PhD position in Arctic Biology

About UNIS

UNIS is a state-owned limited company with five of Norway’s universities represented on the board. UNIS is located in a modern working environment in Longyearbyen, Svalbard, and is well equipped with both technical and scientific equipment and laboratories. The institution has an infrastructure for both marine and terrestrial field, lab and experimental research.

The studies at UNIS are marketed internationally and all classes are offered in English. Approximately half of the staff and students are from abroad.

About the position

The department of Arctic Biology at UNIS is seeking candidates for a full-time, 3-year position as a PhD fellow in Arctic Terrestrial Biology.
Currently the department constitutes 3 professors, 5 associate professors, 7 PhD students, 2 postdocs/researchers, 9 Adjunct Professors and 3 technical/administrative staff. The department conducts research and education in Arctic terrestrial and marine biology, and currently provides 24 courses on bachelor, master and PhD level. The department focuses on an integrated approach to High Arctic biology, within the research topics Climate change biology, Seasonal ecology and Spatio-temporal dynamics of species and systems. Additional information about the department can be found at www.unis.no.

The advertised PhD position is in the field of terrestrial biology, focusing on the insulating effect of aboveground plant communities and their traits on the frozen ground. The candidate will be part of INSULATE, an interdisciplinary project financed by the Norwegian Research Council. INSULATE aims to develop a mechanistic understanding of how much above- and belowground components of biotic groups and organic matter contribute to permafrost insulation, and to enhance future predictions of permafrost thaw based on these drivers. The candidate will be responsible for 1) setting up monitoring plots for surface characterization surrounding an existing borehole network and 2) an experiment testing the effect of vegetation on thaw progression under controlled conditions.

The candidate is expected to take part in extensive field and lab work, which require endurance and the ability to work systematically, both independently as well as in a team. Upon employment, the successful PhD candidate will work out the INSULATE proposal text into a detailed project description together with the supervisors. Short research visits with the national and/or international collaborators on the INSULATE project will be possible.

The PhD will be based at the Department of Arctic Biology at the University Centre in Svalbard (UNIS), and the candidate will be admitted to a PhD program at the Norwegian University of Life Sciences (NMBU). Assoc. Prof. Simone Lang (UNIS) will be the main supervisor with Assoc. Prof. Juul Limpens and Dr. Runa Magnusson (Wageningen University, The Netherlands), Assoc. Prof. Anne Bjorkman (University of Gothenburg, Sweden) and Assoc. Prof. Siri Lie Olsen (NMBU) acting as co-supervisors. The candidate will work closely with the second PhD in INSULATE working on belowground insulation, based at UNIS. The
candidate will further work with team members from Norwegian and international institutions, at UNIS and at the collaborating institutions.

Qualifications and personal qualities

Applicants must:

- hold a master's degree or the equivalent in a relevant topic, such as terrestrial ecology or similar, and must have submitted his/her master's thesis for assessment prior to the application deadline. It is a condition of employment that the master's degree has been awarded.
- have experience from terrestrial field work and be capable of conducting long field campaigns.
- be able to work independently and in a structured manner and demonstrate good collaborative skills.
- have experience in plant identification.
- have experience in the fields of terrestrial ecology, and/or plant physiological ecology, and interest in aboveground interactions between biota and the environment.
- have experience and skills in basic lab, analytical and statistical methods.
- be proficient in both written and oral English.

Advantageous are:

- experience with field work in polar (alpine) regions.
- good floristic knowledge.
- experience with plant traits.
- experience in bryophyte and lichen identification.
- knowledge of R.
- authorship or co-authorship of scientific publications.

Strong motivation and personal suitability will guide successful application. To enable assessment, the following must be included in the application. 1) a written motivation stating your personal and scientific interest in pursuing a PhD degree, and 2) a written outline of a relevant PhD project idea (max 2 pages).
About the research training

The candidate must satisfy the enrolment requirements for the doctoral degree program at the Norwegian University of Life Sciences (NMBU). A plan for the implementation of the research training must be approved by the faculty during the first months of the appointment. The candidate is expected to complete a coursework component of 30 ECTS as part of the formal PhD training.

We offer

The total duration of the PhD position is 3 years. The candidate is expected to start in spring 2024.

All salaries are set in accordance with the Norwegian government's University salary scale. PhD fellow research fellows start at a gross salary of NOK 531 800 annually. As a Svalbard resident an annual allowance of NOK 38 520 (Svalbardtillegg) will be added to the salary. A Social Security contribution of 2%, to the Norwegian Public Service Pension Fund, will be deducted from the salary. Income tax on Svalbard is 8%, plus 7,9% toward National Insurance coverage. UNIS offers a membership in the Norwegian Public Pension Fund.

Application/Inquiries about the position

Inquiries about this position may be directed to supervisor Assoc. Professor Simone Lang (UNIS), phone: +47 77057501, email: simonel@unis.no, or to the Head of Department Prof. Steve Coulson (UNIS), phone: +47 77057503, email: scoulson@unis.no

The application, submitted electronically in www.jobbnorge.no, must include:

- Letter of motivation stating your personal and scientific interest in pursuing a PhD degree
- Written outline of a relevant PhD project idea (max 2 pages)
- CV (including a complete overview of education, professional training and professional work)
- Name and contact information for three referees
- Transcripts and diplomas showing completion of the bachelor's and master's degrees, or official confirmation that the master's thesis has been submitted
- Relevant certificates/references
- A list of any works of a scientific nature (publication list)
- Any peer review publications you are an author or co-author on
- A copy of the master thesis

The application and appendices with certified translations into English or a Scandinavian language must be uploaded in Jobbnorge.no.

You can request to have your application kept from public access cf. the open files act § 25. The request must be explained. UNIS will determine if the application will be kept from public access or not, based on the explanation and the regulations from the open files act. If the application will not be accepted, the candidate will be contacted.

**Selection and appointment:**

A committee appointed by the Managing director of UNIS will evaluate the qualifications of the applicants and invite the highest ranked person(s) for an interview. The appointment will be made by the Director of UNIS based on the recommendation from the committee.
Longyearbyen

Longyearbyen is located in Svalbard, in the midst of a varied and beautiful Arctic nature with good opportunities for outdoor activities. Longyearbyen is a modern town with approx. 2500 inhabitants from many nationalities and has a good service offering including kindergartens, swimming / sports hall and a varied association, sports and cultural life.

Apply for this job

Deadline
15th January 2024

Employer
UNIS

Municipality
Svalbard

Scope
Fulltime

Duration
Fixed Term

Place of service
Pb. 156, 9171 Longyearbyen