



Norwegian University of  
Science and Technology

The Department of biology has a vacancy for a

## **PhD on effects of fungi and invertebrate herbivores on plant community ecology and evolution**

[Apply for this job](#)

### **About the position**

We have a vacancy for a PhD candidate at the Department of Biology, Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU), Trondheim, Norway, to study the effects of fungal pathogens and invertebrate herbivores on plant community assembly and evolution, as part of a globally distributed experiment. This is a fixed-term position for a period of 3 years with the possibility of a 4th year, if the candidate takes on compulsory duty work, such as teaching or other service work at the Department.

The goal is to obtain a doctoral degree in biology. The candidate will perform field experiments to study the roles of fungi and invertebrate herbivores in the ecology and evolution of plant communities along elevational gradients in the Norwegian mountains.

#### **The working environment**

The PhD candidate will join the Multiscale Biology (MsB) section of the Department of Biology. The MsB section investigates processes spanning

multiple levels of biological organization, from molecules to ecosystems. The MsB section is a collaborative, vibrant, and growing research community including 8 Associate Professors and Professors, 10 PhD candidates and postdocs, and 7 engineers. Further information can be found at <https://www.ntnu.edu/biology/research/multiscale>

### **The research group and the project**

The candidate will be directly supervised by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Martijn L. Vandegehuchte. The candidate will take part in an international research network, conducting a globally replicated experiment to investigate the effects of aboveground fungi and invertebrate herbivores on plant communities (BugNet: <https://bug-net.org>).

The candidate will work at Norwegian field sites to conduct the experiments set out by the BugNet project. In addition, the PhD candidate will have the opportunity to develop research into the roles of climate, disease, and herbivory in affecting interactions between plants and soil organisms and in plant evolutionary ecology. The field locations, in the mountains of central Norway, are ideally situated to use elevational gradients as a space-for-time substitution to study climate change effects. Dr. Anne Kempel of the Institute for Snow and Avalanche Research and Prof. Dr. Eric Allan of the University of Bern, both in Switzerland, will co-supervise the PhD candidate.

## **Duties of the position**

- Coordinating and performing research in the field and the laboratory
- Actively participating in meetings and discussions both within the MsB section and within BugNet
- Presenting research findings at national and international conferences
- Assisting BSc, MSc, and other PhD students
- Writing and defending a PhD thesis

- Publishing a minimum of three articles in peer-reviewed international journals

## Required selection criteria

- MSc degree in Biology or a related field.
- A strong academic background from previous studies and an average grade from the MSc degree program, or equivalent education, equal to B or better according to NTNU's grading scale. If letter grades were not awarded for previous studies, the candidate must have an academic basis at least equivalent to B according to NTNU's grading scale.
- Experience with field work, laboratory work, and data analysis.
- Experience in plant community ecology or plant evolutionary ecology.
- Strong quantitative skills and interest in statistics.
- Having submitted all required documents including the research statement

The appointment is to be made in accordance with the regulations in force concerning State Employees and Civil Servants and Regulations concerning the degrees of Philosophiae Doctor (PhD) and Philosodophiae Doctor (PhD) in artistic research national guidelines for appointment as PhD, post doctor and research assistant

## Preferred selection criteria

- Experience with the study of plant-soil, plant-fungi, or plant-invertebrate interactions or the study of large-scale climatic gradients is an advantage.
- Knowledge of R is recommended.
- Experience with structural equation models (piecewise SEM, latent variable models) is an advantage.

## Personal characteristics

- Proficiency in written and spoken English
- Eagerness to develop and test own scientific hypotheses within the framework of the PhD project.
- Ability to work independently, which includes organizing field and lab work, collecting, structuring, and analyzing data, and writing manuscripts.
- Willingness to conduct field work in mountainous areas, also in bad weather
- Ability to collaborate and cooperate with others, both internationally within the project and within the research group.

## We offer

- exciting and stimulating tasks in a strong international academic environment
- an open and inclusive work environment with dedicated colleagues
- favourable terms in the Norwegian Public Service Pension Fund
- employee benefits

## Salary and conditions

PhD candidates are remunerated in code 1017, and are normally remunerated at gross from NOK 491 200 per annum before tax, depending on qualifications and seniority. From the salary, 2% is deducted as a contribution to the Norwegian Public Service Pension Fund.

The period of employment is 3 years with the possibility of a 4th year if the candidate takes on compulsory duty work, such as teaching.

Appointment to a PhD position requires that you are admitted to the PhD programme in biology within three months of employment, and that you participate in an organized PhD programme during the employment period.

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The engagement is to be made in accordance with the regulations in force concerning State Employees and Civil Servants, and the acts relating to Control of the Export of Strategic Goods, Services and Technology. Candidates who by assessment of the application and attachment are seen to conflict with the criteria in the latter law will be prohibited from recruitment to NTNU. After the appointment you must assume that there may be changes in the area of work.

It is a prerequisite you can be present at and accessible to the institution daily.

## About the application

The application and supporting documentation to be used as the basis for the assessment must be in English.

Publications and other scientific work must follow the application. Please note that applications are only evaluated based on the information available on the application deadline.

The application must include:

- A cover letter outlining the applicant's research interests, experience, expertise, and motivation for applying for the position
- A research statement, no longer than one page, describing the research topics and approaches the applicant would address within the scope of the project
- A full CV
- Certificates, diplomas, and transcripts for BSc and MSc degrees in English or Norwegian. If the master's degree has not been awarded yet, a confirmation that the master's thesis has been submitted needs to be submitted.
- A copy of the MSc thesis.
- Name and contact details of three referees

- A list of publications (if applicable) with a description of the applicant's contribution to each publication.

If all, or parts, of your education has been taken abroad, we also ask you to attach documentation of the scope and quality of your entire education, both bachelor's and master's education, in addition to other higher education. Description of the documentation required can be found [here](#). If you already have a statement from NOKUT, please attach this as well.

Joint works will be considered. If it is difficult to identify your contribution to joint works, you must attach a brief description of your participation.

In the evaluation of which candidate is best qualified, emphasis will be placed on education, experience and personal and interpersonal qualities. Motivation, ambitions, and potential will also count in the assessment of the candidates.

NTNU is committed to following evaluation criteria for research quality according to [The San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment - DORA](#).

## General information

### Working at NTNU

A good work environment is characterized by diversity. We encourage qualified candidates to apply, regardless of their gender, functional capacity or cultural background.

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**The city of Trondheim** is a modern European city with a rich cultural scene. Trondheim is the innovation capital of Norway with a population of 200,000. The Norwegian welfare state, including healthcare, schools, kindergartens and overall equality, is probably the best of its kind in the world. Professional subsidized day-care for children is easily available. Furthermore, Trondheim offers great opportunities for education (including

international schools) and possibilities to enjoy nature, culture and family life and has low crime rates and clean air quality.

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As an employee at NTNU, you must at all times adhere to the changes that the development in the subject entails and the organizational changes that are adopted.

In accordance with The Public Information Act (Offentleglova), your name, age, position and municipality may be made public even if you have requested not to have your name entered on the list of applicants.

Any questions about the position should be addressed to Dr. Martijn L. Vandegehuchte (martijn.l.vandegehuchte@ntnu.no).

Please submit your application electronically via [jobbnorge.no](http://jobbnorge.no) with your CV, diplomas and certificates. Applications submitted elsewhere will not be considered. Diploma Supplement is required to attach for European Master Diplomas outside Norway. Chinese applicants are required to provide confirmation of Master Diploma from [China Credentials Verification \(CHSI\)](#).

If you are invited for interview you must include certified copies of transcripts and reference letters.

**Application deadline: 15.03.2022**

