

The University of Veterinary Medicine Vienna (Vetmeduni) works to safeguard the health of animals in Austria through its teaching and research activities and through the services it offers. These tasks represent our contribution to keeping people and their animal companions healthy and to ensuring the production of healthy food. To meet our objectives,

the **Institute of Animal Welfare Science** is looking for a

Scientific Project-Assistant (Pre-Doc)

PhD-Student within the framework of the FWF-project „Let me out!
Proximate factors mediating helping behavior in pigs”

Grade:	B1 Pre-Doc
Level of employment:	30 hours
Length of employment:	3 years
Deadline for applications:	1.9.2023
Reference number:	2023/0214

Place of employment: Vienna, VetFarm Berndorf

Context

Vetmeduni consistently ranks in the top 10 worldwide (2022 Shanghai Ranking for Universities, Veterinary Sciences), and Vienna consistently ranks as one of the most liveable cities in the world with its green surroundings, rich culture, and central location in Europe.

Main tasks

Research on empathy is growing quickly, but inferring empathy remains controversial when it comes to explaining acts when (non-human) animals help others. We have recently shown that pigs, a highly intelligent and social species, can help conspecifics in need. The proximate mechanisms of this behaviour remain to be uncovered. Therefore, we developed a novel group-testing paradigm that allows us to ask pigs who, when, and whom might help. This will allow us for the first time to investigate the role of: 1) personality traits, 2) social relationships, 3) behavioral and acoustic signals and 4) physiological influences on helping behaviour.

This project is in collaboration with the Institute for Behavioural Physiology at the Research Institute for Farm Animal Biology (FBN), Dummerstorf, Germany, funded by the national agencies for research excellence on both sides (FWF and DFG). Research will occur in parallel at both institutes, sharing analysis of the large common dataset according to each institute's expertise (e.g. personality, social behaviour, vocalization analyses, physiological measures). Hence, this project offers the opportunity to work in a truly interdisciplinary and collaborative working environment with leading research groups in animal behaviour and welfare.

This position is for 3 years. The proposed starting date is mid of October 2023 (earliest) but a different starting date (later) is negotiable. The work will be conducted in English and will require travel for experiments at the research farm.

Responsibilities

- involvement in conducting behavioural tests, behavioural analysis,
- learning about physiological techniques, and writing publications, under supervision
- administrative tasks within the frame of the project assignment

Necessary knowledge and qualification

- Proof of completed studies with a Master or Diplom in biology, zoology, degree in veterinary medicine or another relevant course of study
- Experience in animal behaviour research
- Good English (B2)

Desired skills and abilities

- Knowledge in social behaviour / animal behaviour
- Experience in data collection and data analysis
- Ability to conduct research relatively independently
- Interest in multi-disciplinary research approaches
- Evidence of initiative and persistence
- Publications would be a plus
- candidate should be motivated, independent and reliable

We offer

- Top university: the Vetmeduni is one of the leading academic institutions in Europe to offer education in and undertake research on veterinary medicine
- Stable employer
- Attractive campus
- Opportunities for further training, both personal and in connection with your career
- Preventive and medical health care
- Diversity- and family-friendly culture
- Childcare facilities, both in term time and during holidays
- Many attractive fringe benefits
- Staff events

Minimum salary

The minimum salary for university staff is regulated by the collective contract and at the level given above amounts to EUR 3,277.30 gross per month based on a full-term employment. (Wage acc. to the actual FWF personal rate.)

Applications

Please submit applications quoting the **reference number 2023/0214** via e-mail to bewerbungen@vetmeduni.ac.at. Please do not forget to include the reference number or we shall be unable to relate your application to the correct vacancy announcement.

Please submit the following documents to your application:

- a letter addressing the selection criteria below (necessary knowledge and qualifications, desired skills and abilities) in a few pages
- a letter of motivation describing your research interests, experience and goals
- a full CV
- a list of two reference names
- if you are selected for the position, you must provide your graduation certificate when you take up employment (expected graduation at the latest by 15th of October 2023)

The Vetmeduni Vienna is attempting to increase the proportion of female staff, particularly in senior positions, and in accordance with § 41 of the 2002 Universities Act it is striving to attain a balanced representation of men and women, especially on its scientific staff. Applications from qualified women are thus particularly welcomed. If women are underrepresented (below 50%), female applicants who are as well qualified as the best qualified male applicants will be given preference, provided that there are no strong reasons for favouring a particular male candidate.

Applicants have no entitlement to reimbursement of any travel or accommodation costs they may incur as a result of the application procedure.

The Vetmeduni Vienna is proud to have been awarded the certificate "*hochschuleundfamilie*" (career and family). We should thus be especially pleased to receive applications from people with families. Applications from persons with disabilities are similarly welcome.

Translations into other languages are solely for information purposes. The version advertised in the University Bulletin (Mitteilungsblatt) is the only one that is legally binding.

Contact /Further Information

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www.vetmeduni.ac.at/en/animal-welfare-science