

The University of Helsinki is an international scientific community of 40,000 students, faculty and other staff. It is one of the leading multidisciplinary research universities and ranks among the top 100 universities in the world.

The Organismal and Evolutionary Biology Programme is one of the three research programmes at the Faculty of Biological and Environmental Sciences. Most of its activities are centered at the Viikki campus where it comprises roughly 40 research groups which employ 40 principal investigators and 120 researchers.

Helsinki Urban Rat Project, an multidisciplinary research project, invites applications for a

POSTDOCTORAL RESEARCHER IN URBAN DISEASE ECOLOGY

in the Academy of Finland funded project “Urban rats as a model species for disease ecology” for a fixed term of four years, with six month trial period, starting at 1st September 2023.

Helsinki Urban Rat Project (HURP; <https://www.helsinki.fi/en/projects/urban-rats>) is a multidisciplinary research project, started in 2018, striving to understand how rats live in urban areas and how they interact with humans. The overarching aim of the project is more peaceful coexistence between humans and rats. We use a multitude of approaches from ecology to environmental policy research and visual arts. For this project, we have received funding from Academy of Finland to delve deeper into the effects of lethal rat control in the city areas. Urban rats encounter continuous population perturbations caused by pest management professionals’ actions. Interestingly, this pest management provides a potential pseudoexperimental setting in looking at the effects of population changes on rat movement, pathogen and parasite prevalence and population structure before and after treatment. While the core of the project is in disease ecology, it can be linked more towards movement ecology, population genetics, different pathogens or parasites or applied ecology in relation to the applicant’s interest. HURP has previously surveyed the pathogen and parasite diversity, tools for studying rat movement and city-level population dynamics and has established connections with stakeholders, including property-owners and pest management companies. Thus, this project presents an excellent position to perform highly impactful scientific work in multidisciplinary and societally relevant context.

We are looking for a candidate who is able to 1) help in recruiting field sites, 2) lead fieldwork, 3) lead pathogen analysis, 4) work with collaborators in collating other data and eventually 5) analyze and communicate these results in both scientific articles and to lay audiences such as stakeholders and local citizens. The candidate should have completed a PhD in a relevant field, such as zoology, ecology, wildlife biology, microbiology or virology. Previous experience on field work, pathogen analysis in lab, shown track record on publishing in international peer-reviewed journals and excellent communication skills (in English, Finnish and Swedish additional assets) are required. It is also possible that this position is filled with two persons with two-year contracts, where the first person concentrates on fieldwork and the second in lab work. Additional assets include driver’s license and license to perform animal experiments (e.g., FELASA C). We encourage applications from recently graduated PhD holders.

We strive to be a truly interdisciplinary project, thus interaction with biologists, social scientists and artists working within HURP may form a substantial part of the project and interest to interdisciplinary work is an asset. The project sites will be quite literally in people’s backyards, so ability to work with local citizens and other stakeholders is of high importance. Postdoctoral researcher will be located in University of Helsinki, Viikki campus.

The position is for 48 months starting in September. Later starting date is possible, but this shortens the length of contract. The salary of the postdoctoral researcher will be based on level 5 or 6 of the demands

level chart for teaching and research personnel in the salary system of Finnish universities. In addition, the appointee will be paid a salary component based on personal performance. The starting salary of the postdoctoral researcher will be ca. 3 400–3 800 euros/month, depending on the appointees' qualifications and experience. The University of Helsinki offers comprehensive services to its employees, including occupational health care and health insurance, sports facilities, and opportunities for professional development. The International Staff Services office (<https://www.helsinki.fi/en/university/working-at-the-university>) assists employees from abroad with their transition to work and life in Finland. A six-month trial period will be applied.

Please attach the following documents to your application as a single PDF file:

- cover letter, describing why you are the right person for this task and expectations from the future work (max. 2 pages)
- CV outlining relevant skills and experience (including publication list)
- contact details of at least two references.

Application deadline is 18.6.2023.

Please submit your application using the University of Helsinki Recruitment System:

<https://jobs.helsinki.fi/job/Helsinki-Postdoctoral-Researcher-in-Urban-Disease-Ecology/771912102/>

For further information regarding the position, please contact Dr. Tuomas Aivelo, [tuomas.aivelo\(at\)helsinki.fi](mailto:tuomas.aivelo(at)helsinki.fi).

If you need support with the recruitment system, please contact HR Coordinator

The University of Helsinki welcomes applicants from a variety of genders, linguistic and cultural backgrounds, and minorities.