

Freie Universität Berlin - Fachbereich Geowissenschaften - Institut für Geologische Wissenschaften Planetary Sciences, SFB 1759



The SFB 1759 "Habitability as a fundamental planetary process: Towards a paradigm shift away from our perception of the uniqueness of Earth" is a newly established Collaborative Research Center studying habitability for life as we know it based on fundamental physio-geo-chemical processes set by the planet's evolution. The study of planetary habitability in this SFB is therefore oriented along the planetary boundary conditions set by astronomy, physics, chemistry and geology, rather than Earth-specific biological evolution. By focusing on the environments in which life may (or may not) evolve, the SFB will be able to define which signatures (such as trace elements in an atmosphere) can be explained by abiotic processes, and which would indeed need some form of extraterrestrial life, leading to a new database of potential biosignatures as well as traces of habitability. As finding potential biosignatures or traces of habitability may also impact society, the SFB takes a holistic approach and investigates also ethical considerations, how scientists communicate scientific results to the public and how these are discussed in social media, as well as the general perception of the public and factors influencing this. In the SFB, different views on one of the most important questions of humanity — are we alone in the universe? — will therefore be examined hand in hand with different perspectives in natural sciences, social sciences, and humanities. More information: <https://www.geo.fu-berlin.de/en/geol/fachrichtungen/planet/projects/SFB1759> The planned position is offered at the Freie Universität Berlin, Institute of Geological Sciences, in Berlin, Germany. Review of applications will start on the day after the application deadline until the position is filled. The earliest starting date of the position is the 1 October 2026. The starting dates are flexible but funding is limited to 30 June 2030. Applications should be written in English and include a cover letter, the names and email addresses of three referees, CV incl. publication list, and copies of degree certificates, all combined into a single pdf (max. 10 MB). It is possible to apply for multiple positions offered within the SFB at the same time, please indicate the reference code(s) for the position(s) that you are applying for and email your application to coord@sfb1759-planetary-habitability.de.

Research assistant (postdoc) (f/m/d)

full-time job limited till 30.06.2030 salary grade (Entgeltgruppe) 13 TV-L FU reference code: SFB1759-C03-FP

City: Berlin; Starting date (earliest): At the earliest possible; Duration: befristet bis 30.06.2030; Remuneration: Entgeltgruppe 13 TV-L FU; Reference number: SFB1759-C03-FP; Closing date: 10/08/26

Tasks

We are seeking applicants at post-doc level for a position in the newly established collaborative research center SFB 1759.

Biosignature assessment needs to consider its stability and resilience against degradation in order to persist in the environment over relevant exposure timescales. Studying the (photo)chemical evolution and stability of biosignatures experimentally in simulated planetary environmental conditions will allow us to understand kinetic pathways, degradation routes, fragmentation products and volatilization. The project also addresses

the crucial question of how uncertainty in biosignature detection is communicated and perceived by the public. The Postdoctoral researcher will conduct microbial experiments relevant for icy moons with an electron gun in Berlin and in Leipzig. In addition, UV radiation campaigns have to be conducted in both Berlin and in the laboratories of our collaborators at the Open University in the UK, and possibly sample preparation for exposure experiments in space. The tasks also include analysis with the LILBID experiment at FUB of the samples before and after exposure. For more information, please contact Frank Postberg (frank.postberg@fu-berlin.de).

Requirements

Requirements:

Completed PhD in Planetary Sciences, Geology, Chemistry, Physics, Biology or a related field by the time of employment.

Desirable:

- Excellent academic record and doctorate/PhD thesis
- Experience in a chemical or a microbiology laboratory as well as mass spectrometry is an advantage
- Experience in chemical analysis is an advantage
- Good analytical and problem-solving skills, good communication skills, and the ability to work independently and as part of a team
- Very good written and spoken English (B2/C1)

Application

Applications should be sent by e-mail, together with significant documents, indicating the **reference code, no later than August 10th, 2026** in PDF format (preferably as *one* document) to Prof. Dr. Frank Postberg: coord@sfb1759-planetary-habitability.de or postal to

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Institut für Geologische Wissenschaften
Planetologie, SFB 1759 / Planetary Sciences, SFB 1759
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With an electronic application, you acknowledge that FU Berlin saves and processes your data. FU Berlin cannot guarantee the security of your personal data if you send your application over an unencrypted connection.

Freie Universität Berlin is an equal opportunity employer.

More information at <https://stellenticket.de/206035/BUA/>
Offer visible until 10/08/26

