UNIVERSITY OF SUSSEX

1 Advertisement

Post Title: Research Technician - Insect Ecology and Behaviour

School/department: School of Life Sciences
Hours: part time hours considered up to a maximum of 27.4 hours per week. Requests for flexible working options will be considered (subject to business need).
Contract: fixed term for 34 months
Reference: 9443
Salary: starting at £27,131 per annum, pro rata if part time
Placed on: 02 September 2022
Closing date: 29 September 2022 .Applications must be received by midnight of the closing date.
Expected Interview date: TBC
Expected start date:1 March 2023

We wish to appoint a research technician to work on the NERC-funded project "Living at the edge: causes and consequences of individual variation in a changing world".

The project studies the effects of landscape fragmentation on behaviour, physiology, morphology, life history and related traits (and their covariation) in a forest-living ground beetle species using individuals living at an edge of a habitat and those at a core. The project combines both experimental and correlative approaches and applies a wide range of methods in the field and laboratory. These range from enclosure experiments, translocations, radio-telemetry, and behavioural and physiological assays.

You will be supervised by Dr Wiebke Schuett (Project Lead) and Prof Jeremy Niven (both School of Life Sciences) and will work closely with other members of the research team, including a postdoctoral research fellow and a PhD student.

Candidates would ideally have a BSc in animal behaviour, ecology or an allied biological science. We expect a highly motivated, talented, well-organised and meticulous candidate with experience in behavioural observations and excellent team-working ability. The candidate will have a background in one or more of behavioural ecology, insect physiology, evolution and/or ecology. Holding a Masters degree, having previous experience in collecting data in the field and/or of insect behaviour, in conducting physiological assays, in insect husbandry, and/or in genotyping is advantageous. Holding a driving license is desirable.

Potential candidates are strongly encouraged to make informal contact with Dr Wiebke Schuett (w.schuett@sussex.ac.uk; she/her) before applying.

Applications should be accompanied by a full CV, a cover letter (incl. motivation and how criteria are met) and the names of three academic referees.

For full details and how to apply see our vacancies page

June 2022

An overview of research within the theme of animal behaviour and ecology can be found at School of Life Sciences Evolution, Behaviour and Environment group.

The School of Life Sciences at the University of Sussex is at the forefront of research in the UK. In the recent Research Excellence Framework assessment (REF 2021), 100% of our Impact cases in Biological Sciences and Chemistry were rated as world-leading or internationally excellent. The School has received substantial recent University investment and is embarking on an exciting and extensive, multi-million pound refurbishment and improvement project.

The University of Sussex values the diversity of its staff and students and we welcome applicants from all backgrounds. The School of Life Sciences is committed to increasing the diversity of its staff and providing an inclusive working environment. The School currently holds an Athena SWAN Silver Award, has developed a Race Equity Action Plan and hosts an active Equality, Diversity and Inclusion working group. Applications are particularly welcomed from Black and minority ethnic candidates, and women, trans and non-binary candidates, who are under-represented in the School of Life Sciences.

Applications to posts from candidates who wish to work part-time or as job-sharers are welcome. The University offers various schemes to provide real benefits to parents, these can be found at Family Friendly Policies

2. The School of Life Sciences

The School of Life Sciences has a mission statement to understand the mechanisms that drive biological and chemical processes; to develop innovative and diverse approaches to enhance human health, technology and the environment. It undertakes research, teaching and engagement across a wide range of the Life Sciences, from Chemistry through a range of biological and medically-related areas to Conservation Biology. The breadth and depth of cutting-edge research and innovative teaching practice requires a diverse community who work across boundaries to deliver excellence. Multidisciplinarity is a key strength at Sussex, and the School of Life Sciences is part of two collaborative cross-School funded Strategic Research Programmes: Sussex Neuroscience (SN) and the Sussex Sustainability Research Programme (SSRP). Sussex Neuroscience brings together broad-ranging neuroscience approaches from the Schools of Life Sciences, Psychology, Engineering and Informatics, as well as the Brighton and Sussex Medical School. SSRP brings together Life Sciences, Global Studies and the University of Sussex Business School to address the United Nations sustainable development goals.

The School of Life Sciences is the largest in the University in terms of research activity, with an annual research income of around £13 million. The School has a teaching and research faculty of around 90, over 140 research staff, and an administrative team of around 20. The School is structured into five Departments led by a Head of Department. These are Biochemistry & Biomedicine, Genome Damage and Stability Centre, Neuroscience, Evolution, Behaviour & Environment and Chemistry, working closely with the Sussex Drug Discovery Centre. The Head of School Professor Sarah Guthrie leads the Head of School Executive, which includes two Deputy Heads of School (one focussed on research and enterprise, the other on education), the School Administrator and the Director of Technical Services. Wider School organisation and administration is overseen by the School Management Committee, which includes the Heads of Departments and others in Directorship roles.

Our School aims to develop scientists that are able to connect with global issues and develop innovative solutions to the challenges that face the planet. We therefore work to ensure that our research positively impacts our local community, the economy and society as a whole. We have and continue to develop relationships with business, policy and community partners ranging from local SMEs to large scale multinational organisations. Academics, researchers, and students at all levels are encouraged to engage with non-academic partners through activities such as technology and skills sharing, licencing IP, contract research or consultancy, working closely with colleagues in the Sussex Innovations and Business Partnership team.

In the recent Research Excellence Framework (REF2021), 90.6% of our Biological Sciences outputs and 84.8% of our Chemistry outputs were rated as world-leading or internationally excellent. In both areas, 100% of our Impact cases were rated as world-leading or internationally

excellent. We are proud that our research has diverse impact that includes enabling and enhancing diagnosis of cancer and rare genetic diseases, using novel chemical methods to produce new medicines, saving endangered species, influencing policy and practice in pesticide use to protect bees and establishing conservation, economic and health initiatives in Papua New Guinea and Ecuador.

Our vibrant post-graduate research community is made up of around 130 PhD students who are key to our success, undertaking cutting-edge research across all our areas of interest in the Life Sciences. We are part of a number of cross-School and multi-partner PhD programmes: the Sussex Neuroscience PhD programme, 2 Leverhulme-funded Doctoral Scholarship programmes (*Sensation and Perception to Awareness* and *Biomimetic Embodied AI*), the UKRI funded *UK Food Systems* Centre for Doctoral Training and the BBSRC *South Coast Biosciences (SoCoBio)* Doctoral Training Partnership.

The School's teaching is firmly based on our research excellence and offers students an intellectually stimulating and supportive experience, with opportunities for personal research experience and use of modern technology to enhance learning. The School has a population of around 1500 undergraduates studying a range of subjects across the School's expertise. For each degree we offer a 3-year BSc and a 4-year integrated Masters (MSci or MChem). We also offer a Life Sciences Foundation Year, which is ideally suited for students whose A-level (or equivalent) qualifications don't meet the requirements for direct entry on to our BSc/MSci degrees. We have a population of around 85 postgraduate taught students undertaking MSc or MRes courses across our subject expertise.

The School is committed to the University's core values of kindness, integrity, inclusion, collaboration and courage. The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee (with representation on the School Management Committee) promotes and encourages our values across the School, championing initiatives that meet the University's goals of being Equal, Diverse, Accessible and Flexible. We currently hold an Athena SWAN Silver Award and have a BAME Awarding Gap Committee who closely liaise with the University's Race Equality Charter committee. The School also hosts a wellbeing room and a multi-faith prayer room within its estate and the University supports the Trans Rights are Human Rights UK initiative. We believe that equality, diversity and inclusion is everyone's business and aim to provide a friendly and supportive environment for all who work, study and visit the School of Life Sciences.

3. Job Description and Person Specification

Job Title:	Research Technician in Insect Ecology and Behaviour
Grade:	Grade 5
School:	School of Life Sciences
Location:	JMS Building, School of Life Sciences, University of Sussex, BN1 9QG, Brighton
Responsible to:	Principal Investigator, dotted line to the Head of Technical Services
Direct reports:	n/a
Key contacts:	Members of research group: Dr Wiebke Schuett, Prof Jeremy Niven, members of faculty within the School and University
Purpose of the post:	To provide and oversee the delivery of effective high quality research support relating to field and laboratory work on insect ecology and behaviour. The provision of technical assistance and advice to research project staff and students to facilitate the investigation and output of a project group or groups.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Provide technical assistance and advice to staff and students on the preparation of resources, materials, setting-up of equipment, instruments and use of specialised techniques for recognised researchers and research groups within the institution.
2. Carry out experiments and ensure that lab results are prepared and collated correctly for interpretation by the Principal Investigator.
3. Liaise with the supervisor on a regular basis to discuss results and project progression/direction.
4. Ensure that safe working practises are adhered to in line with relevant local and legal requirements. Undertaking basic risk or other safety assessments as required under the supervision of the Principal Investigator or supervisor.
5. Order apparatus and materials and maintain adequate stock levels within policies laid down.
6. Carry out budgeting and cost control to the instruction of, and within limits laid down by, the Principal Investigator.
7. Responsible for ensuring that the tidiness and the provision of the laboratory/laboratories is maintained at all times.
8. Assist in the planning and organising of resources for the running of the general laboratory/laboratories.
9. Generate reagents and research tools for general use by laboratory.
10. Assist with the development and modification of equipment and apparatus, or experimental systems, under the supervision of the Principal Investigator or supervisor.
11. Carry out the regular first line maintenance tasks or minor repairs on all project equipment and resources to ensure reliable and safe working practice. Reporting all faults, ensuring that repairs are carried out and records are kept up to date.
12. Prepare and maintain adequate laboratory records of methods, sample details and results in a timely fashion within specific research project(s).
13. Instruct, train and guide technical staff and students in techniques and operation of particular equipment / apparatus as directed by a supervisor or member of academic staff.
14. Attend laboratory meetings and communicate with other departmental staff on laboratory issues.
15. Participate in specialist networks and undertake development activities where necessary in order to keep knowledge and skills up to date and relevent for subject specialism. Apply working knowledge of theory and practice, sharing this knowledge with others as appropriate.
16. Basic supervision of other technical staff may be required within own area of responsibility as directed by a supervisor or member of academic staff.

This Job Description sets out current duties of the post that may vary from time to time without changing the general character of the post or the level of responsibility entailed.

Project specific duties

This job description is not exhaustive but is a guide to the main functions and responsibilities of the post. It is subject to constant review in light of changes and development of the project. The post holder may be asked to undertake such duties as may be properly delegated following discussion and consultation.

1. Set-up and maintenance of field enclosures and other equipment for field and laboratory work
2. Provide support for setting up and using specialist equipment, e.g. respirometer for metabolic measurements
3. Data collection in the laboratory and in the field on insect behaviour, physiology, life history and morphology
4. Entry of collected data
5. Preparation and analysis of tissue samples for parentage analysis and genotyping (partly at the NERC Environmental Omics Facility in Sheffield (NEOF))
6. Insect husbandry
7. Basic supervision of students and research team on e.g. behavioural, physiological assays, morphological measurements and insect husbandry

PERSON SPECIFICATION

	Essential Criteria	**Desirable**
QUALIFICATIONS		
Usually educated to Level 3 - NVQ Level 3, BTEC award, certificate and diploma level 3, GCE AS and A Level, Advanced Diplomas (England)	X	
BSc or MSc in animal behaviour, ecology or an allied biological science		X
SKILLS/ABILITIES		
The ability to lead and motivate a small team	X	
Proven ability to work independently and use initiative where appropriate	X	
Ability to work flexibly within a small team	X	
Effective oral and written communications skills to work with colleagues and research team providing information and responding to questions and queries	X	
Competent IT skills to effectively manage own workload – MS Suite. Or other IT software relevant to role	X	
Proven ability to interpret guidelines, Standard Operating Procedures and Risks Assessments	X	
KNOWLEDGE		
Knowledge of health and safety procedures and practices relating to relevant area		X
Sufficient knowledge and/or expertise to work on day to day	X	

	Essential Criteria	Desirable
issues in area of animal behaviour, ecology and/or insect biology		
Working knowledge of laboratory skills in animal behaviour or ecology or insect husbandry	X	
EXPERIENCE		
Technical work experience relating to the area/department, acquired in relevant roles and job-related training	X	
Experience in behavioural or physiological assays	X	
Experience in insect husbandry		X
Experience in completing CoSHH and risk assessments		X
Previous supervision of trainees/students undertaking work tasks		X
Experience working in a university or similar environment		X
Experience conducting field work		X
Experience in preparing sample tissue and genotyping		X
Significant experience of working in animal behaviour or insect laboratory		X
PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES AND CIRCUMSTANCES		
Effective planning and organisational skills to organise own workload and priorities	X	
Competent in using specialised lab equipment	X	
Dependable and reliable	X	
Willingness to supervise, work as part of, and contribute, to a team	X	
Willing to coach and instruct other team members	X	
Flexibility to work outside normal hours if required	X	
Holder of a car driving licence		X
Ability to prioritise work to meet set deadlines	X	
Demonstrate continuous specialist development by acquiring relevant skills and competences for the post	X	
Able to develop understanding of long-standing and complex problems and to apply professional knowledge and experience to solve them	X	

"*Please note that this position may be subject to ATAS clearance if you require visa sponsorship.*"