

The Institute of Evolutionary Biology seeks a: Master's student for a 6-month research stay with stipend

The Institute of Evolutionary Biology (IBE) is a joint Institute of the Spanish National Research Council (CSIC) and the Pompeu Fabra University (UPF) located in Barcelona city. IBE research is focused on the processes and mechanisms that generate biodiversity and on understanding the genetic basis of evolution. The IBE is a center member of Barcelona Biomedical Research Park (PRBB).

Description – Comas Lab (Human Genome Biodiversity Lab)

The Comas Lab studies human genetic diversity and evolutionary history, with a particular focus on the population genomics of the Iberian Peninsula, North Africa, and the wider Mediterranean and African world. The group combines molecular genotyping, comparative genomic datasets, and interdisciplinary collaboration with historians and anthropologists to reconstruct migration, admixture, and ancestry processes that have shaped present-day human populations.

Lab website: <https://www.ibe.upf-csic.es/comas>

Project description

AFROEUR: genetic diversity and relatedness of the oldest Afro-European human population, investigates the genetic legacy of the Transatlantic slave trade in Europe, focusing on the influx of Sub-Saharan African (SSA) ancestry into the Iberian Peninsula. The project centers on the morenos of Gibrleón (Huelva, southwest Spain), a community with SSA-associated phenotypes and oral histories linking their ancestry to 16th-century slave ships, whose presence is documented since at least 1540. Due to historical discrimination during the Franco dictatorship, this group has historically been hesitant to collaboration with genetic research, making this study a unique and important first effort. Through close collaboration with historians and anthropologists, 60 moreno volunteers have already been genotyped.

Using molecular and bioinformatic approaches, the project aims to quantify Sub-Saharan African, North African, and European ancestry components and to characterize patterns of genetic diversity, relatedness, and inbreeding within the moreno population in comparison with other Iberian populations, contributing to a multidisciplinary reconstruction of the genetic history of this community.

Duties

We are looking for a student with a strong interest in human population genetics, ancestry, and the historical and anthropological dimensions of genetic diversity. The candidate's tasks will involve:

1) Interpretation and contextualization of ancestry and admixture results (Sub-Saharan African, North African, and European components) in light of historical and anthropological evidence on the Transatlantic slave trade and the Iberian Peninsula.

2) Analysis of genetic relatedness, inbreeding, and genetic diversity patterns within the moreno population, in comparison with other Iberian populations.

3) Literature review and synthesis connecting population genetics findings with the historical record of enslaved African populations in Iberia, contributing to the interdisciplinary narrative of the project.

4) Support for the ethical, community-sensitive communication of results back to project collaborators and participants.

5) Statistical analysis and visualization of population genomic data to characterize ancestry and population structure.

Candidate requisites

- Degree in a branch of Health Sciences or Biological Sciences (e.g. Genetics, Bioinformatics, Biology, Biomedicine, Biotechnology/Environmental Sciences); degrees in fields related to computation and/or anthropology can also be considered.
- If the Bachelor's degree has already been completed, the candidate must be enrolled in an official Master's programme in Biological Sciences or Computation (e.g. Genetics, Genomics, Physical Anthropology, Forensic Genetics, Biomedicine, Bioinformatics, Data Science).
- Good command of English (B2 level or higher is desirable).
- Candidates must meet the general eligibility requirements of the [CSIC JAE Intro ICU 2026 call](#).

We will value:

- Background or strong interest in human population genetics, ancient DNA, human evolutionary history, and/or the anthropology of genetics/identity
- Experience connecting genetic data with historical or anthropological sources
- Skills in academic writing and science communication.
- Basic knowledge of bioinformatics and genomic data analysis
- Skills in statistical analysis / visualization

What do we offer?

- A part time contract (20 hours per week) for 6 months with 700 eur monthly stipend.
- Research experience in one of the leading labs in the field of human population genomics and Iberian/Afro-European ancestry.

- Strong theoretical and practical training in population genomics, bioinformatics, and interdisciplinary research combining genomic, historical, and anthropological data, with the possibility of participating in a scientific publication if results are adequate.
- Location in Barcelona (passeig Marítim de la Barceloneta, 37 – 49), next to the beach.

Application process

Applications must be submitted electronically through the CSIC JAE Intro ICU 2026 platform: <https://www.convocatorias.csic.es/convoca/> (see the call information at <https://sede.csic.gob.es/icu2026>). This position is offered in the second application period (1 to 30 September 2026). Applicants may submit only one application and may indicate up to three training plans within the same CSIC institute, ordered by preference. Required documentation includes proof of identity, academic transcript, proof of Master's enrolment/admission if applicable, a signed declaration, and a Europass CV link.

For scientific enquiries about this project, contact carlos.sarabia@upf.edu.

For administrative questions about the JAE Intro ICU 2026 call, contact jae@csic.es.

For other questions, contact gestio_ajuts@ibe.upf-csic.es.