

Lancaster Environment Centre, Lancaster University
Appointment of LEC Research Technician
0.8 FTE Grade 6 (£26,829-£29,301 pro rata)
24 months fixed-term

Further particulars

Are you fascinated by plant-soil interactions and want to find out about the functioning of ecosystems under climate change? Do you enjoy making detailed measurements of soil processes in laboratory and greenhouse studies? We're looking for a Research Support Technician at the Lancaster Environment Centre (LEC) to work on an exciting project with partners at Liverpool University from 1st February 2018 or soon thereafter. This is a part-time (80%), fixed-term (24 months) appointment at grade 6.

We welcome applications from candidates with experience of working in high-level scientific facilities and the ability to take responsibility for conducting field and laboratory work on plant-soil interactions. You will establish and coordinate laboratory incubations in the Plant-Soil lab at LEC, carry out field measurements at Ness Gardens near Liverpool, and assist with sample collection in the UK's longest-running climate change experiment near Buxton. You will also have the opportunity to shape the research by optimising lab methods, conducting trial experiments, and contributing to publications as appropriate.

You will be motivated, able to work well with colleagues and organize your own work schedule to meet the needs of the role. Full details are provided in the person specification and job description.

We aim to ***interview on the 8th December 2017*** or soon thereafter.

The Project

There is an urgent need to understand ecosystem responses to climate change. Plant-soil interactions are central to ecosystem functioning but we know very little about how climate-driven evolution (in either soil microbes or plants) will alter key interactions and associated ecosystem processes. This NERC-funded project with partners at the University of Liverpool, uses a combination of laboratory and field experiments to determine (i) how climate change drives evolutionary adaptation within soil microbes, (ii) how microbial adaptation alters plant fitness and ecosystem function, and, (iii) how plant evolutionary changes, in turn, affect the community of beneficial soil microbes. The appointee will contribute to unique research into climate-driven evolutionary and ecological change in response to 24 years of climate manipulations at the Buxton Climate Change Impacts Lab, one of the longest-running climate change experiments in the world.

Lancaster Environment Centre

Lancaster Environment Centre forms one of the largest and most prestigious groups of interdisciplinary environmental researchers in Europe, with over 200 staff and research and teaching that span the Environmental, Biological and Social Sciences. LEC was formally constituted on 1st August 2008 through the merger of three successful university departments (Environmental Science, Geography and the non-Medical parts of Biology) and now operates as a fully integrated university department on a single site. It is the largest department in Lancaster University and a key player in the strategic development of the

institution and the Faculty of Science and Technology. The co-location of the NERC Centre for Ecology and Hydrology on the Lancaster campus as part of the LEC complex adds critical mass in environmental research capacity enabling staff from both organizations to work closely together in a formal collaboration. LEC currently admits about 240 undergraduate students and 110 postgraduate (MSc/PhD) students each year and teaches across a wide range of degree schemes. A distinctive feature of LEC is its Enterprise and Business Partnership (EBP) unit which hosts some 20 small companies working with LEC researchers and which has links to a large number of other national and multi-national businesses and organisations. We run both graduate and undergraduate consultancy programmes and have an extensive programme of knowledge innovation and transfer with both private and public sector partners.

Lancaster University

Lancaster is a world-class university with an international reputation for excellence in teaching, scholarship and research. Currently ranked as a top 10 UK university (in all three major league tables) and in the top 125 universities in the world (THE world university rankings), Lancaster continues to grow its reputation for teaching and research excellence both nationally and internationally. Established in 1964 Lancaster is a member of the 1994 group of research-led universities, currently has over 11,000 students and has recently invested £300 million in new departmental buildings, teaching space, student accommodation, social and sporting facilities. Lancaster University has an attractive campus setting on the edge of the historic city of Lancaster in NW England, and close to spectacular scenery in the English Lake District, Yorkshire Dales and Lancashire coast. It is very well connected by road and rail, with Manchester (and its international airport) just over an hour distant, while the train journey to London takes just 2hrs 20mins.

Research in Lancaster Environment Centre

Research in LEC is organized through five interdisciplinary research themes: Atmospheric Science; Biodiversity and Global Change; Catchment and Aquatic Processes; Environmental Geosciences; Society and Environment. Many staff work across more than one theme and a series of Integrating Research Centres such as the Centre for Sustainable Water Management, the Centre for Sustainable Agriculture and the Centre for Chemicals Management focus especially on wider strategic applications and provide a link to policy and business partners (in conjunction with the Enterprise and Business Unit). LEC has many research highlights.

Teaching in Lancaster Environment Centre

LEC offers a wide range of high-quality degree schemes at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels. The undergraduate portfolio includes schemes in Geography (BA/BSc Geography, BSc Physical Geography, BA Human Geography), Environmental Science, Earth and Environmental Science, Environmental Change and Sustainable Development, Ecology, Conservation Biology, Environmental Biology, and LEC staff also contribute substantially to the BSc Biology scheme (delivered in conjunction with the department of Biomedical and Life Science). Over half of all LEC undergraduate students are enrolled on Geography degree schemes. All schemes have high entry grades (AAB or ABB at A level) and have received excellent ratings in recent National Student Surveys. Since the formation of LEC we have

created a new integrated first year course taken by all LEC undergraduates, have increased flexibility within other years of the degrees and, in conjunction with the Enterprise and Business Partnerships Unit, have broadened opportunities for work experience. LEC runs some 15 taught postgraduate programmes including the MRes in Science of the Environment, the MSc in Resource and Environmental Management and the MSc in Ecology and the Environment. All schemes offer an integrated programme of taught modules and require a substantial independent dissertation. A new two year International Masters in Environmental Science and Technology is building on our strong links with China developed through the UK-China Bridge project. PhD students are recruited in all parts of LEC with panel supervision the norm and many students focusing on challenging interdisciplinary projects with supervision that spans the Environmental, Biological and Social Sciences.

Management Structure for Lancaster Environment Centre

LEC's management structure is designed to enable the effective functioning of a large and complex organisation, with the ability to take key decisions quickly, whilst retaining effective communication with all staff. Whilst the Director has overall responsibility for the management of LEC he currently works with five Associate Directors (research, undergraduate studies, postgraduate studies, resources, enterprise and business partnerships) who have day-to-day responsibility for the effective delivery of all key areas of LEC's activities. In addition the Management Group (which currently meets fortnightly) includes the five Research Theme Leaders, some Centre Directors, and the Senior Administrative Officer. Communications with staff are via regular e-newsletters, research theme and teaching team meetings, and whole staff meetings (approximately once a term).

Start date: The appointment will be from 1st February 2018 or as soon as possible thereafter.

Further information

Full details of all LEC's activities can be found on the Departmental web site:

<http://www.lec.lancs.ac.uk/>, and additional information about Lancaster University can be found at: <http://www.lancs.ac.uk/>

Informal enquiries about the position of Fieldwork Support Technician should be addressed to Dr Emma Sayer, e.sayer@lancaster.ac.uk.