



**Plant Protection and Quarantine
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Job Announcement Number: PPQ-PHP-001**

POSITION: Molecular Biologist
Full Time
APHIS Science Fellow Program

SERIES & GRADE: GS-401-11/12/13
Promotion potential: GS-13

OPEN PERIOD: 11/02/2009 to 11/30/2009
**Application packages must be postmarked by 11/30/2009*

DUTY LOCATION: Beltsville, Maryland

SALARY: Range for GS-11: \$60,989 to \$79,280
Range for GS-12: \$73,100 to \$95,026
Range for GS-13: \$86,927 to \$113,007

PROGRAM: Plant Protection and Quarantine
Plant Health Programs

MAIL OR FAX TO: USDA, MRP, HRO, Staffing
100 North Sixth Street, Suite 510C
Minneapolis, MN 55403
Fax: (612) 336-3560

Application materials must be postmarked by the closing date of the announcement. Faxed applications must be received at the fax number listed by midnight Central Time of the closing date. Reference announcement number PPQ-PHP-001 on application material.

WHO MAY BE CONSIDERED

This announcement is open to all United States citizens.

APPOINTMENT DESCRIPTION

This position is an APHIS Science Fellow, which is a 2-year fellowship in the excepted service with the possibility of a 2 year extension. The appointment does not confer the rights and privileges of a permanent appointment in the competitive service. The selectee will be entitled to health and life insurance benefits, retirement benefits and leave accrual.



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MAJOR DUTIES

The duties described are for the full-performance level. At developmental grade levels, assignments will be of more limited scope, performed with less independence and limited complexity.

The incumbent serves as a science fellow in the Molecular Diagnostic Laboratory within Registrations, Identifications, Permits and Plant Safeguarding (RIPPS), Plant Health Programs, Plant Protection and Quarantine (PPQ), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), USDA, and is stationed at the National Plant Germplasm and Quarantine Center (NPGQC) in Beltsville, MD. The incumbent conducts studies to characterize pests intercepted at ports of entry, especially those only identified by morphology to the genus level. Studies would include morphology, culture analysis, and molecular characterization with the goal of establishing a database of molecular sequences to aid in the accurate identification of pests. These pests include plant pathogens, insects, nematodes and others that threaten U.S. agriculture.

The duties may include but are not limited to the following:

- Extracts DNA from insect or pathogen specimens and cultures or both and sequences appropriate gene regions;
- Compares sequences to known taxa using techniques such as BLAST;
- Conducts phylogenetic analyses;
- Compiles a database of authoritative sequences in order to characterize isolates using sequence analysis;
- Identifies barcodes for quarantine significant pests and pathogens of high risk as well as for commonly intercepted low risk pathogens in order to readily detect and distinguish these taxa.

The incumbent will be responsible for writing reports and communicating results orally and in writing to the Agency, colleagues, and stakeholders.

REQUIREMENTS

- U.S. Citizenship
- Males born after 12/31/59 must be registered with the selective service.
- DD214 or other veteran's documents required to receive veterans' preference



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- **Transcripts must be submitted for this position**

SPECIAL CONDITIONS

- **As a condition of employment, appropriate security clearance is required for this position.**
- **Incumbent may travel domestically and internationally.**

QUALIFICATIONS REQUIREMENT

To qualify, all applicants MUST meet all qualification requirements by the closing date of the announcement.

BASIC REQUIREMENTS:

A. Degree: Biological sciences, agriculture, natural resource management, or related disciplines appropriate to the position from an accredited college or university. Proof required - submit transcripts.

OR

B. Combination of education and experience: courses equivalent to a major, as shown in A above from an accredited college or university, plus appropriate experience or additional education. Transcripts required if qualifying based on this provision.

SPECIALIZED EXPERIENCE AT THE GS-11/12/13 GRADE LEVELS:

In addition to the basic requirements described above, applicants must have 1 year of specialized experience equivalent in level of difficulty and responsibility to the next lower level in the Federal service. This experience is typically in, or related to, the work of the position being filled and must have equipped the applicant with the knowledge, skills, and abilities to fulfill the duties related to this position.

SUBSTITUTION OF EDUCATION FOR EXPERIENCE AT THE GS-11 GRADE LEVEL:

Successful completion of 3 years of progressively higher level graduate education leading to a Ph.D. degree or Ph.D. or equivalent doctoral degree from an accredited college or university in biological sciences, agriculture, natural resource management, or a closely related field. Transcripts required if qualifying based on this provision.

OR

COMBINATION OF EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE AT THE GS-11 GRADE LEVEL:



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Applicants may also use equivalent combinations of successfully completed graduate level education and specialized experience to meet the total qualification requirements. Only graduate level education in excess of the amount required for the next lower grade level may be combined with experience. Transcripts required if qualifying based on this provision.

There is no educational substitution at the GS-12/13 Grade Level.

HOW YOU WILL BE EVALUATED – RANKING FACTORS

Please address all of the following factors in your application. Although a response is not required, it is an opportunity to provide specific details of your education and experience to the critical aspects of the position.

- 1. Knowledge of the systematics of microorganisms or insects with an emphasis on molecular and biochemical techniques used to identify plant pests and diagnose diseases.**
- 2. Skill in molecular biology, sequence analysis, phylogenetic analysis, computational biology, assembly and annotation of genomic sequence data, and bioinformatics.**
- 3. Ability to communicate orally and in writing in order to exchange scientific information.**

HOW TO APPLY

A complete application will require the submission of the following:

- 1. Resume that includes:**
 - dates of employment (M/D/Y)**
 - hours per week**
 - Include series and grade level for all federal civilian employment**
- 2. Responses to the Ranking Factors**
- 3. Supporting Documentation (See *Required Documents* section for more information)**

REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

What to submit:

- College transcripts; or**
- A copy of your college diploma (reflecting the field of study, if a specific degree is required); or**



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- A list of all college courses with grades and credits (indicate quarter/semester hours and GPA).

*****All transcripts must be in English or include an English translation**

NOTE: Foreign education must be evaluated by an approved organization. The U.S. Department of Education may be of some help in providing information on these organizations. Visit the U.S. Department of Education at the following web site:
<http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ous/international/usnei/us/edlite-visitus-forrecog.html>

***Veterans' Preference Documents:* If you are claiming Veterans' Preference, you must submit the following proof of eligibility:**

- **Five Point Preference: DD-214 (Please submit the DD-214 (Member Copy 4) for the period of service which you are claiming Veterans Preference)**
- **Ten Point Preference: DD-214 (Please submit the DD-214 (Member Copy 4) for the period of service which you are claiming Veterans Preference), Standard Form 15 (Application for 10-Point Veterans Preference) and the proof requested on the Standard Form 15. For an on-line exact replica of Standard Form 15, visit: http://www.opm.gov/forms/pdf_fill/SF15.pdf**

Applicants who don't have a DD-214 because they are on active duty must include the following information in their application:

- Dates of service (e.g. 1/5/08 to present);
- Branch of Service; and
- Rank and a description of duties and responsibilities.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- **Qualifications: Additional information is available on OPM's website at <http://www.opm.gov/qualifications>**
- **Veterans Preference: Additional information is available in the Vet Guide on OPM's website at <http://www.opm.gov/veterans/html/vetguide.asp>**

CONTACT INFORMATION

**Lynn McDonald
Human Resources
Phone: (612) 336-3358**



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SPECIAL NOTES

The U. S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital or family status. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.)

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audio tape, etc) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at 202-720-2600 (voice and TDD).

To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W Whitten Building, 14th and Independence Avenue SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (202) 720-5964 (voice or TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

This agency provides reasonable accommodation to applicants with disabilities.

If you need a reasonable accommodation for any part of the application and hiring process, please notify the agency. The decision on granting reasonable accommodation will be on a case-by-case basis.