



# Social Rats

## 2 Postdoc Positions



University of  
St Andrews

## Origins of social competence and implications for wellbeing

Author list to be determined <sup>a</sup>

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### JOB INFO

#### History

Closing: 3 March 2023

Start: 1 June 2023

#### Keywords

Rats

Animal Behaviour

Animal Cognition

Cooperation

We are excited to announce **two postdoctoral researcher positions** for a BBSRC-funded research project. The aim of the project is to understand both the development and evolution of social competence (with a focus on cooperation) and its implications for wellbeing in rats. To this end, one of the positions will mainly focus on the **origins**, while the other will mainly focus on the **welfare** aspects. Both successful candidates will longitudinally study the **social behaviour of rats** in a large well-equipped rodent facility with the support of highly experienced technicians. Both positions are available for two years in the first instance, with the possibility of extending the position **up to 3.5 years** in total. Candidates will join the [Cooperation Lab](#), which is a growing international team, led by Dr Manon Schweinfurth. We are based in the [School of Psychology & Neuroscience](#) at the **University of St Andrews**. The lab is part of the [Origins of Mind Group](#) and the [Centre for Social Learning and Cognitive Evolution](#) and thus embedded in a vibrant interdisciplinary academic community, interested in similar research questions. A core principle of our lab is to not only study, but also to live cooperation.

**The position:** Under the supervision and mentorship of the PI, the successful candidates will have the opportunity to, for instance:

- Contribute to the care of a colony of rats
- Set up testing devices
- Liaise with colleagues and technicians
- Conduct behavioural experiments
- Record and code behavioural data
- Analyse and interpret (sometimes) large datasets
- Prepare and contribute to scientific publications
- Present research findings at academic meetings
- Contribute to outreach events
- Attend and contribute to lab activities

In addition, these positions are designed to encourage and support further academic qualification. For example, successful candidates will be able to take advantage of professional development programmes at the University of St Andrews. They are also encouraged to take on more senior responsibilities to prepare them to become PIs themselves, if mutually agreed and where appropriate.

**Your profile:** This work is exciting and will provide excellent research experience for the right person. Given the nature of the research and lab setting, we are looking for candidates who are collegial, dedicated, passionate

about science, enthusiastic about this topic, committed to the project, and empathic with animals. Further, we particularly encourage people from traditionally under-represented groups in our field to apply!

#### Essential criteria

- PhD (hold or close to) in relevant field
- Expertise in mechanisms underlying behaviour
- Experience with collecting behavioural data
- Experience in recording and analysing behavioural data, preferably in R
- Publication of papers in peer-reviewed journals or preprints
- Reliable, efficient, flexible, patient, and independent working ethos
- Good team spirit

#### Desirable criteria

- Expertise in the development of social behaviour
- Previous experience in designing experimental studies, preferably in rodents
- Involvement in studies under lab conditions
- Data analyses skills in social network analyses
- Project management skills

Please find here the entire job description and person specification for the [origins](#) and [welfare](#) position.

**Are you interested?** Then, we are very much looking forward to receiving your application, consisting of a motivation letter (outlining your interest, motivation, and relevant experiences), CV, and the names of two potential referees. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Dr [Manon Schweinfurth](#).

