

The Institute of Geography at the University of Neuchâtel invites applications for a position as a

Doctoral Assistant (75%)

Starting date: 1 February 2027

Responsibilities

- ▶ Participation in teaching the Master's course "Climate Change Adaptation".
- ▶ Participation in practical classes for the Bachelor's course "Introduction to Human Geography".
- ▶ Participation in teaching the interdisciplinary Bachelor's course "Climate Change and Society".
- ▶ Participation in teaching the Master's course "Géographies publiques".
- ▶ Administrative and organizational duties within the Institute (coordination of Erasmus exchanges, organization of scientific meetings).
- ▶ Participation in examination and assessment activities.
- ▶ Supervision and support of Master's theses.
- ▶ Completion of a PhD thesis under the supervision of Prof. Chahan Kropf (in French or English), within the *Climate, Societies and Ecosystems* research group. The PhD topic will be developed jointly with the selected candidate, taking into account their interests, skills, and research ideas. It should address questions at the intersection of climate, society, and ecosystems, ideally combining approaches from the social and natural sciences (for example, institutional analysis alongside quantitative methods). Two possible research directions are suggested as examples:
 - *Mobility, society, and planetary boundaries*: To what extent can a car-based society be compatible with planetary boundaries and societal needs? What are the implications for the future of our lifestyles, infrastructure, and social structures?
 - *Societies and extreme weather events*: How have societies been shaped by their historical exposure to extreme weather events, and what can these relationships tell us about their future in a rapidly changing climate?

These two directions are not exhaustive. Alternative research proposals exploring the relationships between human societies, the environment, and global change are equally welcome.

Profil

- ▶ A university Master's degree in a discipline relevant to the relationships between climate, society, and the environment, including human or physical geography, social sciences (sociology, anthropology, political science, economics, etc.), natural sciences (climatology, ecology, physics, etc.), environmental sciences, sustainable development, urban planning, engineering, or a related field, completed by autumn 2026 at the latest. Candidates with unconventional or interdisciplinary academic backgrounds are also encouraged to apply.
- ▶ Openness to diverse academic backgrounds. We value curiosity, motivation, and the ability to develop original approaches more than belonging to any particular discipline. Previous experience in interdisciplinary research is an advantage but is not required and can be developed during the PhD.
- ▶ Interest in contributing to the development of a new research group. Enthusiasm for actively shaping the group's collaborative culture, reflecting on its ways of working, developing scientific collaborations, and contributing to a stimulating, open, and supportive working environment guided by two principles: "*Eile mit Weile*" (moving forward thoughtfully, without unnecessary haste) and "*Tough on science, kind to people*" (maintaining high scientific

standards while treating people with kindness and respect).

- ▶ Strong interest in interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary approaches. A willingness to collaborate with researchers from different disciplines, understand their perspectives, methods, scientific cultures, and objectives, and build bridges between these approaches to generate new knowledge. This interest also extends to engagement with stakeholders beyond academia, including NGOs, public authorities, and the private sector.
- ▶ Intellectual curiosity, critical thinking, and enthusiasm for exploring new research questions. We are looking for someone who takes initiative, develops their own ideas, and is comfortable working independently. The position offers substantial academic freedom, combined with committed, flexible scientific supervision tailored to individual needs. Particular emphasis is placed on supporting personal ideas and initiatives, encouraging the exploration of new research directions, and helping each doctoral researcher shape their own scientific and professional development.
- ▶ Interest in research that has an impact beyond academia. The group's activities aim not only to produce rigorous scientific knowledge but also to foster its practical use in society. Examples include the development of widely used open-source software (e.g., CLIMADA), the preparation of policy briefs and policy-relevant scientific publications, and collaboration with practitioners and decision-makers. We are looking for someone interested in connecting fundamental research, practical applications, and societal impact.
- ▶ Language skills: Good command of French and English. Candidates may further develop their French language skills during the first months of employment if necessary.

Conditions d'engagement

- ▶ **Contract duration:** One year, renewable three times (potentially four times).
- ▶ **Salary (first year):** CHF 55,503 gross per year at 75% employment.
- ▶ **Research time:** 50% of the working time is dedicated to personal research (PhD thesis).
- ▶ **Workplace:** Institute of Geography, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Neuchâtel, Switzerland.

Please submit your application by email to Secretariat.Geographie@unine.ch no later than **30 November 2026**. Applications should include the following documents, combined into a single attachment:

- Motivation letter
- Curriculum vitae (CV)
- Master's thesis
- Copy of the most recent degree certificate
- Contact details (including email addresses) of two academic referees

The interviews with the shortlisted candidates will take place on 07.12.2026 (December 7, 2026).

Further information :

Institute of geography:

www.unine.ch/geographie/

University regulations governing academic assistants (Statutes, Chapter 6):

https://www.unine.ch/media/wp-content/uploads/sites/17/statuts_unine.pdf

Doctoral regulations:

<https://www.unine.ch/lettres/reglements-et-directives/>

For further questions: Prof. Chahan Kropf chahan.kropf@usys.ethz.ch