M.S. Position in Social Immunity – Penick Lab, Auburn University

The Penick Lab at Auburn University is recruiting a fully funded Master's student to join our team beginning Fall 2025. Our lab explores the evolution and ecological success of social insects through integrative research that spans behavior, physiology, microbiology, and ecology. This M.S. project will focus on social immunity in ants, investigating how investment in antimicrobial defenses shapes microbial communities across ant species.

Ideal Candidate

We are looking for a highly motivated student with a strong interest in ants, social evolution, microbiology, and host-microbe interactions. Ideal candidates will have experience or enthusiasm for microbial culturing, molecular techniques—particularly DNA metabarcoding—and fieldwork. An interest in science communication is also a plus, as the Penick Lab places a strong emphasis on public outreach and encourages students to share their research through media and creative projects.

About the Lab

The Penick Lab is part of the Department of Entomology & Plant Pathology at Auburn University. Our research spans multiple themes including social immunity, urban ecology, climate change, and nest architecture, and takes us from city sidewalks to remote forests. Learn more about our work at penicklab.com.

Details about the M.S. program at Auburn University can be found here.

Application Process

To apply, email the following to **Dr. Clint Penick (czp0134@auburn.edu)**:

- A short statement of interest outlining your background and research goals.
- Your CV or resume.
- Contact info for two references.

Applications received by April 30, 2025 will receive full consideration.

Prospective students will also need to formally apply to Auburn University's Graduate School. See full requirements here.