



POSITION DESCRIPTION

## **Laboratory Research Assistant in environmental ancient DNA**

July 2025

UNIVERSITY of   
**TASMANIA**

## Position Summary

College / Division	College of Science and Engineering
School / Section	Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies (IMAS)
Location	Hobart - IMAS Salamanca
Classification	Research Assistant
Reports to	Senior Lecturer
Direct reports	1
Delegation level	No Delegation

## Position Overview

We are seeking a Research Assistant (RA) to implement ancient DNA analyses on seafloor sediment and other environmental samples. The RA will work at the IMAS environmental ancient DNA (TRACE-DNA) laboratory, as well as the UTAS Sandy Bay Central Science Molecular Genetics Laboratory. Previous experience in molecular genetics/genomics laboratory work is essential, as well as proficient organizational skills to maintain laboratory protocols and safety records. The RA will coordinate sample shipments to IMAS, undertake ancient DNA extractions, metagenomic library preparations, DNA/RNA quality control and quantification, purchase and maintain stock reagents, and regularly update laboratory files. Additional tasks include training and working with students in the lab and participating in team meetings, requiring a collaborative and inclusive work attitude. Ancient DNA analyses from environmental samples allow the reconstruction of past ecosystems, in this case, the Antarctic region. This helps to inform future predictions of Antarctic ecosystem change with ongoing global warming. This position is part-time (0.5 FTE) for 3 years, funded through an Australian Research Council Discovery Project (DP250100886). Options for full-time employment might arise depending on funding and can be discussed if interest exists by the RA.

## About the University of Tasmania

Welcome to the University of Tasmania, your island campus 1,270 million years in the making. This is heightened education at a slower pace of life. A place that attracts the highest percentage of scientists per capita in the world. Home to towering temperate rainforests, 60,000 years of human knowledge and underground cultural experiences of legend. Take your time to breathe it all in.

Our journey began in 1890, with a seed of academic excellence sown on our island. We inspire and encourage people to flourish and thrive. Our unique circumstances have made us resilient, transforming us into creative problem solvers. Our success is a testament to our quiet determination and adaptability.

We are more than just a place of learning. We are a catalyst for economic growth, a beacon for literacy, a champion for health and a guardian of our environment. We generate powerful ideas for and from Tasmania. We invite inquiring minds, from near and far, to join us in our pursuit of the extraordinary.

# Accountabilities and outcomes

## Purpose

This position contributes to research into Antarctic ecosystem dynamics, where global warming induced changes in ice sheet configurations are impacting marine life.

## Key Outcomes

- Coordination of international sample shipments to IMAS, adhering to biosecurity regulations
- Sedimentary ancient DNA extractions of ~700 Southern Ocean sediment samples
- Metagenomic sequencing library preparations of ~700 Southern Ocean sediment samples
- Maintenance of reagent stocks and laboratory documentation
- Training students in laboratory techniques
- Participation in team meetings

## Behavioural Expectations

We aim for everyone to have a positive experience at our university, and all staff contribute toward creating a university culture that is safe and supportive, enabling our community to flourish by:

- Treating all others – staff, students and community with fairness, equity and respect.
- Ensuring the workplace is an inspiring and safe place to be.
- Ensuring the workplace is free from harassment, bullying, victimisation and discrimination.

## Success profile

### Personal Attributes

- Structured: Works methodically to organise and plan tasks, upholds standards and works quickly, able to multi task to produce outcomes.
- Detail Oriented: Produces high quality work through attention to detail, checking for errors and following procedures to finish tasks within specified timescales.
- Flexible: Has an optimistic approach and readily recovers from setbacks. Embraces change and invites feedback to adapt and improve in the face of new challenges.
- Investigative: Readily takes up opportunities to learn and acquire new skills and is able to identify issues and make intuitive judgements.

## **Core Capabilities**

- Strategy into Action: Able to set, operationalise and activate strategy into specific actions, timelines and responsibilities to enable the University to deliver on key strategic goals.
- Self Awareness and Interpersonal Skills: Recognises and regulates emotions and behaviour in the work context and effectively builds relationships with others to create a collaborative and empowering environment that enables people to achieve and thrive.
- Holistic Decision Making: Able to form sound judgements based on all available information, considering the potential impacts of decisions from a broad range of perspectives before taking definitive action.
- Continuous Improvement: Continuously finds ways to improve and simplify processes, systems and practices to deliver improved outcomes for our students, staff and community by utilising practices such as Lean, Agile and Design Thinking.

## **Role Specific Skills, Knowledge and Experience**

- Experience working in a molecular genetics lab, preferably environmental or ancient DNA
- Ability to implement laboratory protocols independently
- Good interpersonal skills (ability to communicate clearly and work well within a team)
- Familiarity with Microsoft Word, Excel, Powerpoint
- Excellent organisation skills to perform administrative tasks (e.g., purchasing consumables, protocol documentation)

## **Qualifications and Licences**

- You will be expected to demonstrate your practical laboratory experience in an initial half-day session on campus.

## **Other Requirements**

To be eligible for this position, you are required to hold Australian or New Zealand Citizenship, permanent residence or a valid visa that enables you to fulfil the requirements of this role.

As part of our commitment to a safe and inclusive workplace, employment history and criminal background checks may be conducted as part of the selection process.

Additional requirements of the role:

Laboratory and workshop activities and handling hazardous substances



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The intention of this Position Description is to highlight the most important aspects, rather than to limit the scope or accountabilities of this role. Duties may be altered in accordance with the changing requirements of the position