



UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

CANDIDATE BRIEF

Research Fellow in Paleobiology, Faculty of Environment



Salary: Grade 7 (£36,333 – £43,155 p.a.)

Reference: ENVEE1660

Fixed-term for 36 months – due to external funding

Location of the post is University of Leeds (with scope for hybrid working)

We are open to discussing flexible working arrangements

Research Fellow in Paleobiology

School of Earth and Environment, Faculty of Environment

Are you an ambitious researcher with skills in palaeobiology or palaeoecology, and looking for your next challenge? Do you want to be part of a large, cutting-edge palaeobiological research programme? Do you want to further your career in one of the UK's leading research intensive Universities?

We are looking for a Research Fellow with experience in palaeobiology and palaeoecology who will play a pivotal role in our UK Natural Environmental Research Council/US National Science Foundation funded project "CASCaDE: Community And Structural Collapse During Mass Extinctions". You will work with a large international cross-disciplinary research team to combine palaeontological data with cutting-edge advances in ecological theory to gain a holistic understanding of marine extinction dynamics linked to rapid climate change and mass extinction in the fossil record.

Working as a palaeobiologist you will build a database of fossil communities and model food web structure across a number of major climatic and extinction events throughout the Phanerozoic. You will undertake database building and curation as well as model implementation and lead associated research publications.

You will have experience in taxonomic and functional palaeoecology and knowledge of Phanerozoic macroevolutionary events and some experience of undertaking quantitative analyses in R. You will show a strong commitment to publishing scientific results at an international level.

What does the role entail?

As a Research Fellow, your main duties will include:

- Working with the project team to model extinction dynamics across a variety of major climatic events in the Phanerozoic;
- Leading the development of a taxonomic and body size database of marine macro-communities spanning some major environmental and biotic transitions in Earth history and linking this data to modelled plankton communities;
- Leading the development of a reproducible methodology for extracting community-level data sets spanning the entire Phanerozoic from the [Paleobiology Database](#);



- Working with the research team to model marine food structure during a variety of timeslices throughout Earth history using pre-existing food web models;
- Working with the research team to simulate secondary extinction cascades across a number of major events in Earth history;
- Working with Dr Dunhill, Professor Beckerman and the rest of the research team to develop research objectives and contributing to setting the direction of the research project and ensuring the project is successfully completed;
- Preparing papers for publication in leading international journals and disseminating research results through other recognised forms of output;
- Assisting with public engagement efforts throughout the project;
- Where appropriate, contributing to the development of complimentary research funding proposals in collaboration with the research team;
- Generating and pursuing independent and original research ideas in the appropriate subject area;
- Developing research objectives and proposals and contributing to setting the direction of the research project and team including preparing proposals for funding in collaboration with colleagues;
- Evaluating methods and techniques used and results obtained by other researchers and to relate such evaluations appropriately to your own work;
- Working both independently and also as part of a larger team of researchers, engaging in knowledge-transfer activities where appropriate and feasible;
- Maintaining your own continuing professional development and acting as a mentor to less experienced colleagues as appropriate;
- Contributing to the training of both undergraduate and postgraduate students, including assisting with the supervision of projects in areas relevant to the project.

These duties provide a framework for the role and should not be regarded as a definitive list. Other reasonable duties may be required consistent with the grade of the post.

What will you bring to the role?

As a Research Fellow you will have:

- A PhD or near completion - i.e. the initial thesis needs to have been handed in at the point of application in Palaeobiology, Palaeontology, Ecology, Zoology, Environmental or Biological Sciences or a closely allied discipline;



- A strong background in palaeoecology or palaeobiology with a focus on major macroevolutionary events of the Phanerozoic and an understanding of fossil taxonomy and functional diversity;
- Some experience of carrying out quantitative palaeobiological analysis in R;
- Good time management and planning skills, with the ability to meet tight deadlines, manage competing demands and work effectively under pressure without close support;
- A proven track record of peer-reviewed publications in recognised journals within your field;
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills including presentation skills;
- A proven ability to work well both individually and in a team;
- A strong commitment to your own continuous professional development.

You may also have:

- Experience of ecosystem modelling in R;
- Expertise in mass extinction events;
- Knowledge of community ecological theory (i.e. food webs).

How to apply

You can apply for this role online; more guidance can be found on our [How to Apply](#) information page. Applications should be submitted by **23.59** (UK time) on the advertised closing date.

Contact information

To explore the post further or for any queries you may have, please contact:

Dr Alex Dunhill, Associate Professor of Palaeobiology

Tel: +44 (0)113 343 1288

Email: a.dunhill@leeds.ac.uk

Additional information

Please note: If you are not a British or Irish citizen, from 1 January 2021 you will require permission to work in the UK. This will normally be in the form of a visa but, if you are



an EEA/Swiss citizen and resident in the UK before 31 December 2020, this may be your passport or status under the EU Settlement Scheme.

Find out more about our [School of Earth and Environment](#)

Find out more about the [Earth Surface Science Institute](#)

Find out more about the [Palaeo@Leeds Research Group](#)

Find out more about the [Faculty of Environment](#)

Find out more about our [Research and associated facilities](#)

Find out more about [equality](#) in the Faculty.

About the Team

You will be [based in the lab of Dr Alex Dunhill](#) within the Palaeo@Leeds Research Group/Earth Surface Science Institute at the University of Leeds. Dr Dunhill oversees a friendly and relaxed lab group that puts researcher development and well-being before all else. Together with the welcoming and collegiate atmosphere fostered within ESSI, this creates an ideal environment for researchers to flourish and express their academic creativity.

You will join an international team of researchers. These include [Professor Andrew Beckerman](#) who will have a parallel Research Fellow focused on computational modelling of secondary extinction scenarios and several researchers in the UK, USA and Switzerland including [Dr Jennifer Dunne](#), [Dr Pincelli Hull](#), [Professor Crispin Little](#), Professor Andy Ridgwell, and [Dr Catalina Pimiento](#).

Our University

As an international research-intensive university, we welcome students and staff from all walks of life and from across the world. We foster an inclusive environment where all can flourish and prosper, and we are proud of our strong commitment to student education. Within the Faculty of Environment we are dedicated to diversifying our community and we welcome the unique contributions that individuals can bring, and particularly encourage applications from, but not limited to Black, Asian and ethnically diverse people; people who identify as LGBT+; and people with disabilities. Candidates will always be selected based on merit and ability.



The Faculty of Environment has received a prestigious Athena SWAN silver award from Advance HE, the national body that promotes equality in the higher education sector. This award represents the combined efforts of all schools in the Faculty and shows the positive actions we have taken to ensure that our policies, processes and ethos all promote an equal and inclusive environment for work and study.

Working at Leeds

We are a campus based community and regular interaction with campus is an expectation of all roles in line with academic and service needs and the requirements of the role. We are also open to discussing flexible working arrangements. To find out more about the benefits of working at the University and what it is like to live and work in the Leeds area visit our Working at Leeds information page.

Candidates with disabilities

Information for candidates with disabilities, impairments or health conditions, including requesting alternative formats, can be found on our Accessibility information page or by getting in touch with us at disclosure@leeds.ac.uk.

Criminal record information

Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974

A criminal record check is not required for this position, however, all applicants will be required to declare if they have any 'unspent' criminal offences, including those pending.

Any offer of appointment will be, in accordance with our Criminal Records policy. You can find out more about required checks and declarations in our Criminal Records information.

