

## Open PhD position

# Branching spirals in deep time: Ammonoid phylogeny and macroecology

The Nekton Palaeobiology group at the Department of Palaeontology of the University of Zurich invites applications for a PhD position. The successful candidate will work in a Swiss National Science Foundation supported research project under the supervision of Adjunct Prof. Dr. Christian Klug. Ammonoids range among the most important groups of invertebrates used in biostratigraphy and are excellent objects to address a broad range of palaeobiological questions, and yet, there is no up-to-date phylogeny. This research project is highly collaborative and focuses on the evolution of ammonoids.

The offered PhD project will focus on building an ammonoid phylogeny in a Bayesian framework in collaboration with two Postdocs, the project leader, and a large group of international collaborators. The PhD candidate will: 1) help to define morphological characters for character matrices to study ammonoid evolution; 2) choose a large group of ammonoids, for which representative taxa shall be scored; 3) carry out Bayesian and parsimony analyses, which (4) will be integrated in an ammonoid supertree; 5) study an additional important aspect of ammonoids, such as dimorphism or variability.

The ideal candidate will be a highly motivated student of Life- or Earth Sciences with a biological, geological or palaeontological background. Excellent writing skills in English are required. Knowledge in working with methods to reconstruct phylogenies such as Bayesian and parsimony would be great; alternatively, it is expected that this knowledge is acquired early during the project. Some computational skills or experience with statistics are expected. Knowledge on ammonoid palaeobiology would also be very helpful. German language skills are an asset in daily life in and around the university but are not mandatory for the position.

The prospective student is expected to have received a master's degree or equivalent by the start of the PhD.

The University of Zurich is one of the top research institutions in Europe. The city, near the Alps, offers conditions for an excellent quality of life. With researchers working in Palaeontology and Evolutionary Biology, the University of Zurich offers an exceptional

academic environment for research and study. The Department of Palaeontology and the newly opened exhibits of the Natural History Museum of the University of Zurich further offer state-of-the-art research facilities in an international and stimulating academic environment.

To apply, please send a letter of motivation including information on previous scientific work and publications if available (maximum of 2 pages), a CV (maximum of 2 pages), and contact details of two referees. Please ensure that all those parts are combined into a single PDF-file.

Together with an electronic copy of the Masters-thesis, please send your application to: Prof. Dr. Christian Klug ([chklug@pim.uzh.ch](mailto:chklug@pim.uzh.ch)).

Review of applications starts end of June 2026, but applications will be considered until the position is filled. Applicants should be prepared to be interviewed by beginning or second half of August 2026.

STARTING DATE OF PROJECT: October 1st, 2026.

<https://www.pim.uzh.ch/en.html>