

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

Assistant Professor, Astrobiology Center (ABC), National Institutes of Natural Sciences

1. Job Title: Assistant Professor (1 position)

2. Division and Location: Exo-Planet Search Project Office, Astrobiology Center, Mitaka, Tokyo 181-8588 Japan

(Scope of possible changes) The location of work may be designated by NINS / ABC

3. Area of Expertise: Exoplanet science or related fields

4. Job Description:

The Astrobiology Center (ABC) was founded in 2015 under the National Institutes of Natural Sciences (NINS), an Inter-University Research Institute Corporation, comprising five institutes across distinct disciplines, including the National Astronomical Observatory of Japan (NAOJ) and the National Institute for Basic Biology (NIBB). ABC was established with NAOJ and NIBB as its founding institutes. ABC comprises three project offices: the Exo-Planet Search Project Office, which searches for and characterizes exoplanets; the Astrobiology Instrument Project Office, which develops advanced instrumentation for exoplanet observation; and the Exo-Life Search Project Office, which studies life's metabolic processes, such as photosynthesis, to guide the search for biosignatures on exoplanets. The importance of this interdisciplinary approach has grown considerably in recent years, as future large space telescopes and extremely large ground-based telescopes are expected to enable the detection of signs of life on exoplanets.

Exoplanet science has entered a pivotal era, transitioning from the discovery of exoplanets to their detailed characterization, driven by an unprecedented wave of international space missions and next-generation observational facilities. In the coming years, several international space missions, such as PLATO and the Nancy Grace Roman Space Telescope, are expected to reveal the population of exoplanets orbiting a wide variety of host stars. In coordination with these efforts, ABC aims to establish the occurrence rate of Earth-like planets in the habitable zone (η_{Earth}) around various types of host stars from the late 2020s through the 2030s, using both the radial velocity and transit methods, supported by the development of cutting-edge observational instruments and novel data-analysis techniques. Looking ahead to the era of direct imaging/spectroscopy of potentially habitable planets by future flagship missions such as the Habitable Worlds Observatory (HWO) in the 2040s, ABC is pursuing the development of advanced instrumentation. In the next decade, it will be essential to conduct detailed simulations to characterize habitable planet candidates and their atmospheres using next-generation observations to optimize observational strategies.

ABC invites applications from internationally recognized researchers who can make leading

contributions to the detection and characterization of exoplanets, including relevant theoretical research, through ongoing or near-term international missions, such as PLATO, Roman, and Ariel. ABC particularly welcomes applications from researchers who can propose novel science cases through observational simulations and related studies, and who can play a central role in next-generation missions planned for the 2030s and 2040s. The successful candidate is expected to contribute to one or more of the above initiatives within the Exo-Planet Search Project Office, and to advance astrobiology through next-generation exoplanet observations and theory. The candidate will also be required to promote interdisciplinary collaboration with the other project offices. In addition, ABC is seeking a researcher who will promote this interdisciplinary field of astrobiology through multi-disciplinary collaboration. The successful candidate will also be expected to contribute to the training and mentoring of early-career researchers, including graduate students affiliated with ABC.

(Scope of possible changes) The research and teaching activities may be designated by NINS / ABC

5. Terms of Appointment:

The successful candidate is expected to start working at ABC as soon as reasonably possible after the job offer. The term of the appointment will continue until the end of the Japanese academic year in which the candidate reaches mandatory retirement age of 65. The successful candidate will undergo a six-month probationary period upon commencement of employment.

6. Qualifications

- (1) Minimum Educational Requirement: Ph.D. or equivalent
- (2) Other Requirements: A track record of internationally recognized research in the relevant field of expertise, as well as experience of international collaborations.

7. Required Application Materials: (*All materials must be prepared in English. Materials submitted in any other language will not be accepted.)

- (1) Cover letter
- (2) Curriculum vitae
- (3) List of publications (Please separate refereed and non-refereed papers, and provide the citation count for each paper from ADS. SPIE and COSPAR proceedings may be included in refereed papers.)
- (4) Summary of past research activities including international collaborations (maximum 2 pages, A4 or Letter size)
- (5) Your commitment and plan to fulfill the duties with a detailed description of your research (maximum 2 pages, A4 or Letter size)
- (6) Anticipated start date of the job appointment
- (7) Contact information (email address and phone number) for prompt communication, and the email address of your current supervisor or line manager

(8) Two reference letters

All reference letters must be prepared by faculty/staff with tenured positions. These should be from references other than the current supervisor or line manager named in (7) above, in order to provide a broader assessment of the candidate. It is preferred that the two reference letters be provided by individuals based in different countries. Please ask your references to upload their letters directly via the URL indicated in 9 before the application closing date. Applicants are responsible for ensuring that the letters are submitted before the closing date for the application.

8. Application Deadline: September 30, 2026, 12:00 noon (Japan Standard Time)

9. How to Submit an Application:

Applicants are required to submit their application as follows.

- (1) Please access the following URL for registration: <https://forms.cloud.microsoft/r/GQFTDTFsdd>
- (2) After you submit the registration form, you will receive an email containing two URLs: (a) one for uploading your application documents, and (b) one for uploading your reference letters.
- (3) Please ask your references to upload their letters via the URL shown in (2)(b).
- (4) Please upload the application documents (from 7. (1) through (7) above) via the URL (2)(a). These files must be in PDF format (max 50 MB each, 100 MB in total, at most 10 files).

10. Contacts:

If you have any questions related to the job description, please contact:

Professor Teruyuki Hirano, Head of Exo-Planet Search Project Office, ABC

E-mail: abc-apply_AT_abc-nins.jp (replace _AT_ with @)

Subject of email: "Question on Assistant Professor of ABC Exo-planet Search Project Office"

If you have any questions related to the job application system or other items, please contact:

E-mail: job04-assistantprof_AT_ao.ac.jp (replace _AT_ with @)

Subject of email: "Question on Assistant Professor of ABC Exo-planet Search Project Office"

11. Selection Process:

Shortlisted candidates may be interviewed by the selection committee either in person or online. Travel and other expenses related to the interview will not be covered by ABC. If the selection committee determines that no suitable candidate has been identified, ABC reserves the right to conclude the search without making an appointment.

12. Working Conditions:

- (1) Work Type and Work Hours: The Discretionary Labor System for Professional Work shall be applied. (Standard work hours: 38.75 hrs/week, from 8:30 to 17:15 with an hour intermission.)
- (2) Holidays: Saturdays and Sundays, national holidays, New Year holidays (From December 29th to

January 3rd)

- (3) Paid leave: Annual paid leave, refreshment leave, summer closure, bereavement leave, etc.
- (4) Social Insurance: MEXT Mutual Aid Association (health insurance), Employees' Pension Insurance, Employment Insurance, Industrial Accident Compensation Insurance
- (5) Remuneration:
 - A) Salary: Annual salary shall be determined based on professional knowledge, skills, required education, and job experience as per the NINS regulations (NINS, or the National Institutes of Natural Sciences, is an upper-level organization that manages ABC). Payments will be made monthly in 12 equal installments.
 - B) Allowances: Dependent allowance, residential allowance, commutation allowance, and other allowances will be paid to employees who meet the conditions outlined in the NINS regulations. An amount equivalent to the year-end allowance and diligence allowance will be included in the annual salary.
 - C) Salary Increment: Once a year in accordance with the performance review
 - D) Retirement Allowance: Provided
 - E) Travel and relocation: Eligible employees will be provided with a relocation travel package to ABC, subject to the travel regulations of NINS (details must be arranged with the administration office).

13. Remarks:

- (1) This position is subject to the NINS Employee Regulations. The annual salary schedule indicated in Table (2) of the Research-Education Employee Base Annual Salary shall be applied to this position.
- (2) Policy for Equal Employment Opportunity: ABC is committed to diversity and inclusion in the workplace and strives to pay regard to advancing equality. To this end, this open recruitment has made use of positive action in accordance with Article 8 of the Equal Employment Opportunity Act for Men and Women (Special Provisions Concerning Measures for Female Workers). If you have taken leave(s) for maternity, childcare, and family care, please indicate it in your curriculum vitae. We will take it into account when assessing your performance.
- (3) NINS implements the program to support staff members (young researchers) who received educational loans (scholarships) from the Japan Student Services Organization (JASSO) and are now repaying them. For details, see <https://www.nins.jp/about/folder7/dairihenkan.html>
- (4) Smoking is prohibited on the premises, excluding designated outdoor smoking areas.
- (5) Information submitted in your application documents will not be used for any purpose other than the selection process and for contacting you with necessary notices in connection with the selection. Once the selection process is complete, we will securely dispose of all application documents and personal information except those submitted by the successful candidate.

14. Name of Recruiter:

Inter-University Research Institute Corporation, Natural Institutes of Natural Sciences (NINS),
Astrobiology Center (ABC)