



Open Position: **PhD student – funded position (f/m/d)**
 Research project: **Immunity and microbiome of marine transmissible cancers**
 Project start date: **Flexible between November 2025 and February 2026**

Keywords

Transmissible cancers - Marine biology - Immunology - Microbiome / Metagenomics - Genomics / Transcriptomics - Fieldwork - Molecular biology - Histological diagnosis - PhD student

The Department of Symbiosis in Bremen, Germany is seeking a highly motivated **PhD student** to investigate the immunity and microbiome of **marine transmissible cancers** at the Max Planck Institute and University of Bremen.

Background

The Max Planck Institute for Marine Microbiology (MPI-MM), founded in 1992 and located on the campus of the University of Bremen (Germany), is part of the Biology & Medical Section of the Max Planck Society. Its core research focuses on the diversity and functions of marine microorganisms and their interactions with the marine environment.

The institute comprises three major departments — Symbiosis (led by Nicole Dubilier), Molecular Ecology (Rudolf Amann), and Biogeochemistry (Marcel Kuypers) — each with several research groups and associated projects, which together span disciplines from field research and expedition work, through laboratory-based molecular and metabolic studies, up to bioinformatic approaches.

The Institute, with its approximately 240 employees, is located in Bremen (Germany), a dynamic university city in northern Germany. The city is home to a vibrant research community, with 4 universities and around 50 research institutes in fields ranging from marine sciences to aerospace engineering. The city's strong focus on innovation and its international academic environment make it an attractive destination for researchers.

Your profile and eligibility requirements

The ideal candidate will be self-motivated, passionate about research, and willing to learn, develop and apply state-of-the-art methods. Previous experience in molecular techniques (DNA/RNA extraction, PCR, sequencing library preparation) and/or histology or cytology will be valued. Basic computational skills for genomic or transcriptomic data analysis (R, Python, or similar) are an asset but not a prerequisite for the position. The candidate should demonstrate curiosity, initiative, good communication skills and a strong interest in evolutionary biology.

Applicants should hold an MSc (or equivalent degree) with a strong background in biology or computer science, and have some knowledge of cancer evolution, and a drive to pursue their PhD in an international and multidisciplinary setting.

A good command of English, both written and spoken, is essential for effective communication in our international research environment.

Our offer

The successful candidate will have the opportunity to do a PhD thesis that combines fieldwork, cyto-histological diagnosis, molecular techniques and analyses of sequencing data of transmissible cancers in bivalves. We offer a fully funded 3-year research position. It will include access to state-of-the-art laboratory facilities, high-performance computing resources, and opportunities for international training and conference participation. The



working language of the group is English; knowledge of German is not required, but free German language courses are available through the institute.

The position is currently offered for three years with the possibility of an extension by another year subject to future funding acquisition. Starting date is flexible. The salary is fixed in accordance with the collective agreement for the public sector: 65% TVöD E13. The salary includes all mandatory social insurance contributions for health care, long-term care, unemployment, and retirement. The place of employment is Bremen (Germany).

Your application

We look forward to receiving your complete online application through the Max Planck recruitment website:

<https://career.mpi-bremen.de/jobposting/fd71854ae887707f586dfa0d24e9a18a6d2225e60>

To apply, please be prepared to submit:

1. a statement describing your research interest and motivation to apply for one of these positions as well as your qualifications for the positions (max. 1 page),
2. a full CV,
3. transcript of records for the master and bachelor degrees, and
4. names and contact details of up to two potential referees.

Closing date for applications: **16 November 2025**. Applications are reviewed on a rolling basis and interviews may be scheduled if complete application documents are available. Please feel free to contact Dr Alicia L Bruzos for informal enquires about the position.

Further information

You can visit our institute website at www.mpi-bremen.de or Bruzos website at <https://albruzos.github.io>.

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact:

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Equal opportunity statement: The Max Planck Society is committed to diversity and equal opportunities. We explicitly encourage applications from individuals regardless of gender, age, disability status, family situation, sexual orientation, nationality, or cultural background.

Data privacy: Personal data will be processed exclusively for the purpose of the selection procedure in accordance with applicable data protection regulations.