UNIVERSITY OF COLOGNE

Research Associate (f/m/x)

Department for Prehistoric Archaeology & MESH

We are one of the largest and oldest universities in Europe and one of the most important employers in our region. Our broad range of subjects, the dynamic development of our main research areas and our central location in Cologne make us attractive for students and researchers from around the world. We offer a wide range of career opportunities in science, technology, and administration.

ZOOGESTURE is a Pioneering project funded by the VolkswagenFoundation that explores the role of nonhuman animals in gestural attunement, learning, and technological innovation in early human evolution. Further details: https://zoogestures.uni-koeln.de/opportunities.

YOUR TASKS

» Conduct independent research and publish results in leading international journals

» Lead work package 2: "Past and present socio-zoo-technical systems"

» Contribute to the development of a new theoretical framework for the comparative study of technical imitation and learning from nonhuman animals

» Collate archaeological data from different periods (Palaeolithic to Neolithic) and identify evidence of animal-inspired technical invention

» Analyse records of Indigenous knowledge and oral traditions worldwide to trace animal-inspired technological solutions

» Support the team's primatological-anthropological fieldwork and participate in observations and interviews with Indigenous populations in Uganda and Guinea (Africa)

» Engage with literature and theoretical concepts from other disciplines, notably anthropology and philosophy of technology, multispecies studies, cultural evolution, primatology, and the environmental humanities

» Collaborate with other interdisciplinary project partners

» Assist the PI(s) in the organization of scientific workshops and academic/public outreach

YOUR PROFILE

» Excellent English communication and writing skills

» Strong motivation for challenging interdisciplinary research and experience or background in crossing disciplinary boundaries

» Ability to work creatively with archaeological and oral history data

» Doctorate in multispecies archaeology or a related field

» Broad background in anthropology, including experience in anthropological fieldwork

» Strong theoretical, conceptual and interpretive profile

» Solid knowledge of early prehistory, its material culture, and zooarchaeology

» Basic understanding of learning theory and cultural transmission theory would be desirable

» Expertise in comparative animal behaviour, primatology, multispecies research methologies and the environmental humanities is highly advantageous

WE OFFER

» A competitive and interdisciplinary research ecology

» A diverse working environment with equal opportunities

» Support in balancing work and family life

» Extensive advanced training opportunities

» Occupational health management offers

» Flexible working time models

The University of Cologne promotes equal opportunities and diversity. Women will be considered preferentially in accordance with the Equal Opportunities Act of North Rhine-Westphalia (Landesgleichstellungsgesetz – LGG NRW). We also expressly welcome applications from all suitable candidates regardless of their gender, nationality, ethnic and social origin, religion, disability, age, sexual orientation and identity.

The position is available from 1 January 2026 on a full-time basis (39,83 hours per week). The position is to be filled for a fixed term until 31 December 2028. If the applicant meets the relevant wage requirements and personal qualifications, the salary is based on remuneration group 13 TV-L of the pay scale for the German public sector.

Please submit your application (without photo) including proof of the required qualification s online under: https://jobportal.uni-koeln.de. The reference number is Wiss2508-21. The application deadline is 30.09.2025. For further inquiries, please contact Dr. Shumon T. Hussain (s.t.hussain@uni-koeln.de) and take a look at our FAQs.

HR EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH