



Job Description

Job title	Plant Pathologist	Location - base	Niab, Park Farm, Histon, Cambridge
Team	Plant Pathology	Job group	Snr Tech
Department	30	Post ref.	SV/A1115
Reports to	Lesley Boyd (Charlotte Nellist)	Line manages	N/A

1. Team overview

The Field Pathology Team is focused on delivering high quality field trials and research across a range of cereal and broadleaved crops, and their respective pathogens, and is currently comprised of six technical staff and three research leaders. The team have access to extensive walk-in growth room and glasshouse facilities, laboratories, and a range of field trial sites across Cambridgeshire, as well as other Niab field trial sites across the UK. The Field Pathology Team is an integral part of the Plant Pathology Department at Park Farm, consisting of over 20 research staff plus several PhD students and visiting workers who deliver a wide range of levy (AHDB, Defra/APHA), commercial, and UKRI funded projects.

2. Role purpose

- Organise the inoculation and assessment of disease resistance tests in both cereal and broadleaf combinable crops for Variety and Recommended Listing purposes.
- Organise and deliver the practical pathology work for a number of research projects and contract work. This may include glasshouse, growth room and field trial work and some molecular analyses.

3. Financial authority/responsibility

Authority to raise Purchase Orders within defined limits.

4. Key relationships

Internal Lesley Boyd (covering maternity leave for Charlotte Nellist), members of Pathology Field Team, HoD and other members of Plant Pathology department, Cambridge trials team manager and members, Seed Handling Unit (SHU) manger and members.

External: Project partners and collaborators; visitors to trials (funders, breeders).

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5. Key tasks/responsibilities

Use of table with % time is optional. Details should appear in this section rather than the Role purpose section above. Where appropriate, give headings on each row, with bullets underneath the heading.

	Approx. % of time
Preparation of pathogen inoculations for field disease assessment trials, including yellow and brown rust, eyespot and Fusarium Head Blight of wheat, net blotch and Rhynchosporium of barley, and canker and light leaf spot of oil seed rape (OSR), as well as other pathogens, if and when required.	30
Inoculate field trials of wheat, barley, oats, OSR and potato.	10
Assess inoculated and uninoculated cereal and broadleaf field trials for a range of fungal diseases, requiring good record keeping.	40
Helps out, when needed, other members, of the Pathology Team. Oversee /assist with host visits from funders and breeders to the field trials. Molecular diagnostic and marker work, such as screening for the presence of pathogens. Collate and help interpret experimental data. Contribute to project meetings as required. Help arrange and oversee repair and regular servicing of growth rooms and relevant equipment (incubators, fridge/freezers, other). Help maintain pathogen collections. Help maintain safe and clean work environment.	20

6. Working conditions

- Work is split between laboratory, field and office work, which varies according to the season.
- Due to peaks in workload, it may not be possible to take holiday at certain times of the year unless pre-arranged with sufficient notice.
- Long hours and weekend working are sometimes necessary at peak times. Overtime and TOIL are available. Occasional overnight absences from Cambridge base may be required.
- Regular Visual Display Unit usage.
- Containment Level 1 laboratory conditions. Regular use of laboratory equipment, including microscopy.
- Physically demanding work: walking, standing, bending and occasional manual handling of items up to 25 kg.
- Working outdoors, in any weather conditions, at all times of the year, meaning exposure to sunlight and rain. Occasional working in glasshouses and polytunnels in high temperatures.
- Regular exposure to plant material, pathogens, pollen, bees and other insects.
- Occasional exposure to dust e.g. soil particles, from threshed seeds.
- Managed exposure to chemicals e.g. seeds treated with pesticide and fertiliser. Use of standard and experimental agrochemicals using hand-held equipment. Full training will be provided as needed.
- Lone working in field and glasshouse.

Person Specification

Criteria	Essential	Desirable
Qualifications		
BSc degree in plant biological topic, or equivalent qualifications/experience	x	
Pesticide application certification (PA1 and PA6)		x
Knowledge and skills		
Good verbal and written communication skills	x	
Good interpersonal skills	x	
Good IT skills – email, word processing, spreadsheets, document sharing	x	
Good organisational and planning skills	x	
Good analytical and problem-solving skills	x	
Experience		
Experience of managing disease assessment field trials, i.e. preparation of inoculum and assessment of disease	x	
Knowledge of fungal diseases of cereal and broadleaf crops		x
Attributes		
Accuracy and attention to detail.	x	
Evidence of commitment to own personal development and willing to learn new skills	x	
Collaborative and open-minded regarding science	x	
Innovative	x	
Flexibility – able to work alone and as part of a small team	x	
Proactive and self-motivated; confident about working without direct supervision	x	
Other		
Full driving license enabling travel to field sites and occasional travel to Niab sites elsewhere in Great Britain. Transport can be provided.	x	