



INSTITUTE FOR ANIMAL HEALTH  
**PIRBRIGHT LABORATORY**

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**Research Assistant**  
**Post Ref: 09P/0037**

**JOB DESCRIPTION**

The Institute for Animal Health (IAH) is one of five research institutes of the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC) and is at the forefront of research into animal diseases.

It is currently based on two sites: **Compton (near Newbury)** and **Pirbright (near Woking)** where this post is based. In total, the Institute employs some 400 staff and, at any one time, is host to up to 50 students and visiting scientists.

The Institute for Animal Health provides National and International Reference Laboratories for the diagnosis and characterization of important exotic viral diseases of domestic animals. We are establishing a unit dedicated to the provision of diagnostic reagents and kits for use within the institute's reference laboratories and for distribution globally through commercial partners. This is an exciting new development for IAH and is a direct result of the increasing demand for quality diagnostic reagents and kits globally.

The unit will work closely with members of Genecom, the technology transfer and business development team, and group leaders within the reference laboratories. Initially, the unit will focus on projects concerned primarily with the diagnosis of foot-and-mouth disease, but will expand to cover other diseases.

**PURPOSE**

The principal role and responsibility of this position will be to provide technical support for the reference laboratory and commercial diagnostic activities of the IAH including training for visiting scientists.

**Principal functions:**

1. Assisting with assay development and validation
2. Assisting with reagent screening and validation
3. Preparing and quality testing diagnostic reagents for internal QA
4. Preparing and quality testing diagnostic reagents for distribution outside the IAH
5. Assisting with the compilation and dispatch of the kits and reagents
6. Assisting with quality assurance procedures
7. Providing technical support during emergency disease outbreaks

**JOB DESCRIPTION**

This position is for a highly motivated research assistant to produce diagnostic reagents and kits that will be supplied globally in support of animal disease control. The post will be within the Vesicular

Diagnosis Group, a small friendly team who develop, validate, perform and supply diagnostic tests for foot-and-mouth disease virus and related viruses. The work underpins our reference laboratories in their support of national and international control of these important livestock diseases. The reference laboratories have obligations to DEFRA, the World Animal Health Organisation and the Food and Agriculture Organisation for the provision of diagnostic tests, disease surveillance activities and training for visiting scientists. They also work with external clients and commercial collaborators to develop new reagents, methodologies and services to be used globally. The position will be supported by senior scientists who will provide full training in the associated tests and standard operating procedures.

The institute operates at ISO 9001 and the reference laboratories are accredited to ISO 17025.

The principal activities of the reference laboratory and commercial diagnostic reagents services are:-

- Preparation and maintenance of stocks of diagnostic reagents and kits including treatment and innocuity testing of reagents to enable them to be safely transferred to a clean laboratory outside containment
- Evaluation and validation of diagnostic reagents and kits to confirm their fitness for purpose
- To supply diagnostic reagents and kits to third parties in liaison with administrative and stores personnel
- Development, evaluation and validation of new diagnostic reagents and methodologies
- Provide training to scientists in the current and emerging diagnostic assays and associated technologies

The job description is only an outline of the tasks, responsibilities and outcomes required of the role. The jobholder will carry out any other duties as may be reasonably required by his/her line manager.

The job description and personal specification may be reviewed on an ongoing basis in accordance with the changing needs of the Human Resources Division and the Institute for Animal Health.

## **DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **Essential**

1. An interest in laboratory testing procedures
2. Good working knowledge of computer systems and IT tools (Microsoft Office or other systems)
3. Careful and organised approach to work
4. Ability to work in a quality environment and to maintain accurate records in logbooks and computerised systems
5. Team worker
6. Flexible worker
7. Ability to work to deadlines
8. Commitment to the delivery of performance targets

The Institute is engaged in Research work on a number of virus diseases of live stock, several of which, in particular foot-and-mouth disease, are highly infectious to livestock, therefore compliance with the Disease Security Regulations is an essential requirement of employment.

The Employee must not live on any premises where any cloven hoofed animals are kept, such as cattle, sheep, pigs, goats or deer, and must not visit any premises where such animals are kept

within three days of entering the restricted area of the laboratory, or within five days of entering the restricted animal accommodation.

All employees shall actively participate in the IAH-wide quality assurance system in conjunction with the Institute Quality Manager. Employees are also expected to safeguard their own health and safety and security by following IAH policies and all employees are responsible for the Health and Safety and security of staff under their management.

### **Qualifications and Experience**

1. Two or more A levels
2. Experience in working in a (commercial) laboratory environment
3. Experience in carrying out diagnostic assays for serology and or biochemistry including ELISA
4. Experience in virology based assays such as virus neutralisation tests
5. Experience working to SOPs and QA systems
6. Experience in human or animal health laboratories

Full training in all techniques will be provided including emergency outbreak training.

### **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

For additional information or an informal discussion of how the Institute operates and the challenges which will face the successful candidate please telephone or write to the Institute for Animal Health, Pirbright Laboratory, Ash Road, Pirbright, Woking, Surrey, GU24 0NF (tel.01483 232 441 ) or email [pirbright.hr@bbsrc.ac.uk](mailto:pirbright.hr@bbsrc.ac.uk)

### **BENEFITS OF THE POST**

The post is graded at Band C and is an indefinite contract, with funding currently until 15/09/2011. Starting salary is £21,098 to £23,442 depending on qualifications and experience. On appointment, you are eligible to join the Research Council's Pension Scheme. You have the choice of either:

- an attractive, index-linked defined benefit pension scheme that currently has a 3.5% member contribution rate. The bulk of the cost of this scheme is met by the employer:  
or
- a stakeholder pension with a contribution from the employer. Our basic contribution is based on your age, and we pay this regardless of whether you choose to contribute anything. You do not have to contribute if you do not wish to but, if you do, we will also match your contributions up to an additional 3% of pay.

Annual leave is 27 days on appointment plus 10.5 days public and privilege holidays. The Institute has a subsidised child care scheme, staff restaurant and free parking. Staff work a 37 hour week, Monday to Friday.

**Closing date:** 18<sup>th</sup> March 2010