



UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

CANDIDATE BRIEF

Research Fellow in Insect Behaviour, Faculty of Biological Sciences



Salary: Grade 7 (£33,797 – £40,322 p.a.).

Due to funding limitations it is unlikely an appointment will be made above £39,152.

Reference: FBSBY1129

Available on a fixed-term basis for 36 months. We will consider job share and flexible working arrangements.

Research Fellow in Insect Behaviour

School of Biology

Are you an ambitious researcher looking for your next challenge? Do you have an established background in animal behaviour and entomology? Do you want to further your career in one of the UKs leading research intensive Universities?

Studies in insects have highlighted physiological roles for seminal fluid proteins/peptides in influencing reproductive success by modulating female behaviour and physiology through interaction with the female nervous system. This project focuses on novel seminal fluid peptides of *Drosophila melanogaster* that are transferred to the female during copulation. We hypothesise that these exclusively male peptides serve as pheromones that manipulate post-mated female physiology and orchestrate behaviours to maximise paternal success and that these effects are mediated through neuronal circuits of the female brain. We have already chemically synthesised most of these peptides for injection into virgin females to observe behavioural responses and effects on reproductive fitness. In partnership with colleagues at GIST, Republic of Korea, we have generated flies allowing the expression of these male-only peptides in female tissues, including the brain.

You should have a PhD (or close to completion) in insect behaviour/physiology or a closely allied discipline, with experience in insect behaviour/physiology and an interest in the molecular basis of behaviour.

You should be familiar with a range of assays for insect behaviour and physiology. The male peptides will be introduced to virgin females, either by injection or by using the GAL4-UAS binary expression system, and the effects on the female will be monitored. The post does not require prior experience of genetic manipulation of *Drosophila*, since the project is a close collaboration with the Molecular Neuroethology group of [Professor Young-Joon Kim](#) at GIST. We expect that there will be opportunities to spend time at GIST during the tenure of the project. The post will also involve collaboration with [Dr Neil Audsley](#) (Newcastle University and FERA) on peptide receptor aspects of the project and with the mass spectrometry facility at the University of York for analysing expressed peptides in insect tissues.



What does the role entail?

As a Research Fellow, your main duties will include:

- Designing, planning and conducting a programme of investigation, in consultation with Professor Elwyn Isaac;
- Generating independent and original research ideas and methods in insect behaviour and reproductive physiology with an aim to extend the molecular ethology research portfolio;
- Making a significant contribution to the dissemination of research results by publication in leading peer-reviewed journals, and by presentation at national and international meetings;
- Working independently and as part of a larger team of researchers, both internally and externally, to develop new research links and collaborations and engage in knowledge transfer activities where appropriate;
- Contributing to the supervision of junior researchers and PhD students and acting as a mentor to less experienced colleagues;
- Evaluating methods and techniques used and results obtained by other researchers and relating such evaluations to your own research;
- To contribute to, and to encourage, a safe working environment.

These duties provide a framework for the role and should not be regarded as a definitive list. Other reasonable duties may be required consistent with the grade of the post.

What will you bring to the role?

As a Research Fellow, you will have:

- A PhD (or close to completion) in insect behaviour/physiology or a closely allied discipline;
- Experience in insect behaviour or physiology and an interest in the molecular basis of behaviour;
- Strong analytical skills, with the ability to work accurately and carefully, designing, executing and writing up research independently;
- A developing track record of peer reviewed publications in international journals;



- Excellent communication skills, both written and verbal, and the ability to communicate your research at national and international conferences;
- The ability to work well both independently and as part of a team;
- Strong initiative and a pro-active approach, with excellent organisational, planning and self-management skills, including the ability to prioritise workloads to meet deadlines/demand and deliver high quality under pressure;
- A strong commitment to your own continuous professional development.

You may also have:

- Experience in working with *Drosophila melanogaster*;
- Evidence of pursuing external funding to support research.

How to apply

You can apply for this role online; more guidance can be found on our [How to Apply](#) information page. Applications should be submitted by **23:59** (UK time) on the advertised closing date.

Your application should include:

- A supporting statement providing evidence to support each requirement listed on the 'What will you bring to the role' section of the Candidate Brief (no more than two sides of A4, minimum font size 11);
- An academic curriculum vitae, including a list of your publications.

Contact information

To explore the post further or for any queries you may have, please contact:

[Elwyn Isaac](#), Professor of Comparative Biochemistry

Tel: +44 (0)113 343 2903

Email: r.e.isaac@leeds.ac.uk (preferred means of contact during the pandemic restrictions).



Additional information

Working at Leeds

Find out more about the benefits of working at the University and what it is like to live and work in the Leeds area on our [Working at Leeds](#) information page.

The University of Leeds and the Faculty of Biological Sciences are committed to providing equal opportunities for all and offer a range of family friendly policies. The University is a charter member of Athena SWAN (the national body that promotes gender equality in higher education), and the Faculty of Biological Sciences was awarded a Silver award in 2020. We are proud to be an inclusive Faculty that values all staff, and are happy to consider job share applications and requests for flexible working arrangements from our employees. Our Athena SWAN webpage provides more information.

Candidates with disabilities

Information for candidates with disabilities, impairments or health conditions, including requesting alternative formats, can be found on our [Accessibility](#) information page or by getting in touch with us at disclosure@leeds.ac.uk.

Criminal record information

Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974

A criminal record check is not required for this position. However, all applicants will be required to declare if they have any 'unspent' criminal offences, including those pending.

Any offer of appointment will be in accordance with our Criminal Records policy. You can find out more about required checks and declarations in our [Criminal Records](#) information page.

