Curriculum vitae

Positions

- **Coordinating Researcher**, University of Coimbra, Portugal (2025 – today)
- **Assistant Researcher**, University of Coimbra, Portugal (2019 – 2025)
- **Lecturer in Ecology**, University of South Wales, UK (2018 – 2019)
- **Marie Curie Fellow**, Cardiff University, UK & EMBRAPA-Florestas, Brazil (2015 – 2018)
- **Research Associate, School of Biosciences**, Cardiff University, UK (2012 – 2015)
- **Teaching Assistant (Animal Anatomy and Histology; Histological Techniques; Ecotoxicology)**, Universidade dos Açores, Portugal (2008 – 2012)
- **Intern – Section of Zoological Anatomy & Taxonomy (SATZ), Histology & Histochemistry, Ecotoxicology of volcanic emissions**, Universidade dos Açores, Portugal (2007 – 2008)
- **Intern – XIII Scientific Expedition to Flores & Corvo Islands (Marine & Terrestrial Invertebrate Ecology, Scuba Sampling)**, Azores, Portugal (2007)
- **Intern – Shellfish Husbandry, Ecology & Larval Physiology (Ornamental Shrimps)**, Universidad Autónoma de México (UNAM), Sisal, Mexico (2005)

Coordination roles

- Coordinator, Environmental Genomics Laboratory (EnGeL-UC), UC Biotech, University of Coimbra (Since April 2025)
- Co-coordinator, Soil Health Research Line, Centre for Functional Ecology (CFE), University of Coimbra (Since January 2024)
- Co-coordinator, Thematic Line 2 – Sustainable Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, LabTerra – Laboratory for Land Use Sustainability and Ecosystem Services (Since November 2023)
- Work Package 4 leader (Approaches for Soil Health Assessment); led the WP4 sessions at the kick-off meeting (Wageningen, 2023) and the General Assemblies (Coimbra 2024, Nancy 2025, Berlin 2026), BENCHMARKS, Horizon Europe (GA 101091010) (Since 2023)

Education

- **Postgraduate Certificate in Education (Fellow of the Higher Education Academy)**, Higher Education Academy, United Kingdom (2018-2019)
- **Ph.D. in Cellular & Molecular Biology**, Universidade dos Açores (Ponta Delgada, Portugal) (2008-2012). *The effects of extreme environments of volcanic origin using earthworms as models* — With honourable mention link
- **M.Sc. Shellfish Biology, Fisheries and Culture**, School of Ocean Sciences, University of Wales (Bangor, UK) (2005-2006). *Propagation and Nutrition of the soft coral Sinularia s.p.*
- **B.Sc. in Biology (First Class Honours)**, Universidade dos Açores (Ponta Delgada, Portugal) (2001-2005). *Physiology and Nutrition in Larvae of the Cleaner Shrimp Lysmata amboinensis in the First Days of Life* — First Class Honours link

- **Naval Instruction (1st year)**, Escola Naval (Portuguese Army Navy University) (2000-2001)

Distinctions

- 2019 — Elected Best Student Partnership (Lecturing) of University of South Wales, University of South Wales
- 2018 — Short-Listed for Best Lecturer of University of South Wales, University of South Wales
- 2015 — Top 5 finalist of the Royal Geographical Society grant contest "Land Rover Bursary", Royal Geographical Society
- 2015 — 3rd Place in the PacBio SMRT grant contest, Pacific Biosciences Inc.
- 2012 — 4th Place for the Best Business Idea with the project "GEOMARTEC", Governo dos Açores
- 2011 — Mexican Government Scholarship for Advanced Postgraduate Studies, Mexican Government
- 2008 — Best Poster Award, International Congress of Metals and Genetics (ICMG 2008), Université Paris Descartes
- 2008 — PhD Scholarship, Fundo Regional para a Ciência e Tecnologia
- 2005 — M.Sc. Scholarship, European Social Fund
- 2001 — B.Sc. Scholarship, Universidade dos Acores

Memberships

- Environmental Genomics Laboratory (ENGEL), University of Coimbra — Principal Researcher (since 2024)
- European Reference Genome Atlas (ERGA) — Member (since 2023)
- Global Soil Biodiversity Initiative (SOILBon) — Member (since 2023)
- International Network on Soil Biodiversity (NETSOB), contributing to GLOSOB — Member (since 2023)
- British Ecological Society — Member (since 2019)
- Marie Curie Alumni Association — Member (since 2018)
- Society for the Study of Evolution — Member (since 2012)
- Systematic Biology Society — Member (since 2012)
- International Society of Computational Biology — Member (since 2010)
- Society of Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry (SETAC) — Member (since 2008)
- Institute of Marine Engineering, Science & Technology (IMarEST) — Member (since 2005)
- Sociedade Portuguesa de Ecologia — Member of the Scientific Committee of the National Ecology Meeting (since 2021)

Languages

Portuguese (native), English (excellent), Spanish (excellent), French (average)

In the media

- Earthworms: integral ecosystem engineers — CORDIS Web Forum
- Earthworms — integral ecosystem engineers — phys.org

- The Volcanic Earthworm on Newsweek! — Newsweek
- An Azorean story that is over half a billion years old — Açoriano Oriental (Local Azorean Journal)

Selected publications

- Leitão, R.; Ferreira, T.; Ferreira, N. G. C.; Orozco-terWengel, P.; Kille, P.; Brown, G. G.; **Cunha, L.** (2026). Compartment-specific responses of soil, root, and earthworm gut microbiomes to Terra Preta de Índio–inspired amendments in a tropical latosol. *Applied Soil Ecology*, 225, 107278. doi:10.1016/j.apsoil.2026.107278
- Fraga Dornellas, L.; Mata, V.A.; Mendes, S.; Leitão, R.; Bartz, M.; Nascimento, E.; Costa, J.; Sousa, J.P.; **Cunha, L.** (2025). Establishing DNA-Based Strategies for Soil Biodiversity Assessment: Insights From Carabid Beetles. *Ecology and Evolution*, 15(11), p.e72461. doi:10.1002/ece3.72461
- Lombardo, U.; Arroyo-Kalin, M.; Schmidt, M.; Huisman, H.; Lima, H. P.; de Paula Moraes, C.; Neves, E. G.; et al. (2022). Evidence confirms an anthropic origin of Amazonian Dark Earths. *Nature Communications*, 13, 3444. doi:10.1038/s41467-022-31064-2
- Demetrio, W. C.; Conrado, A. C.; Acioli, A. N.; Casadei Ferreira, A.; Bartz, M. L.; James, S. W.; da Silva, E.; et al. (2021). A "Dirty" Footprint: Macroinvertebrate diversity in Amazonian Anthropic Soils. *Global Change Biology*, 27(19), 4575-4591. doi:10.1111/gcb.15752
- White, H. J.; León-Sánchez, L.; Burton, V. J.; Cameron, E. K.; Caruso, T.; **Cunha, L.**; Dirilgen, T.; et al. (2020). Methods and approaches to advance soil macroecology. *Global Ecology and Biogeography*, 29(10), 1674-1690. doi:10.1111/geb.13156
- **Cunha, L.**; Montiel, R.; Novo, M.; Orozco-Terwengel, P.; Rodrigues, A.; Morgan, A. J.; Kille, P. (2014). Living on a volcano's edge: genetic isolation of an extremophile terrestrial metazoan. *Heredity*, 112(2), 132-142. doi:10.1038/hdy.2013.84

Full list: https://luiscunhamx.github.io/publications.html