

Research Assistant in “Stuck in the mud: addressing the fine sediment conundrum with multiscale and interdisciplinary approaches to support global freshwater biodiversity”

Job Ref: REQ250704

Full-time and fixed term for 18-months starting 1st November 2025

As part of the University’s ongoing commitment to redeployment, please note that this vacancy may be withdrawn at any stage of the recruitment process if a suitable redeployee is identified.

Geography Department: [Geography and Environment | Loughborough University](#)

Project Description

This is an exciting opportunity to play a key research role in a UKRI funded research project that will quantify and develop a mechanistic understanding of how environmental controls drive fine sediment impacts for freshwater biota. The successful candidate will join our vibrant and friendly multidisciplinary team working collaboratively to tackle aquatic biodiversity losses. The role is full time for 9 months.

Fine sediment (typically defined as particles <2mm) deposition in riverine ecosystems represents a critical anthropogenic threat to global freshwater diversity. Despite the extent and magnitude of this threat we lack fundamental knowledge about the mechanisms controlling the ecological effects of fine sediment; vital knowledge needed to underpin the implementation of effective global river management strategies. The overall objective of the project is to identify, examine and quantify the primary abiotic and biotic controls influencing the ecosystem effects of instream sedimentation.

The research assistant’s main responsibilities will be to assist in ecological fieldwork (monthly), process ecological and sedimentological samples in the laboratory, identify macroinvertebrates and to input data into computer spreadsheets. The applicant may have the opportunity to be involved in assisting with the running of laboratory experiments.

Job Description

Job Grade: Technical Services Grade 5

Job Purpose

To participate as a research assistant in an interdisciplinary project on the environmental controls of riverine fine sediment deposition and the consequences for freshwater biodiversity. To assist the PI with field assistant and laboratory processing of ecological and sedimentological samples. The post is based at Loughborough University and cannot be undertaken remotely.

Job Duties

- To undertake and assist with monthly fieldwork constituting macroinvertebrate and sedimentological sampling.
- To undertake macroinvertebrate sample processing in the laboratory including picking of invertebrates from samples and subsequent identification.

- To undertake sediment processing of samples in the laboratory to include grain size analysis and Loss on Ignition processes.
- To input data into excel once processed in the laboratory.
- Attendance and input at regular internal meetings;
- Report to, and share progress with, the Loughborough Investigator;
- Assist in the development of materials for knowledge transfer and networking;
- To engage in training programmes in the University (e.g. through Professional Development) which are consistent with your needs and aspirations and those of the School);
- To undertake such duties as may be reasonably requested and that are commensurate with the nature and grade of the post.

Points To Note

The purpose of this job description is to indicate the general level of duties and responsibility of the post. The detailed duties may vary from time to time without changing the general character or level of responsibility entailed.

Special Conditions

All staff have a statutory responsibility to take reasonable care of themselves, others and the environment and to prevent harm by their acts or omissions. All staff are therefore required to adhere to the University's Health, Safety and Environmental Policy & Procedures.

All staff should hold a duty and commitment to observing the University's Equity & Diversity policy and procedures at all times. Duties must be carried out in accordance with relevant Equity & Diversity legislation and University policies/procedures.

Successful completion of probation will be dependent on attendance at the University's mandatory courses which include Respecting Diversity and, where appropriate, Recruitment and Selection.

Organisational Responsibility

Reports to the PI.

Person Specification

Your application will be reviewed with respect to meeting the essential and desirable criteria listed below. Applicants are strongly advised to explicitly state and evidence how they meet each of the essential (and desirable) criteria in their application. Stages of assessment are as follows:

1 – Application; 3 – Interview

Essential Criteria

Area	Criteria	Stage
Experience	Knowledge of freshwater organisms, in particular macroinvertebrates.	1,3
	Experience of working in laboratories	1,3
Skills and abilities	Excellent written and oral communication skills	1,3
	Self-motivated with ability to meet deadlines	3
	Excellent time management and organisation to complete agreed work commitments on time	1,3
	Ability to work independently <u>and</u> as part of a team and to collaborate with others	1,3
Training	Demonstrate a willingness to undertake further training as appropriate and to adopt new procedures as and when required.	1,3
Qualifications	Masters or degree (or undertaking) in Geography, Environmental Science, Ecology or discipline of relevance to the project (or experience consummate to the role)	1
Other	Commitment to observing the University's Equality and Diversity policy at all times.	1

Desirable Criteria

Area	Criteria	Stage
Experience	Knowledge of river science / aquatic ecology literature	1,3
	Experience of undertaking laboratory experiments	1,3
	Experience of working with aquatic invertebrate samples and using a compound microscope	1,3
Skills and abilities	Excellent IT skills	1

Conditions of Service

The position is full-time and fixed term for eighteen months starting 1st November 2025. Salary will be on Technical Services Grade 5 from £29,179 - £34,132, at a starting salary to be confirmed on offer of appointment.

The appointment will be subject to the University's normal Terms and Conditions of Employment for Academic and Related staff/Operational and Administrative staff, details of which can be found [here](#).

The University is committed to enabling staff to maintain a healthy work-home balance and has a number of family-friendly policies which are available at <http://www.lboro.ac.uk/services/hr/a-z/family-leave-policy-and-procedure---page.html>.

We also offer an on-campus nursery with subsidised places, subsidised places at local holiday clubs and a childcare voucher scheme (further details are available at: <http://www.lboro.ac.uk/services/hr/a-z/childcare-information---page.html>)

In addition, the University is supportive, wherever possible, of flexible working arrangements. We also strive to create a culture that supports equality and celebrates diversity throughout the campus. The University holds a Bronze Athena SWAN award which recognises the importance of support for women at all stages of their academic career. For further information on Athena SWAN see <http://www.lboro.ac.uk/services/hr/athena-swan/>