

A case study of the German archives' labor market in 2019

German
archives' labor
market

Maik Schmerbauch

*Bundesbeauftragte für die Unterlagen des Staatssicherheitsdienstes der ehemaligen
Deutschen Demokratischen Republik, Berlin, Germany*

197

Received 1 October 2020
Revised 7 December 2020
1 May 2021
6 May 2021
Accepted 6 May 2021

Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to discuss the German labor market situation.

Design/methodology/approach – This study is focusing on the German archive labor market for the year 2019 and examines the job postings.

Findings – Many postings in 2019; problems in posts such as different salaries and quality of tasks.

Originality/value – This is an original source-based study.

Keywords Germany, Jobs, Labor market, Archive, Vacancies

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

There have been very few research studies published about the state and development of German archival jobs and the labor market in the recent past. One reason for this gap is that the topic is not the main focus of German archivists beyond their normal tasks and daily duties. In educational programs such as studies in archival science (AS), there are no courses taught on this subject and it receives even less mention as a subject within programs like archival management which teaches organization and leadership skills. Some statistics are collected by the Federal Employment Agency of Germany to get regular (often annual) overviews of the labor market in the archival, library and documentation fields. However, archives and libraries have otherwise provided only a general survey of the profile and duties of archivists as part of professional training so as to support the decision of potential trainees and employees to join the sector. There does not yet exist any systematic wider study of the German labor market by professional archivists who conduct research within the field. This author previously published a similar study of international archival vacancy announcements over 2016 (Schmerbauch, 2019).

The current focus on electronic records in German archives has caused the recent retirement of the majority of traditional archivists who joined the sector in the 1980s, as they held more conservative attitudes and tended to work exclusively with paper-based records [1]. However, the acknowledgment that digitization is an important challenge for archives in the coming years also had a remarkably positive impact on the recent job market in Germany. The 2019 was a year in which, similar to 2017 and 2018, there was a noticeable positive trend in the archival labor market. This trend is the first of its kind in past decades, as previous archival job vacancies were rare and positions, thus, difficult to obtain. Instead, in 2019 a significantly larger number of vacancies announcements and job postings across the different types of German archives were published online.

The high retirement numbers of senior staff in public administration (Stumpf and Ausbildung im, 2015), including archives, over the next few years, is surely one reason for the need for this type of study. In addition to the retirements, companies and municipalities



are facing a significant general political expectation that public records should be made easily available to increase digitization and online publications (which, therefore, necessitates that archives staff have relevant skills) and there are now funding opportunities available for digitization projects (for instance, from the German Research Foundation and state programs) to enable this. These conditions inform the basis for the majority of staff recruitment in German archives.

These important factors also contribute to the need for similar studies to further understand the motivations for posting a vacancy announcement. The fact is that with the financial resources of public and private employers (now much more available than over the past two decades), archives are well-positioned for the future. Another reason for this study is to examine the need to strengthen awareness of the importance of securing the historical record for future use. The aim of this article is to understand the current labor market while presenting a related analysis of upper archival service (UAS) and higher archival service (HAS) level posts to accurately reflect the current shortage of skilled workers and the management challenges facing German archives.

Literature review

There have only been a small amount of German literature published on this topic and research in the past decades. One brief study of only four pages is by Karsten Uhde, Deputy Head and Director of Studies of the German Central Archives School in Marburg and lecturer in archival paleography, (Uhde, 2019, 2020). Based on interviews among selected UAS and HAS Marburg graduates and on statistics, Uhde states that as the middle of the 2010s there has been a clear trend of a very good labor market in opposite to previous years. He prognosticates a positive labor market for all graduates of archival studies in the 2020s.

Its weakness is the extreme brevity of the study and that it only refers to vacancies that were posted on the website of the Archivschule. Also, Uhde included the Regular Lower Archival (trainee) Service which does not require the same type of study and he excluded other related programs like information science which even more common an entrance into the archival world in today's Germany. So Uhde is more confined research from the eyes of the "inner circle and frame" of the Archivschule and it delivers more general and descriptive information than a deeper methodical analysis. Uhde presented little literature and did not reflect on vacancies data such as archive types and announcement content like this research article does and presented no wider discussion on lessons learned. However, it is a readable glance comprising information for German archivists.

Marcus Stumpf, Head of the Archives Office in the German State of Nordrhein-Westfalia also put his focus on the past to analyze development and training in German archives (Stumpf, 2019). He is concerned that several archive types, especially municipal archives in districts and towns, still have less than 50% qualified archival staff, and therefore cannot ensure they will address important challenges such as digitization. He states that Germany has a massive shortage of skilled archives workers that archival training is the best way to ensure that archives recruit the best employees. However, Stumpf's work concentrates more on the general question of training and is confined mostly to special regions than wider qualitative analyzes of expert research. However, he discusses this topic regularly and so makes German archives aware of it. As well, professor of AS Susanne Freund fixes her attention primarily on the availability of further training opportunities in the profession rather than reporting on with deeper data-based research.

There are also a few short pieces in the literature now almost 20 years old which deliver barely enough information to reveal the situation at that time period and which is not directly relevant to this study (Sachau and Ralph, 2001; Herget and Norbert, 2003; Englert, 2003).

So, questions regarding the labor market and the training of German archivists have been rarely discussed in the past and the literature reveals that only a few German archivists are moved to publish about the current situation. Therefore, this research will provide a wider analysis of the actual situation in 2019 based on empirical data which have not been similarly collected and analyzed by any past or present author. This research will bring new information and insights into the labor market and it will shed light on the situation. It also provides several goal statements and proposals for enhancements. The intention is to strengthen archival professionals' aware of the development of current and future labor markets.

Methodology

To carry out this original source-based study, the author collected and analyzed a selection of job postings and vacancy announcements in print publications and on relevant portals and websites from January to December 2019. The study was limited to positions in the intermediate (UAS or Gehobener Dienst) and higher (senior) civil (HAS or Höherer Dienst) service, in comparison to some jobs in commercial and non-profit sectors. The UAS and HAS level jobs were classified into these categories according to:

- the explicit text of the advertisement according to the corresponding career qualifications,
- salary groups up to senior level (up to E13g and A13g) and senior service (from E13 and A13); and
- commercial or other positions not subject to public service levels (this classification was adopted on the basis of either a bachelor's degree or diploma (senior service) or a master's or doctorate degree (higher service).

Because in German archives the majority of employees work in UAS and HAS level positions, the study focused on those labor markets. It excluded lower-level positions because there was actually a decrease in those vacancy announcements. For the purposes of this article, all relevant vacancy announcements that were accessible from reliable sources in print and on websites were analyzed using data extraction and qualitative content analysis methods (Fühles-Ubach *et al.*, 2013a, 2013b; Mertens, 2013; Werner, 2013; Fühles-Ubach *et al.*, 2013a, 2013b) for particular indicators (or metadata) related to the research questions.

The following job portals and print sources relevant to archives were accessed as part of the research:

- (1) Archivschule Marburg (<https://www.archivschule.de>).
- (2) Openbibliojobs (<https://jobs.openbiblio.eu>).
- (3) Interamt (<https://interamt.de>).
- (4) Kimeta (<https://www.kimeta.de>).
- (5) Wirtschaftsarchiv (www.wirtschaftsarchiv.de).
- (6) Niedersachsen (Regional Lower Saxony) job portals:
 - State Government of Lower Saxony (<https://karriere.niedersachsen.de>).
 - Der Archivar – Magazine of the German Association of Archivists (www.archive.nrw.de/archivar).
 - Augias job market (www.augias.de).
- (7) German job exchange labor office (<https://jobboerse.arbeitsagentur.de>).

- (8) WILA Arbeitsmarkt – Zeitung für Geistes – u. Sozialwissenschaftler/innen sowie Jobsuchende in Umwelt und Natur, published by Wissenschaftsladen Bonn e. V., appears weekly.
- (9) German Newspaper “Die Zeit,” appears every Thursday with a special focus on job market vacations also in humanities and science.

Relevant data was extracted from the print vacancy announcements and job postings on the web into an Excel generated spreadsheet in which they were listed by running number (Nr. column A) with associated metadata as below and in [Figure 1](#) above:

- archive type (Archivsparte. column B);
- pay group (Entgelt. column C);
- civil service option (Verbeamtung. column D);
- fixed term or temporary contract status (Befristung. column E);
- working hours/if part-time (Arbeitszeit. column F);
- number of positions (Anzahl Stellen. column G);
- type of position(s) (Stellenarbeit. column H);
- minimum qualification (Qualifikation. column I);
- exact description of the position (Terminology. column J);
- classic analog (Aufgaben klassisch. column K) or digital (Aufgaben digital. column L) archival tasks;
- includes activities in records management (records management. cell M);
- required work experience (Berufserfahrung. column N); and
- job location (Ort. column O).

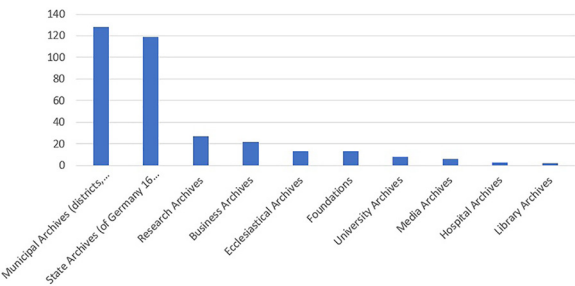


Figure 1.
Number of jobs
according to archival
types

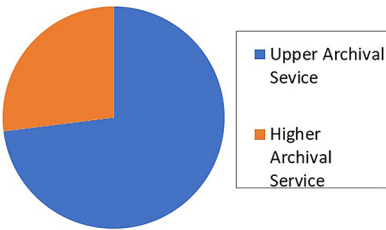


Figure 2.
Proportion of UAS to
HAS job postings

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Nr.	Archivsparte	Entgelt	Verbeamtung	Befristung	Arbeitszeit	Anzahl Stellen	Stellenarbeit
1	Kommunale	EG 9b	Ja	unbefristet	Vollzeit	1	Stellv. Leiter
2	Kommunale	k.A.	Nein	bis 2 Jahre	Teilzeit	1	Sachbearbeiter
3	Kommunale	EG9c	Nein	unbefristet	Vollzeit	1	Leiter
4	staatliche	Hausstarif	Nein	bis 2 Jahre	Vollzeit	1	Sachbearbeiter
5	staatliche	Hausstarif	Nein	bis 2 Jahre	Vollzeit	1	Sachbearbeiter
6	staatliche	Hausstarif	Nein	bis 2 Jahre	Vollzeit	1	Sachbearbeiter
7	staatliche	Hausstarif	Nein	unbefristet	Vollzeit	1	Sachbearbeiter
8	Kommunale	EG10	Ja	unbefristet	Vollzeit	1	Sachbearbeiter
9	Hochschularc hive	TVL E9	Nein	bis 2 Jahre	Teilzeit	1	Sachbearbeiter
10	Kommunale	EG10	Ja	unbefristet	Vollzeit	1	Sachbearbeiter
11	Kommunale	EG15	Ja	unbefristet	Vollzeit	1	Leiter

(continued)

Table 1.
Snapshot of the
research data
spreadsheet

Table 1.

A	I	J	K	L	M	N	O
Nr.	Qualifikationen	Terminologie	Aufgaben klassisch	Aufgaben digital	Records Management	Berufserfahrung	Ort
1	Bachelor Archiv oder Diplom	Diplom-Archivarin	Ja	Ja	Ja	erwünscht	Aachen
2	alle A+B+D+I	Archivar/in (m/w/d)	Ja	Nein	Nein	keine Angaben	
3	Studiengänge	Archivar/in (w/m/d)	Ja	Ja	Ja	erwünscht	Ahaus
4	Bachelor Archiv oder Diplom	Archivar oder Historiker	Ja	Nein	Nein	keine Angaben	Arolsen
5	Geschichte oder Archiv	Archivar oder Historiker	Ja	Nein	Nein	erwünscht	Arolsen
6	Geschichte oder Archiv	Archivar oder Historiker (m/w/d) -Schwerpunkt neueste/ osteuropäische Geschichte-	Ja	Nein	Nein	erwünscht	Arolsen
7	alle A+B+D+I	Archivar (m/w/d) Die	Ja	Nein	Nein	keine Angaben	Arolsen
8	Studiengänge	varin/Archivar (m/w/d) für den	Nein	Ja	Ja	erwünscht	Augsburg
	alle A+B+D+I	Aufgabenbereich der digitalen					
	Studiengänge	Langzeitarchivierung und des Records Management					
9	Bachelor Archiv oder Diplom	Archivar	Nein	Nein	Ja	erwünscht	Augsburg
10	Bachelor Archiv oder Diplom	Archivarin/Archivar (miwid) für den	Nein	Ja	Ja	erwünscht	Augsburg
		Aufgabenbereich der digitalen					
		Langzeitarchivierung und des Records Managements					
11	Höherer Dienst und Promotion erwünscht	Amts- und Archivleitung	Ja	Ja	Ja	Berufserfahrung zwingend ohne w. A.	Augsburg

Archive types	No. of vacancies	No. of temporary jobs	German archives' labor market
Municipal archives (districts and towns)	128	103	
State archives (in all 16 federal states)	119	57	
Research archives	27	7	
Business archives	22	11	
Ecclesiastical archives	13	8	
Foundations archives	13	2	
University archives	8	3	
Media archives	6	2	
Hospital archives	3	3	
Library archives	2	0	
<i>Totals:</i>	<i>341</i>	<i>196</i>	

203

Table 2.
Number of relevant
jobs in the study

City	No. of postings	Table 3. Recruitment numbers by city
Stuttgart	14	
Hamburg	10	
Koblenz	9	
Potsdam	9	
Hanover	8	
Marburg	8	
Wiesbaden	8	
Munich	6	
Frankfort	6	
Düsseldorf	6	
Dresden	6	
Freiburg	5	

The name of the employer was not documented due to privacy protection; instead, the archive type in column A was used.

This study does not claim to cover all of the 2019 vacancies, and therefore is not a complete overview. However, we can assume that the majority of German employers posted their relevant vacant positions on these archives' web portals and print to reach all qualified applicants; especially as according to German regulations for public employers, all job opportunities must be formally and widely disseminated. They do so to guarantee a fair and open selection process, to enhance competition, to increase chances for applicants and to avoid discrimination against disabled persons and minority populations, such as immigrants or refugees. More detailed information about the reasons behind recruitment and available positions was not within the scope of this study.

Background

The influence of regional archival professional associations on the national labor market should not be underestimated, especially around questions related to the need for more employees in archives to face challenges like digitization. For example, middle German archivists recently founded the Association of Lower Saxony Archivists (*Verband Niedersächsischer Archivarinnen und Archivare e.V.* or VNA). The Association subsequently issued the "Göttingen Declaration on the State of Archives in Lower Saxony" and as a consequence contacted the heads and leaders of numerous archives and similar

institutions throughout Lower Saxony. The Association advised them of the urgent need for an effective and efficient archival program for electronic records and on the importance of recruiting suitable candidates for these challenges (VNA, 2019).

The special German archival job system

German archival jobs can normally be divided into three types:

- (1) Regular lower archival service posts, for which employers usually require a 3-year traineeship in Archives or Information Management after finishing at least a relevant secondary school degree like the German “Realschule” with 10 classes. Occasionally it is sufficient to have equivalent experience from a traineeship in related field/s. This job group fulfills basic archival services including records destruction, maintenance, minor description tasks and re-housing of materials. While it is fair to say that the title “lower” reflects less advanced duties, the work still provides fundamental support to archives.
- (2) Upper archival service (UAS) posts, which require a certification (formerly a diploma of archives, now a bachelor’s degree) in archival or information science/studies (AS) from a public school or in exceptional cases, a bachelor in history or historical studies. A formal AS degree can be obtained in Germany only at the University of Applied Sciences in Potsdam. Degrees in information science and related fields are available at many more locations. In addition to this, the German state and federal archives offer a tough highly competitive civil service training program, which provides better job security for applicants than for those coming from the public education system. Civil service candidates study at the Central Archives School in Marburg (Archivschule Marburg) or in the AS degree program at the University of Applied Studies. UAS positions lead to upper management and leadership track and are responsible for archival duties including overseeing the entire records appraisal process from ministry transfer to final archives accessioning, providing reports to supervisors on all archival issues, leading public relations (dealing with public policy issues, press/media and advocating for the archives) and conducting archives audits.
- (3) Higher archival service (HAS) which, at a minimum requires a master’s degree in History, Law or related subject; and often requires an additional PhD, DPhil or Dr iur; this is the only formal entrance requirement because these applicants also undergo fierce competition to get a place within the Archivschule Marburg. In addition, they must already work in a state or federal archive. In exceptional circumstances, entrance into the HAS track can be successfully earned by formal study in history and job promotion; or a diploma from a post-graduate public program in AS with a master’s degree (currently only possible in a 3-year program of study at the graduate school in Potsdam).

The HAS incumbents have the best opportunities to become the head of an archive with supervisory responsibility to delegate archival work to staff. Most heads of archives in Germany belong to this group and they have a strong community of practice and maintain relationships with German archival networks. The legitimacy of UAS and HAS positions are founded on state regulations ([Niedersachsen, 2013, 2014](#)) and in federal law ([die Bundesrepublik Deutschland, 2013, 2014, 2017, 2019](#)).

The AS program subjects at Marburg for both the UAS and HAS tracks are essentially the same, but the HAS requires additional management skills training, as well as

demanding historical records language skills, such as Latin and paleographic knowledge. The curriculum for the UAS and HAS includes the following subjects: the canon of AS courses (such as description and preservation), digital archives management, public relations, administrative science (business and public administration), archival law, "General Auxiliary" subjects such as diplomatics or genealogy; paleography, Latin and French. The UAS and HAS curricula are regulated by two recent ordinances ([Studienordnung, 2017a, 2017b](#)).

Results and analyzes

Number of vacancies

Over 2019, the author identified a total of 341 different job vacancies and postings for UAS and HAS positions that were advertised in known job portals. As absolute completeness could not be assured and several postings were undoubtedly unidentified, it can be assumed that there were more than 341 job postings in 2019. However, the long experience of the German archivists' use of the websites and print resources which have been included here implies that they are the most reliable and cover almost all regular job postings in German archives. The number of unidentified jobs is, therefore, expected to be minimal. The following table details results according to German archive types.

According to these results, the largest number of jobs were advertised for municipal archives, which currently exist in approximately 1,450 German towns, cities, districts and communities ([Orientierung, 2017](#)), with a total of 128 jobs posted. The federal government and state archives published a total of 119 positions. If we put the number of archives at the central federal (8) and the level of the federal states (the 16 separate higher authorities) at 24, statistically five positions per archive were advertised, although half of them were initially offered to candidates as a temporary job with the possibility of longer-term employment. Among these was one professorship in AS at the University of Applied Sciences in Potsdam, but this post was limited to a one-year temporary assignment.

There was also a positive (but smaller) trend reflected in research and business archives (49 posts). In ecclesiastical archives, which comprise approximately 119 institutions [2], there were comparably few postings (13 posts). Similarly, only small numbers of vacancies were advertised across university archives, media archives, hospital archives and archives within libraries (19 posts).

Municipal and state archives together accounted for 247 postings, which comprised over 70% of UAS and HAS level jobs. It is an obvious conclusion that the need for skilled workers at these archives was recognized in 2019 in contrast to the trends of previous years. This is a clear indicator of the growth of the labor market because the 2017 numbers for archives postings showed 93 ads and then 117 ads in 2018 ([Central German Job Office \(Nuremberg\), 2020](#)).

Types of vacancies

Overall, the percentage of permanent contracts for the selected candidates within the 341 positions advertised in 2019 was relatively high at 42.5%, but it otherwise shows that almost every second advertised position, at least for the period of the entrance into the job, remained temporary (and therefore limited) according to the vacancy text and job description. The following reasons for temporary jobs were given in the job descriptions: parental leave replacements/cover, temporary projects with a duration between 1 and 5 years or no stated reason. However, in comparison to the precarious labor market in Germany for archivists over the past two decades, the number of permanent contracts is still an improvement, providing more stability for candidates and employees, especially those

pursuing social stability and a work-life balance in which their free time and family is much more important than being a workaholic. Obviously, there was a strong need for skilled workers in many municipal and state archives over the entirety of 2019.

Of the 341 postings, 249 were for UAS positions and 92 (just over a quarter) for HAS jobs). Comparing 2019 to previous years, the UAS market has developed remarkably quickly: 2014 = 120 postings, 2017 = 174 postings and 2018 = 214 postings, so 2019 continued this growth pattern. This also happened with the HAS market, as 2014 = 69 postings, 2017 = 54 postings and 2018 = 70 postings (this data only includes postings to the Archivschule portal which contains the majority of postings from known websites (Uhde, 2020)). So, 2019 continued to reflect the development of high-level work and concomitant skill sets of concern to archives when looking to hire suitable candidates. It is remarkable that municipal archives advertised for 52 head of archives positions. Some were newly created positions within older institutions; others were to replace someone leaving an existing position. Some of the newly created archival leader positions were for communities in which a corresponding position was set up at that level. In terms of the latter, it is likely that additional jobs will be advertised in the next few years, as the new leaders create archival infrastructure for the first time and seek to staff their organizations. The fact that both municipal and state archives urgently need specialist staff is reflected in the 63 positions that were advertised in municipal archives and by the 48 positions in the state archives which formally offer candidates better job safety when they are declared state civil servants so that compared to the past, better personal perspectives in careers for applicants emerged (Uhde, 2020). More archival management personnel were also sought for science and business archives than in the recent past. Altogether, there were high-quality job postings for UAS and HAS archival staff in 2019.

Work experience and academic requirements

In many job postings, the “desired” requirements often included previous professional experience. Indeed, work experience was mandatory for 72 of the total positions, especially for the HAS-level managerial positions. An additional 12 positions were advertised to “young professionals” after their formal training or studies. Therefore, 75% of all of the positions offered applicants the opportunity to apply for a position without making professional experience or training in archives compulsory. Employers expressed more interest in the academic and training qualifications that the applicants had to offer than in their lack of work experience. These educational requirements ranged from a bachelor’s degree in AS to a doctorate/PhD in history and related subjects. In 59 of the job posts, municipal archives required civil service training from the Marburg school for a career in the UAS track or, alternately, a bachelor’s degree or a diploma in AS as a minimum prerequisite to employment. In total, 26 positions provided the opportunity to apply with a bachelor’s degree in history. In total, 27 archives also accepted any degree out of the range of “ABDI” (archive-library-documentation-information) fields. In total, 11 HAS-track positions still required a doctorate (in any historical subject) in addition to completion of the Marburg civil service training.

However, whether employers were actually able to find suitable candidates who reliably met these rigorous requirements is a separate question; one that can be undertaken by following up with each hiring entity in another study, as it is beyond the scope of this one. Candidates with such high qualifications are generally needed in all types of archives and presumably, they would only leave their current employment for a better opportunity to climb higher on the career ladder. It is likely that their current employers would also have an

interest in retaining them. So, the professional stake in the vacancies is high and whether it has also been met in the employers' eyes would have to be separately researched.

This articulated need for archival specialists is remarkable because, in the past, archives rarely included people from different educational and professional backgrounds; and those who were hired to provide archival support often did not have suitable professional archival experience. When inexperienced people were hired it was often due to financial constraints of the employer and the broader problem of lack of awareness about archives and records management. People who were recruited into those positions were usually hired on temporary contracts, often to qualify out of unemployment by job agencies. This likely impacted the quality of their archival work and contributed to the overall disorganization of municipal archival services. However, the 2019 job postings in municipal and state archives show a willingness to mitigate this situation, which will be enhanced by hiring professional UAS and HAS-level archival staff who are prepared to take on all areas of archives and records management in the future, especially those surrounding digitization.

To hire at the HAS-level, state archives required a doctorate/PhD for 27 positions, a bachelor's degree or diploma for 26 jobs, an ABDI-related degree for 37 placements and a degree in history for 18 posts. There were only a few positions that accepted alternate humanities degrees (such as those in cultural studies) for an archives position. The large number of postings requiring a degree in the wide field of ABDI shows that state archives are gradually placing more trust in broader information science education in addition to the traditional AS so that archives can better cope with future challenges to the profession.

Ecclesiastical archives almost always required a minimum of a bachelor's degree or a diploma in AS, while the media, business and foundation archives usually accepted ABDI degrees and/or a history degree as the baseline requirement for an expression of interest in their jobs.

It is noteworthy that 294 (86%) of all the positions were advertised as full-time. Only 14% of the positions for entry-level were part-time. Again, this is a remarkable improvement, after decades of a majority of part-time jobs often regarded as precarious for employees who need to be able to plan more securely for their private life and future.

All of the job postings and vacancies in UAS and HAS tracks required high levels of training and some work experience in the archival profession and in addition, often some in related studies. From an archivist's point of view, there is reason to hope that because of their experience and training, the staff hired in the near future will be able to implement measures to progress and improve existing problematic situations in some archives, (particularly those at the municipal level).

With additional qualified staff, state archives could deliver much higher quality work than the current human resources situation often allows. For example, improvements could be made to cataloging and descriptive work or in records management within the administrative institutions from which the state archives receive records. So, there is a lot to be achieved by future archivists, which the next section of this paper will elucidate.

Work responsibilities and geographic locations

Work areas and responsibilities delineated in the study's data set of job postings can be divided into three different areas for the 280 UAS and HAS level roles:

- (1) traditional archival tasks such as the areas of records transfer, appraisal, description, preservation and patron/public services; activities applied to both analog and digital records and data.

- (2) implementation of long-term digital archiving systems in policy and practice, usually with the final aim of establishing a digital preservation program.
- (3) the organization of an administrative registry, with all the attendant tasks of records management for the creator institutions or organizations related to the archives – in Germany archivists taking on responsibility for records administration is a newer development within the past decade (and not yet adopted everywhere), so this field of responsibility must be further promoted in the future.

These three areas cover the general professional activities of an archivist. In total, 82% of this subset (280) of postings included the more traditional activities. The fact that the need for long-term digital archival systems will become increasingly important for many German archives and authorities was expressed in 218 of the job ads. In terms of the third category, there were 165 positions posted that outlined tasks related to records management and registry work, which leads us to conclude that the need for managing active and inactive records before they may be transferred to archives is considered to be important by administrators. A total of 165 positions included all three areas in one position, which corresponds to the wide range of tasks outlined in almost every posted ad. It should be noted that this study had no way to determine whether the selected candidate will carry out all of the tasks outlined in the description and information about the job activities, as it is difficult to predict how day-to-day business will actually be carried out. However, analysis definitively revealed that the German archives have made and continue to make considerable progress in seeking new skill sets, especially in the second and third areas (digital archives and records management).

The geographic spread of locations of the archives that posted vacancies is distributed across the entire country, but with some areas of concentration. An archives' location is often an important motivation for a candidate's application, as it can impact their entire career plan and personal life. For example, the capital city and state of Berlin which contains an extremely diverse and very special archival landscape (a mix of multi-level government and historic cultural archives), clearly offers more prospects than do other German cities. A total of 50 positions (43 postings plus an additional 7 positions at archives looking for more than 1 employee) across all archive types were posted in the capitol in Berlin. This corresponds to the social milieu of the metropolis in contrast to other German cities, especially, as Berlin offers such a wide variety of attractive professional opportunities.

In other German cities recruitment numbers were as follows.

In addition, there were over 20 cities and communities from all regions of Germany with one to four advertised positions in 2019. Obviously that year Berlin offered the largest selection of archives jobs for UAS and HAS applicants. The capital is not quite a goldmine for archivists looking for a job after their studies or who want to make a change from their current employer archive, but in 2019 it offered the best opportunities, with which the other three cities (Munich, Hamburg and Cologne) with over a million inhabitants, (and which also have large cultural and archive scenes), could not compete.

Archivist salaries and job titles

Salary or income level also plays a large role in the attractiveness of the desired job and is often the most important factor for applicants from all professional groups in the world's labor market. In Germany there exist special fixed and negotiated salary tables for civil service jobs to which the municipal and states archives adhere. The tables do not differ very much between the federal states. Business and other types of archives such as foundations often have their own private salary structures.

In many postings, it was possible to analyze the income and salaries using the information from the relevant salary group according to the active public service salary tables for federal states and municipalities. Generally, the salary groups for civil service employees are the result of collective bargaining negotiations (between employers and employee representatives such as trade unions), which are valid for a specified time period (Civil Service Salary Tables, 2019).

There are normally 15 salary groups from the lowest (E1) to the highest (E15) pay group; for permanent civil servants, there is a similar salary table that uses groups A1 to A15. The salaries for each group can only differ minimally from state to state. For the UAS track, salaries in groups E9 – E13g (g= special lower grade like a “border” to the full E 13 in HAS) are negotiated; and the HAS track uses groups E13 to E15. Within every group, there are vertical steps from 1 up to 6 depending on years of job experience. Normally the entrance level on the lowest UAS rung is in group E9 at step 1, indicating that the candidate is without previous archival job experience. Although the group and step vary for each and every hire, a candidate can expect to earn an annual income of about 40,000 € upon formal entrance to the EG9 step 1 on a full-time basis.

This information is in keeping with the information on entrance salaries for university graduates in other work sectors whose salaries are researched annually by different institutions in Germany [3]. The archival entrance salary is absolutely in line with the average in other sectors, so the job of an archivist remains attractive, especially if it is on a full-time basis with a permanent appointment.

Municipal archives offered 92 positions with pay equivalent to the UAS track and 22 positions in the HAS track. The state archives make information about its salaries available for over 90% of its vacancies, but the remainder included no salary information, forcing applicants to personally request that information. State archives advertised 47 positions according to HAS salary scales and 66 according to UAS salary scales.

In over 90% of their advertisements, vacancies for business archives did not contain any information about salary and benefits, so we assume that they have to be directly negotiated between the candidate and the employer.

The increased use of archives-specific job titles in and outside Germany has been sporadically noted by researchers since the early twentieth century (Meisner, 1930, 1934; Fürst, 1930; Menne-Haritz, 1992; Abdelaziz, 2017; Keitel, 2018). An analysis of exact titles and accurate task descriptions reveals the power and influence of a particular position and increases its authenticity, and therefore it was interesting to examine the actual terminology used for the positions in the advertised vacancies.

These labels are often combined with the specific job title, such as City Archivist, State Archivist and Scientific Archivist. Only four postings were identified with the title of Records Manager, but the term Archivist for “Digital Long-Term Archiving [Preservation]” was identified in 18 postings. Similar postings used terms such as document manager, historian and information manager. These vacancy announcements included a large number of more varied terms for the job title of Archivist than in the past, which bolsters the impression that this sector’s job market now recognizes digital records and archives work and is also increasingly open to incorporating candidates from allied disciplines.

Conclusions and further questions

As a German archivist, the author has extrapolated several lessons learned and a number of open questions from the results of this study. A select few are considered and discussed below, which include what was the final focus of the study and which conclusions can be made regarding the current job situation in the archival labor market?

Vacancy advertisements and job descriptions

It would be interesting to better understand who in the recruiting institutions and organizations designs the job descriptions for newly established archival positions. Have they followed the best practices of other archives or received support from archive advice centers or nearby archives? Creating a new job description requires a deep knowledge of the content and context of the records and documents of the respective institution, as well as understanding the relevant archival duties. Therefore, the author paid special attention to those new job advertisements that demonstrated a weaker understanding (for example, these which tended to provide a lower salary or outlined more tasks than one person could ever fulfill). The comprehensiveness of the content is very important, but in some cases, an archive professional would have seen that the job duties as described as impractical or even unfeasible.

Recruitment processes

In addition, in most cases the vacancies studied here did not provide deeper information on the personnel selection process (e.g. duration of a job interview, complex assessment center, practical exercises) as normally applicants get this information bypassing the preselection. However, it would be much easier for the applicants to prepare themselves if they knew more about the selection process in advance. This lack of information can scare off interested parties and should be addressed going forward.

Salary levels

Different salary levels for essentially the same jobs and duties were often noticeable in the job vacancies. Payment and salary scales for a city archivist with near-identical job profiles even ranged from a UAS E9 to a HAS E15. Although salary tables remain very consistent, similar jobs were assigned to different salary groups and steps in different locations. Objective demographic reasons (e.g. number of inhabitants in the municipality, financial resources) do not always provide an explanation for this strong differentiation. Likewise, in some cases, digitization activities were only rated as a UAS E9, while in others those positions were categorized up to UAS E13, making the latter far more attractive.

Qualifications

In many archives, candidates with a master's degree or comparable candidates for advertised diploma or bachelor's positions courses are used to boost salaries (In other words, "over-qualified" candidates may make higher salaries). Here lies the question of fairness of remuneration, which should offer the same money for the same tasks and duties, notwithstanding job demographics or candidate qualifications. This issue should be further explored through confidential consultation with individual employers, as it seems there is no uniform standard of assigning salary scales.

Due to the precarious labor market situation in recent years, even doctoral candidates/PhDs have accepted positions within the archives service for which a bachelor's degree formally would have been sufficient, as in several cases at the author's workplace; and as is well-known throughout the German archival community. The precarious labor market in humanities, (as opposed to in the natural sciences), might explain why highly qualified academics might accept a non-academic job with lower pay than their degrees might otherwise warrant. In this respect, the qualifications are often only a minimum requirement which does not necessarily exclude other higher qualification levels *per se*.

On the other hand, advertisements for master's graduates in AS or additional archival qualifications for those studying allied subjects were still hard to find. Here it will be

necessary to find out why many employers prefer a bachelor's degree, diploma or (occasionally) other career qualifications, although the work activities of a position also necessitate a master's degree. Establishing the option to study archives at German universities other than Potsdam within allied programs [4] or at least the addition of significant parts of AS to the curricula of historical disciplines, could also send positive signals toward a more stable labor market in response to the broadening of acceptable qualifications for recent job openings.

Candidate pools. Due to the recognized internationalization of the federal administration and economy and the active recruitment of foreign archive and records management specialists, it would even be advantageous to add a second version of the postings in the English language and to advertise on prominent international job portals in European countries to a greater degree. In English-speaking countries in particular (especially the UK), there is a much more specialized academic records management training course than in Germany, but its graduates do not always find permanent jobs due to a tight labor market. If the job market continues to develop in a positive way, German archives should consider taking chances in special cases to look further afield and consider foreign candidates, especially if their knowledge and language skills would be an asset to the job itself. In Germany, every citizen of the European Union (EU) can apply as German citizens and residents may for a public job. As restrictions on non-EU citizens have been remarkably attenuated in Germany, others can apply if they have an estimated income of at least about 50,000€ per annum [5], which is certainly a realistic expectation for UAS and HAS positions.

It can be expected that many of the advertised positions in 2019 have recruited well-qualified specialists in AS. That means that these graduates, as well as those from liberal arts studies, had wider choices and far better opportunities and career options in the job market than ever before. In recent years there have only been around 15 annual graduates from the HAS and around 20 from the UAS (Uhde, 2019), so they are very popular; sometimes there is competition for their recruitment on the basis of their qualifications. Therefore, it is a job seeker's market and currently, none of these graduates should be unemployed. Due to the number of vacant positions, graduates from Potsdam and related programs should also have had good chances at the vacancies, but this can only be verified by separate research as Potsdam does not publish these statistics.

The calls for applications in the 2019 vacancies postings are undoubtedly a positive indicator of the current state of affairs for the appointment of specialists in the German archives sector. It demonstrates the necessity of state, federal and municipal archives and also of science and economics archives, to maintain or even establish professionally managed archives for the future. While financial resources for recruitment were made available by employers in 2019, similar trends for the coming years remain to be seen. Whether or not the negative impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on many job sectors will affect the number and quality of archives postings in 2020 and onward, German archivists should not lose sight of monitoring the ongoing needs of the labor market.

Further research

The study results suggest that the archival job market would benefit from becoming a part of traineeships, courses and conferences; and even be included within AS curricula so as to ensure that current and future archivists are more familiar with it. This would also encourage them to reflect on the labor market within their own professional field and to support discourse within the archival community and with their international counterparts.

A better understanding of the aforementioned elements can also be used by specialized labor market institutions as research data for global comparisons of archival job development.

Within archives themselves, especially in their human resources sections, the study data may provide an advantage in planning for recruitment of archival staff. If similar studies of the labor market in Germany and abroad can continue to be sustained, this can also support the AS and records management profession as it continues to develop to meet the needs of the electronic workplace and digital archives.

Notes

1. For more information on retirement in the German public sector, [Stumpf and Ausbildung im \(2015\)](#), [Kretzschmar \(2010\)](#) and [Berlinger and Corinna \(2016\)](#).
2. Compare the overview against the number of all German ecclesiastical archives in: *Archive*, 2017.
3. For example, an important journal which regularly scrutinizes the German academic labor market, UNICUM BERUF – Das bundesweite Karrieremagazin is published seven times a year.
4. For example, the University of Leipzig, which has already integrated archival content into modules for their many history courses at: www.gko.uni-leipzig.de/fileadmin/user_upload/historisches_seminar/01geschaefsfuehrung/KVVs/KVV_WS_19_20.pdf (accessed in December 2020).
5. Further information on entering the German labor market can be found at from the German Foreign Ministry at: www.auswaertiges-amt.de/de/service/fragenkatalog-node/01-arbeitsmoeglichkeiten/606314

References

- Abdelaziz, A.M. (2017), "International trends in standardizing archival terminology: the multilingual archival terminology (MAT) as a model in comma", *International Journal on Archives*, No. 2, pp. 135-161.
- Berlinger, U. and Corinna, F. (2016), "Anna niesing und anna biechele: branchenanalyse öffentlicher dienst der länder: eine untersuchung zur arbeitssituation aus sicht der beschäftigten", Study no. 327, Mai Hans-Böckler-Stiftung, available at: www.boeckler.de/pdf/p_study_hbs_327.pdf
- Central German Job Office (Nuremberg) (2020), Statistics, available at: <https://statistik.arbeitsagentur.de/Navigation/Statistik/Statistische-Analysen/Interaktive-Visualisierung/Berufe-auf-einen-Blick/Berufe-auf-einen-Blick-Anwendung-Nav.html>; and <https://statistik.arbeitsagentur.de/Navigation/Statistik/Statistik-nach-Themen/Arbeitslose-und-gemeldetes-Stellenangebot/Gemeldete-Stellen/Gemeldete-Arbeitsstellen-Nav.html> (accessed December 2020).
- die Bundesrepublik Deutschland (2017), "Verordnung über den vorbereitungsdienst für den höheren archivdienst des bundes vom 19", Juni 2017 (BGBl. I S. 1896, 1897).
- die Bundesrepublik Deutschland (2013), "Verordnung über die ausbildung und prüfung für den archivdienst in der laufbahngruppe 2 der fachrichtung allgemeine dienste (APVO-AD-Archiv) vom 7", Januar.
- die Bundesrepublik Deutschland (2014), "Verordnung vom 20.08.2014 (nds. GVBl. S. 248.)".
- die Bundesrepublik Deutschland. (2019), "Zweite Verordnung zur Änderung der Verordnungen über den gehobenen und den höheren Archivdienst des Bundes vom 23", April (BGBl. I S. 517, 525-526).
- Englert, M. (2003), "Medien-Informationsmanagement: archivarisches, dokumentarisches, betriebswirtschaftliche, münster: rechtliche und Berufsbild-Aspekte ein beitrag zur analyse der professionalisierung in der informationsarbeit in: ARBIDO archiv bibliothek dokumentation, hrsg. von der vereinigung schweizer archivare", *Ausgabe*, Vol. 18 No. 2003, pp. 13-15.

- Fühles-Ubach, Simone, Seadle, M., Sato, E. and Kyngäs, H., (2013a), "The qualitative content analysis process in", *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, Vol. 62 No. 1, pp. 152-159.
- Fühles-Ubach, Simone, Seadle, M. and Wimmer, U. (2013b), "Comp. Script Methoden – Tutorium", *Weiterbildendes Fernstudium: Bibliotheks Und Informationswissenschaft, Humboldt Universität zu Berlin*, Vol. 15.
- Fürst, W. (1930), "Zur frage der archivischen fachausdrücke in", *Archivalische Zeitschrift*, Vol. 39 No. jg, pp. 274-281.
- Herget, J. and Norbert, L. (2003), "Informationsspezialisten in der wissenschaftsgesellschaft: neue qualifikationsprofile, bedarfsstrukturen und nachfragepotentiale des arbeitsmarktes, ein beitrag zur analyse der professionalisierung in der informationsarbeit", *ARBIDO Archiv Bibliothek Dokumentation*, Hrsg. von Der Vereinigung Schweizer Archivare, Vol. 18 No. 2003, available at: <http://docplayer.org/58742684-Informationsspezialisten-in-der-wissenschaftsgesellschaft-neue-qualifikationsprofile-bedarfsstrukturen-und-nachfragepotentiale-des-arbeitsmarktes.html>
- Keitel, C. (2018), "Zwölf wege ins archiv", *Umriss Einer Offenen Und Praktischen Archivwissenschaft, Stuttgart*, p. 202f.
- Kretzschmar, R. (2010), "Aktuelle Entwicklungstendenzen Des Archivarischen Berufsbilds", *Archivar*, Vol. 63 No. 3, pp. 356-360.
- Meisner, H.O. (1930), "Elemente der archivischen berufssprache", *Archivalische Zeitschrift*, Vol. 39 No. jg, pp. 260-273.
- Meisner, H.O. (1934), "Archivarische berufssprache", *Archivalische Zeitschrift*, Vols 42/43 No. jg, pp. 260-280.
- Menne-Haritz, A. (1992), "Schlüsselbegriffe der archivterminologie, lehrmaterialien für das fach archivwissenschaft (veröffentlichungen der archivschule marburg, band 20)", *Marburg*, p. 11.
- Mertens, N. (2013), "Fallstudien", *Handbuch Methoden Der Bibliotheks- Und Informationswissenschaft: Bibliotheks, Benutzerforschung, Informationsanalyse*, K.G. Saur Verlag.
- Niedersachsen (2014), "Arbeitgeber mit vielfalt", (Lower Saxony regional job portal, available at: <https://karriere.niedersachsen.de> (accessed December 2019).
- Niedersachsen. (2013). "Verordnung über die ausbildung und prüfung für den archivdienst in der laufbahngruppe 2 der fachrichtung allgemeine dienste (apvo-ad-archiv) vom 7. januar, and Verordnung vom 20.08.2014 (Nds GVBl. S. 248).
- Orientierung (2017), in diesen Zahlen erfolgt an: Archive in Deutschland, Österreich und der Schweiz, Adressenverzeichnis 2017/2018, hrsg. vom Ardey-Verlag in Zusammenarbeit mit dem VdA-Verband deutscher Archivarinnen und Archivare e.V., 24. Auflage, Münster.
- Sachau, M. and Ralph, S. (2001), "Die Hamburg-Connection: qualifizierung, arbeitsmarkt und berufsstart diplomierter", *Medien-Informationsmanager in Journal Info 16 Info*, Vol. 7, Medien, Archive, Information, pp. 40-46.
- Schmerbauch, M. (2019), "Requirements for archives and records management jobs in international organizations with focus on united nations – a job analysis of the vacancy announcements in 2016", *Comma, International Journal on Archives*, Vol. 2017 No. 2, pp. 125-134.
- Studienordnung (2017a), "Für die fachstudien an der archivschule marburg – hochschule für archivwissenschaft – im rahmen der ausbildung des gehobenen archivdienstes vom 4", August.
- Studienordnung (2017b), "Für das referendariat im höheren archivdienst an der archivschule marburg – hochschule für archivwissenschaft vom 10", Dezember.
- Stumpf, M. (2019), "Archivar*in steckbrieflich gesucht? Herausforderungen der nachwuchsgewinnung heute und morgen", in: *Archiv-Nachrichten Niedersachsen*, Vol. 23, pp. 9-17.
- Stumpf, M., Ausbildung Im, W. and, (2015), "Eine kommunalarchivische position", *Archivar*, Vol. 68 No. 4, pp. 325-328, available at: www.archive.nrw.de/sites/default/files/media/files/Archivar_4_2015.pdf
- Uhde, K. (2019), "Aus-, fort- und weiterbildung an der archivschule marburg in zeiten des", *Qualifikationsnotstands in Archiv-Nachrichten Niedersachsen*, Vol. 23, pp. 18-25.

- Uhde, K. (2020), "Der stellenmarkt für archivariinnen und archivare (2006-2018)", *Der Archivar. Zeitschrift Für Archivwesen*, Vol. 3, pp. 271-274, Kommunikation – Daten im Dialog und Dissens.
- Werner, P. (2013), *Qualitative Befragungen in: Handbuch Methoden Der Bibliotheks- Und Informationswissenschaft: Bibliotheks, Benutzerforschung, Informationsanalyse*, K.G. Saur Verlag.

Further reading

- Archivar "The magazine of the german association of archivists", available at: www.archive.nrw.de/archivar (accessed December 2019).
- Archive in Deutschland, Österreich und der Schweiz, Adressenverzeichnis 2017/2018, hrsg. vom Ardey-Verlag in Zusammenarbeit mit dem VdA-Verband deutscher Archivarinnen und Archivare e.V., 24. Auflage, Münster 2017.
- Archivschule, M. (accessed December 2019), available at: www.archivschule.de
- Augias job market (accessed December 2019), available at: www.augias.de
- Federal Civil Service Salary Tables, available at: <https://bezugerechner.bva.bund.de/> (accessed in December 2020).
- Freund, S. (2019), "Fachkräfte gesucht – strategien und zukunftsvisionen des potsdamer modells", *Studienangebote Des Fachbereichs Informationswissenschaften in: Archiv-Nachrichten Niedersachsen*, Vol. 23 No. 5, pp. 26-35.
- Interamt, available at: <https://interamt.de> (accessed December 2019).
- Job exchange labor office, available at: <https://jobboerse.arbeitsagentur.de> (accessed December 2019).
- Kimeta, available at: www.kimeta.de (accessed December 2019).
- Openbibliojobs, available at: <https://jobs.openbiblio.eu> (accessed December 2019).
- States Civil Service Salary Tables, available at: <https://oeffentlicher-dienst.info> (accessed in December 2020).
- Verband Niedersächsischer Archivarinnen und Archivare e.V (2019), "Göttinger erklärung zur lage des archivwesens in Niedersachsen", available at: www.vna-online.de/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/G%C3%B6ttinger-Erkl%C3%A4rung.pdf (accessed in December 2020).
- Wirtschaftsarchive, available at: www.wirtschaftsarchive.de (accessed December 2019).

Corresponding author

Maik Schmerbauch can be contacted at: schmeichi@web.de