



UNIL | Université de Lausanne

## PhD positions: comparative neuroscience of thermosensory circuits in nematodes

Employment Start Date: 1st October 2026 or to be agreed  
Contract Length: 1 year, renewable, maximum 4 years  
Department: Prof. Annika Nichols' Lab, Center for Integrative Genomics (CIG), University of Lausanne (UNIL), Switzerland

Animals have evolved a remarkable diversity of behaviours. How is it that nervous systems can generate diverse behaviour? We will use the small stereotypic nervous systems of *Caenorhabditis elegans* and *C. tropicalis* to investigate what differences in their nervous systems allow differences in behaviour. Both species have 300 neurons, with highly conserved anatomical and molecular identities. Yet, we find that *C. elegans* and *C. tropicalis* behave differently to heat stimuli. The Swiss National Science Foundation has funded my lab to determine which circuit, genetic and nervous system-wide functional differences underlie these differences in behaviour. My lab will be starting at the CIG in October 2026 in Lausanne, Switzerland. If you are fascinated about understanding the neuronal basis of behaviour, apply to my lab!

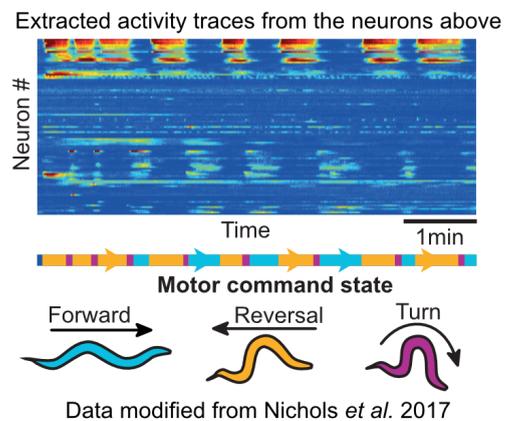
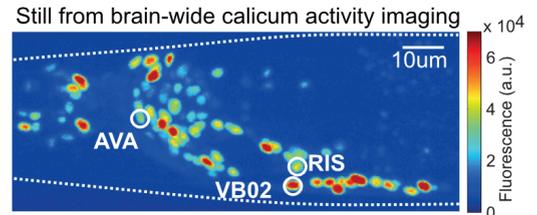
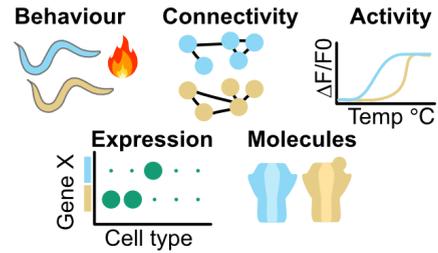
### Qualifications:

- Ideally the candidate should have completed a MSc in neuroscience, molecular biology, ecology and evolution, bioinformatics, data science or a related field.
- Previous experience in any of: *C. elegans*, calcium imaging, genetics, molecular biology, programming (Python), data analysis/visualisation and behaviour, are a plus. Candidates with an interest in developing these skills are also encouraged to apply.
- Excellent written and spoken English, strong communication skills, and the ability to work effectively in a team and contribute to collaborative projects.

**How to apply:** Please send an email to [annika.nichols@ugconnect.edu.au](mailto:annika.nichols@ugconnect.edu.au) with:

- a cover letter with a statement of why you would be interested in joining my lab and where you heard about the position
- a CV
- names and contacts of 2-3 references

Or apply through the advert on the UNIL homepage. Candidates will be evaluated starting in March 2026 and until the positions are filled. Only short-listed candidates will be contacted. For more information see my website: <https://www.nichols-lab.org/>



Data modified from Nichols *et al.* 2017