

Opportunity Title: USDA-APHIS Laboratory Fellowship
Opportunity Reference Code: USDA-APHIS-2023-0118

Organization U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)

Reference Code USDA-APHIS-2023-0118

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A complete application consists of:

- An application
- Transcript(s) – For this opportunity, an unofficial transcript or copy of the student academic records printed by the applicant or by academic advisors from internal institution systems may be submitted. All transcripts must be in English or include an official English translation. Click [here](#) for detailed information about acceptable transcripts.
- A current resume/CV, including academic history, employment history, relevant experiences, and publication list
- Two educational or professional recommendations. At least one recommendation must be received in order for the mentor to view your application.

Application Deadline 6/9/2023 3:00:00 PM Eastern Time Zone

Description *Applications are reviewed on a rolling-basis.

APHIS Office/Lab and Location: A research opportunity is currently available with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), within the Foreign Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory (FADDL) at the Plum Island Animal Disease Center, located in Orient Point, New York.

Research Project: The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Animal Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) Foreign Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory (FADDL) at the Plum Island Animal Disease Center, New York provides diagnostic capability to assist the United States and the USDA in diagnosing and responding to Foreign Animal Disease (FAD) threats. Specifically, the FADDL provides diagnostics for foreign animal diseases.

The selected participant will collaborate with microbiologists, veterinarians, statisticians, and biotechnicians to support the validation services section of FADDL. They will have the opportunity to learn about transboundary animal diseases and their impact on trade, surveillance procedures and methods, diagnostic testing, sample handling and management, as well as how automated platforms are used in laboratories, troubleshoot said platforms and assays, and validation study guidelines and design.

Learning Objectives: Research activities include, but are not limited to:

- Learn and perform high-throughput nucleic acid extraction and real-time polymerase chain reaction (rPCR) methodologies for the detection of foreign animal disease agents
- Conduct diagnostic assay performance characteristic evaluation in support of the validation of foreign animal disease diagnostic assays
- Analyze data, summarize findings on forms, reports, and via presentations



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- Assist in routine laboratory duties to ensure quality programs and maintenance programs are supported
- Assist in laboratory diagnostic needs in support of foreign animal disease case investigations

Mentor(s): The mentor for this opportunity is Chungwon J. Chung (Chungwon.Chung@usda.gov). If you have questions about the nature of the research please contact the mentor.

Anticipated Appointment Start Date: 2023. Start date is flexible and will depend on a variety of factors.

Appointment Length: The appointment will initially be for one year but may be renewed up to five years upon recommendation of APHIS and is contingent on the availability of funds.

Level of Participation: The appointment is full-time.

Participant Stipend: The participants will receive a monthly stipend commensurate with educational level and experience. **The annual stipend rate for this position will be determined upon selection and estimated to range between \$55,000 and \$65,000. Relocation expenses are not available.**

Citizenship Requirements: This opportunity is available to U.S. citizens only.

Background Investigation Requirements: Background investigations are required for the selected candidate so the individual can work in biocontainment without an escort and handle select agents. Adjudication of a Special Agency Check (SAC) is required before the selected candidate can start at Plum Island Animal Disease Center. An advanced BI security clearance will be conducted/adjudicated after start date, allowing for unescorted access to biocontainment. An APHIS Select Agent Clearance is also required so that the selected candidate can work with select agents. Paperwork for all of these clearances will be sent to the selected candidate after acceptance of the official offer from ORAU.

ORISE Information: This program, administered by ORAU through its contract with the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) to manage the Oak Ridge Institute for Science and Education (ORISE), was established through an interagency agreement between DOE and APHIS. Participants do not become employees of USDA, APHIS, DOE or the program administrator, and there are no employment-related benefits. Proof of health insurance is required for participation in this program. Health insurance can be obtained through ORISE.

This is an equal opportunity program open to all qualified individuals without regard to race, color, age, sex, religion, national origin, mental or physical disability, genetic information, sexual orientation, or covered veteran's status.

Questions: Please visit our [Program Website](#). After reading, if you have additional questions about the application process please email USDA-APHIS@orau.org and include the reference code for this opportunity.

Qualifications The qualified candidate should have received an associate's, bachelor's, master's, or doctoral degree in one of the relevant fields.

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Research is performed in a BSL-2/3 laboratory. Interacting with unknown pathogenic agents mandates the use of biocontainment hoods and wearing personal protective gear, which can be strenuous on the individual. Individuals will be required to shower out at the end of the day after conducting research in bio-containment. As a condition of this opportunity, all personnel entering the BSL-3 biocontainment facilities at Plum Island shall not be in contact with specific susceptible animals off the Plum Island premises for a period of five (5) days after leaving biocontainment. Currently, restricted species are cattle, sheep, goats, deer, other ruminants & swine. Horses, birds (agricultural and pet birds) & rabbits are normally permitted but restrictions may be placed on individuals conducting research with contagious agents affecting these species. Restricted livestock or other restricted animals should not be housed on the premises where the individual under quarantine restrictions lives.

The appointment requires daily travel to and from Orient Point, NY or Old Saybrook, CT and Plum Island aboard government-provided marine vessels.

Highly preferred skills include:

- Knowledge of general laboratory practices including aseptic technique and the use of common laboratory equipment (centrifuge, micropipettes, biosafety cabinets, microscope, etc.)
- Proficient in technical writing and creating and delivering oral presentations
- Proficient in communication (oral and writing), interpersonal and organizational skills
- Demonstrates critical thinking skills and ability to analyze and interpret data
- Flexible and self-motivated to complete assigned tasks
- Eager to learn from peers and to work in a team environment
- Proficient in using basic word processing and data management software
- A background in biology, virology, and/or foreign animal diseases

Preferred skills include:

- BSL-3 laboratory experience
- Experience in working with select agents
- Knowledge of polymerase chain reaction methodologies

**Eligibility
Requirements**

- **Citizenship:** U.S. Citizen Only
- **Degree:** Associate's Degree, Bachelor's Degree, Master's Degree, or Doctoral Degree.
- **Discipline(s):**
 - **Communications and Graphics Design** ([1](#)👁)
 - **Life Health and Medical Sciences** ([11](#)👁)