



Doctoral position – Plant immunity (f/m/x)

CEPLAS | Institute for Plant Sciences / Saur Lab



Foto: Thomas Jusek

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.

The Saur Lab is part of the SFBI403, CEPLAS, and FOR5682, providing access to state-of-the-art research facilities and a vibrant, interdisciplinary research environment. Our group investigates the molecular mechanisms underlying plant-microbe interactions. The successful candidate will perform molecular and biochemical experiments to characterize the molecular functions of cell surface-localized receptor homologs in regulating interaction with pathogenic fungi and other microbes (TV-L 13, 65%).

YOUR TASKS

The primary goal of this research is to investigate the function of cell surface-localized receptor homologs in regulating microbial invasion of dicots (*A. thaliana*, *N. benthamiana*) and monocots (barley). This research will involve the use of available genetic material and the generation of mutant and chimeric constructs of the cell surface-localized receptor SRF3 to mechanistically assess its established role in

- » microbe-triggered immunity
- » cell death-related immune responses
- » iron-related processes

(doi: 10.64898/2026.01.08.698370) using transcriptomic (RNAseq), phenotypic (plant immunity measurements & microbial proliferation assays) and biochemical assays (protein-protein interaction assays).

YOUR PROFILE

- » An MSc (or equivalent degree) in Biology or a related field, with expertise in molecular plant-microbe interactions and/or plant immunity
- » A strong interest in the molecular mechanisms of plant-microbe interactions (incl. pathogens and/or natural microbiota members)
- » Experience in molecular cloning, protein-protein interaction and/or RNAseq analyses will be considered an advantage.
- » Excellent English communication skills, both written and spoken

WE OFFER

- » A scientifically stimulating environment with a low hierarchy
- » A diverse working environment with equal opportunities
- » Support in balancing work and family life
- » Flexible working time models
- » Extensive advanced training opportunities
- » Occupational health management offers

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 (65%) is available from 1 October 2026. Is to be filled for a fixed term until 30 September 2029. 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 apply online with proof of the required qualifications (without a photo) under <https://jobportal.uni-koeln.de> The reference number is Wiss2605-16. The application deadline is 22 July 2026.

For further inquiries, please contact Professor Isabel Saur at (isaur@uni-koeln.de) and take a look at our [FAQs](#).

