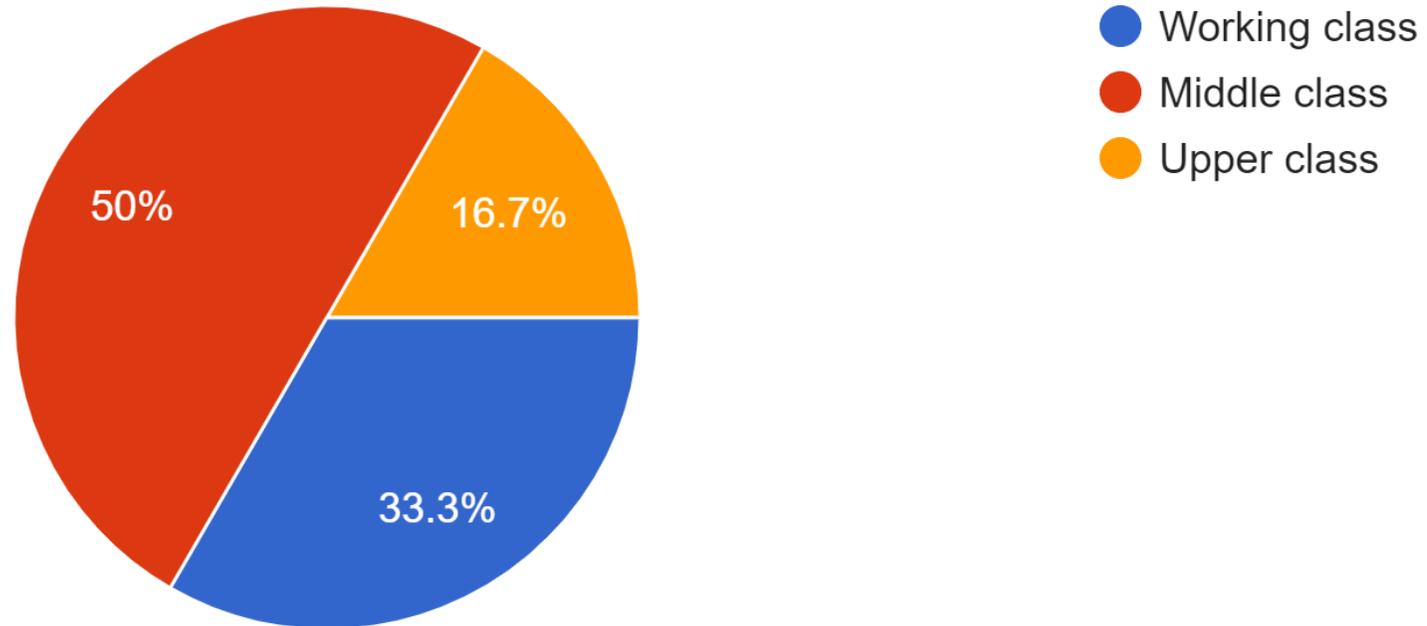
● Yes  
● No



# Results:

(4) How would you describe your family's socioeconomic background?

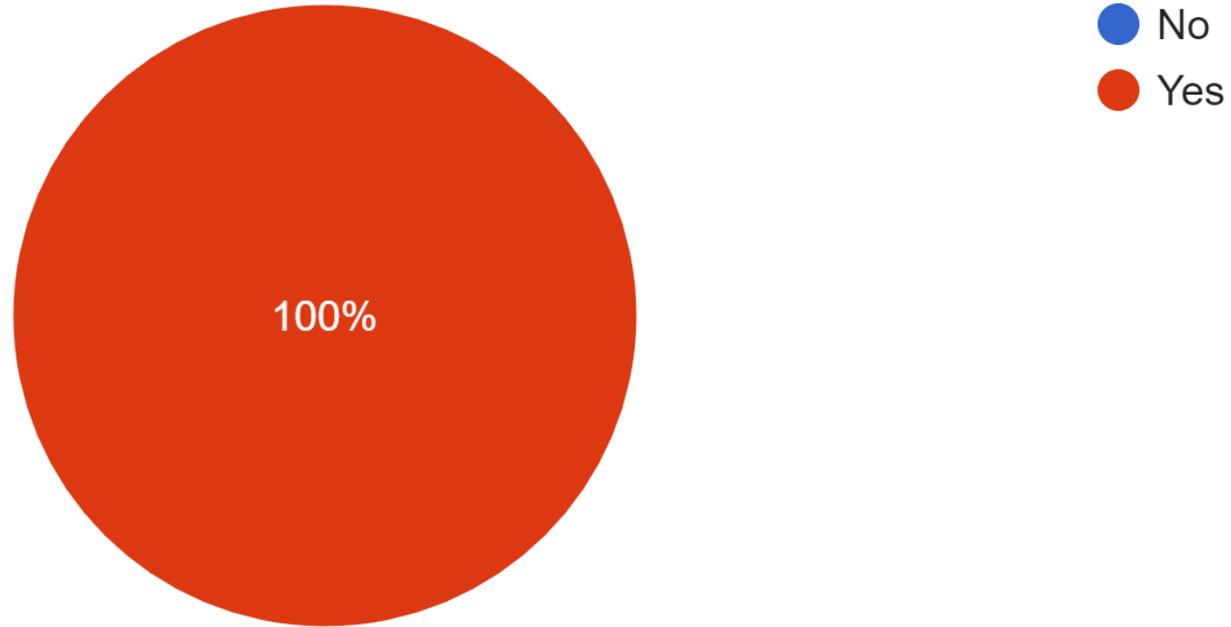
12 responses



# Results:

(5) Do you have family members who attended University?

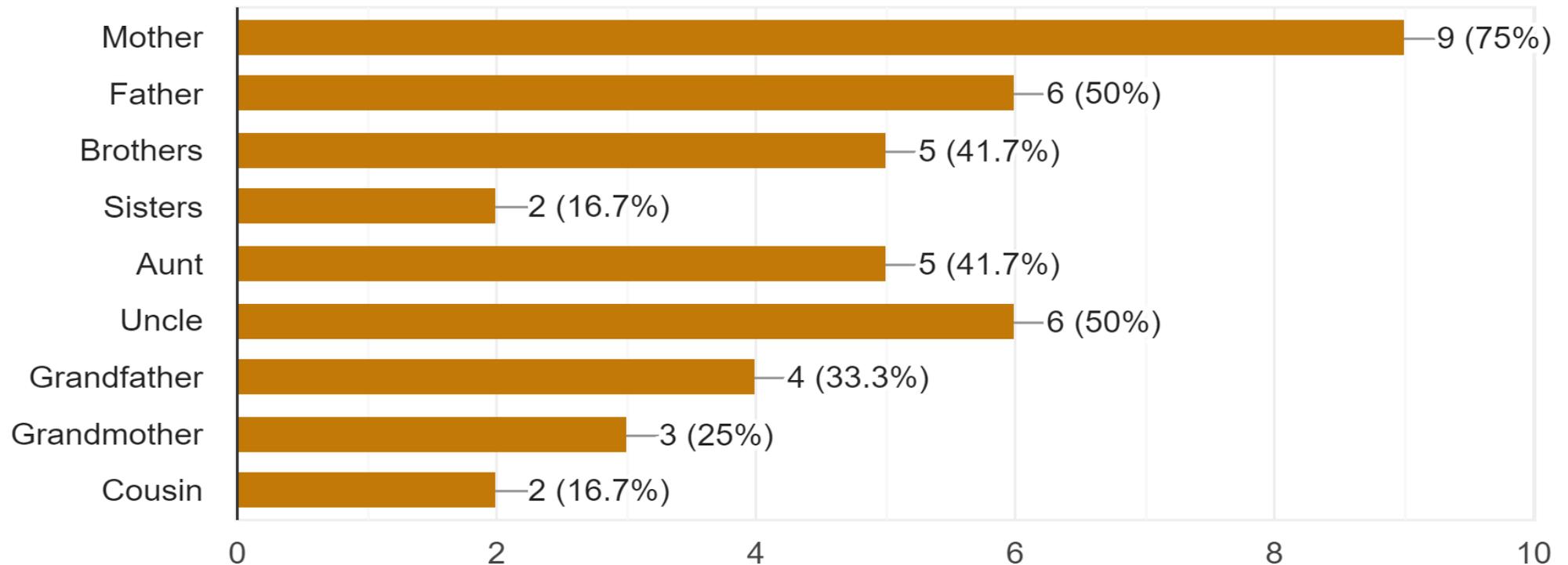
12 responses



# Results:

(6) If you answered yes to the previous question, please check which family members have attended university below

12 responses



# Results:

## Reasons for choosing an archaeology degree

(7) Why did you choose to study archaeology at KU?

12 responses

I have always found ancient Egypt extremely fascinating, and after learning that Egyptology mainly is a philological study, i pursued archaeology as it let me work with the material culture of ancient Egypt

I've always wanted to do archaeology, and doing it in Copenhagen where I grew up seemed like the easiest and least expensive option, as education is free here, compared to elsewhere in the world.

Beacuse it was a dream

Because I love history and practical work.

Personal interest + practical work on site,

I chose it out of personal interest over pragmatic reasons like employment opportunities

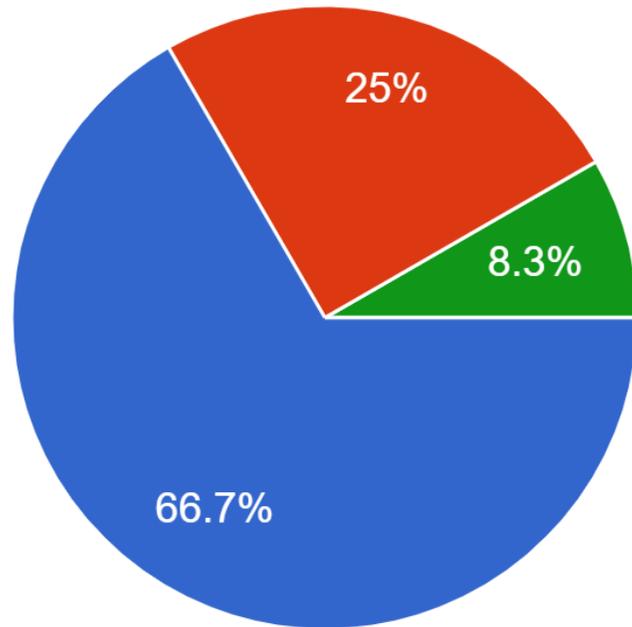
I needed a career shift from Digital & Graphic Design to a more passion-driven area.

I always wanted to become an archaeologist, and Ku is the only place that offers a degree in Near Eastern archaeology.

# Results:

(8) What are your career plans after you graduate?

12 responses

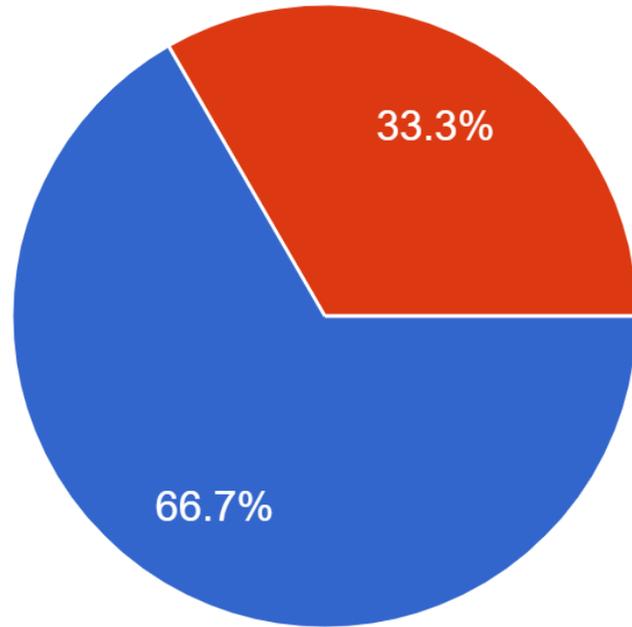


- Continue with an MA in archaeology
- Continue with a degree in another subject
- Enter the workforce
- I want to use my BA degree to become an officer in the military.

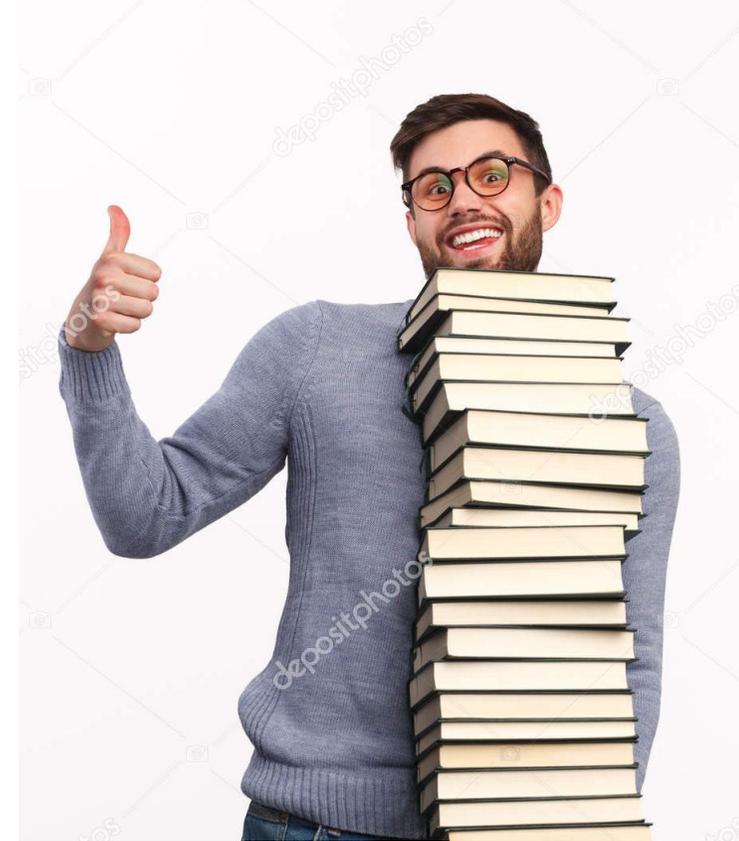
# Results:

(9) Are you satisfied with the archaeology program at ToRS?

12 responses



- Yes
- No



# Results:

## Unsatisfied

(10) If you are not satisfied with your decision to study archaeology, please explain why.

4 responses

*“I am very satisfied with my decision: we have covered unexpected topics which have caught my interest, and I really like how much anthropology plays a role in our study. I am not however satisfied with all aspects of the program: I think we get too little hands-on experience, and I think we jump a lot back and forth between topics, time periods and geographical regions without going in depth (sometimes it is even repetition of what has already been covered).”*

(Respondent: 22-25 years-old female, middle-class, born in Denmark)

# Results:

## Unsatisfied

(10) If you are not satisfied with your decision to study archaeology, please explain why.

4 responses

*“I love to study archaeology but some professors haven’t been good at teaching and this has sometimes affected my motivation.”*

(Respondent: 22-25 years-old female, working-class, born in Denmark)

# Results:

## Unsatisfied

(10) If you are not satisfied with your decision to study archaeology, please explain why.

4 responses

*“I am satisfied with studying archaeology, but not at ToRS.”*

(Respondent: 22-25 years-old female, upper-class, born outside Denmark)

# Results:

## Unsatisfied

(10) If you are not satisfied with your decision to study archaeology, please explain why.

4 responses

*“Overall I am happy with studying archaeology..., but...*

*I think we are lacking teaching in how to apply our education to the job market and also that some of our teachings are not applicable or wanted in the job market.*

*I fear that I am taking a degree that will lead me to unemployment.*

*I also dislike the ideological undertones ... in some of the themes we study (...such as gender). This would perhaps not have been a huge issue if there was a plurality of opinions during class, and if plurality of opinions was encouraged, but this is not the case. The one sidedness is a huge issue ...and I fear that dissent would lead one to be ostracized professionally and socially. I chose to become an archaeologist and not an activist.”*

(Respondent: 26-29 years-old male, working class, born in Denmark)

# Discussion:

- Similar gender proportion between UK and KU undergraduate archaeology students



# Conclusions/reflections:

- Need to increase sample size by including students from previous years (perhaps access detailed demographic information via state information)
- This would avoid issues related to students misrepresenting themselves in the survey
- More detailed information related to university backgrounds of family members might provide insight on potential influences family members have on student degree choices
- Ethnic backgrounds of students a potentially sensitive subject but would provide additional insight



# References:

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