JULIAN MERCER

BIOLOGIST

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PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

Biologist with 7+ years in laboratory and field research on microbial ecology and environmental genomics. Plans experiments, analyzes sequencing data, publishes findings, and collaborates with agencies and industry partners to turn laboratory results into practical recommendations.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Staff Biologist Jun 2020 - Present
Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, Berkeley, CA

- Led a soil microbiome project that sequenced 240 samples and identified three bacterial groups linked to drought resilience.
- Processed 16S sequencing data with QIIME 2 and R, cutting analysis time per batch from five days to two.
- Authored two peer-reviewed papers and presented results at three scientific conferences.
- Managed a $180K grant budget for reagents and sequencing, finishing the project 4% under plan.
- Supervised two research technicians and a graduate intern on sampling protocols and data quality.
- Designed qPCR experiments with replicate controls and reference genes, improving the reproducibility of expression data across runs.
- Analyzed sequencing datasets with R and Python, summarizing findings for collaborators in clear figures and short weekly updates.

Research Biologist Aug 2017 - May 2020
Monterey Bay Aquarium Research Institute, Moss Landing, CA

- Collected and preserved 150 water samples on four research cruises following strict contamination controls.
- Extracted DNA and ran PCR for plankton community profiling, achieving a 94% amplification success rate.
- Built statistical models of species abundance and temperature in R to support a coastal monitoring report.
- Coordinated with agency partners to share datasets and methods in standardized formats.
- Maintained biosafety documentation and trained four lab members on sterile technique and waste handling procedures.
- Coordinated shared equipment schedules across three research groups, reducing instrument booking conflicts by about 40%.

Laboratory Biologist Jul 2015 - Jul 2017
Thermo Fisher Scientific, Carlsbad, CA

- Validated nucleic acid extraction kits by comparing yield and purity across 60 environmental samples.
- Documented validation results in technical notes used by application scientists for customer support.
- Troubleshot inhibition issues in PCR assays, restoring consistent performance for a high-volume customer protocol.

CORE SKILLS

Laboratory research | Data analysis | Microbial ecology | 16S sequencing | QIIME 2 | R | PCR and qPCR | DNA extraction | Field sampling | Experimental design | Statistical modeling | Grant budgeting | Scientific publishing | Team supervision

EDUCATION

M.S. in Biology, University of California, Santa Cruz, Santa Cruz, CA

CERTIFICATIONS

Wilderness First Responder | Biosafety Level 2 Training