

M.Sc. Research Opportunity in 'Oribatid Mite Ecology, Systematics and Taxonomy'

Posted Date: November 25, 2021

Application Deadline: January 15, 2022

Status: Open

An exciting new position for an M.Sc. student is available through a multidisciplinary research program involving researchers from the [Department of Biological Sciences](#) at the University of Alberta and the [Alberta Biodiversity Monitoring Institute](#).

The successful applicant will contribute to the local and regional biodiversity assessment of Edmonton, Alberta, and surrounding areas to assess potential introductions and dispersal mechanisms of oribatid mites. Research will include work on the systematics and taxonomy of the Galumnoidea of Alberta. Specifically, the M.Sc. project will involve:

- 1) in conjunction with ABMI researchers, study the habitat and range extent of oribatid mites within and near Edmonton to identify introductions of non-native species and to assess their dispersal mechanisms. This will include: contributing to experimental design; field work to collect soil and conduct ecosite assessments; laboratory work to extract invertebrates from soil, microscopic identification of oribatid mites to species-level; analytical techniques to assess range extent, movement and dispersal; writing and publication.
- 2) study of the 10+ morphospecies within the Galumnoidea known in Alberta to determine if they have been described, and to redescribe and formally describe new species as necessary. This will include using microscopy to study and characterize specimens, illustration via photography and line drawings, contributing to and analyzing morphological, molecular and biogeographical data, and connecting with specialists and museums nationally and internationally to access and study type specimens as needed.

The successful candidate will have a Bachelor of Science (B.Sc.) degree or equivalent by August 2022. Desired skills include experience identifying small invertebrates using dissecting and light microscopy. The candidate must be academically competitive and expected to work with a network of acarologists, entomologists, and biodiversity scientists across Canada, and with oribatid experts outside of Canada as needed.

The stipend is for 2.3 years with an annual amount of approximately \$25,197, part of which will come from teaching assistantships. The candidate's M.Sc. program will be based in the Department of Biological Sciences at the University of Alberta in Edmonton. The candidate must either be a Canadian citizen or have residency approval to start the program in September 2022. We encourage students to apply as soon as possible as the deadline to apply to the University of Alberta for the September 2022 start date is 1 February 2022. See information about eligibility and minimum GPA and English requirements [here](#).

Interested candidates should send the following documents by email to both Dr. Lisa Lumley (llumley@ualberta.ca) and Dr. Heather Proctor (hproctor@ualberta.ca) by 15 January 2022 at the latest: 1. a current curriculum vitae, 2. a cover letter describing their interest in the position, and 3. names and contact information for two references. For further information about the M.Sc. research opportunity, please contact:

Dr. Lisa Lumley: Terrestrial Invertebrate Coordinator, Alberta Biodiversity Monitoring Institute and Adjunct Professor, Department of Biological Sciences, University of Alberta; Email: llumley@ualberta.ca

Dr. Heather Proctor: Professor, Department of Biological Sciences, University of Alberta; Email: hproctor@ualberta.ca