



## **Candidate Information Booklet**

### **Senior Software Developer – ICT 5**

**IRC300304**

Completed Application Forms must be returned to HRConnect no later than 12 noon (UK time) on Friday 24<sup>th</sup> May 2024

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### Communication between HRConnect and you

HRConnect will issue competition communications electronically. Please ensure you check your email account regularly, to make sure that you don't miss any important communications. There may be a requirement to issue competition communications by post.

Please update us with any changes to your email address and home address to ensure you are fully informed at all times.

### Equal opportunities

Agri-Food and BioSciences Institute (AFBI) is an equal opportunities employer and has been awarded the Bronze Charter Mark in recognition for our commitment towards Diversity and Inclusion in the workplace. All appointments will be made strictly on the basis of merit. If you have any queries with regard to this recruitment process or require any documentation in an alternative format, please contact HRConnect via email [Recruitment@HRConnect.nigov.net](mailto:Recruitment@HRConnect.nigov.net) or call 0800 1 300 330. We will be happy to assist you.

**We would particularly welcome applications from females and those from a Roman Catholic background.**

## Recruitment overview

Thank you for your interest in our organisation. At AFBI you will find a fantastic team spirit and a commitment to the development of both you and your skills so that you can choose to have a long-term career with us.

This Candidate Information Booklet offers specific information to applicants.

Please read this document carefully in advance of submitting your application and retain it for reference throughout the recruitment process.

At AFBI, we take great pride in the work we undertake. All AFBI employees are appointed on merit on the basis of fair and open competition.

**We wish you every success in your application!**

Important dates - It is intended that interviews for this post will take place in AFBI HQ, Newforge Lane, Belfast during week commencing Monday 17<sup>th</sup> June 2024.

Compulsory documentation - It is compulsory that all candidates invited to attend an assessment and/or interview, bring sufficient identification. Your attendance may not be permitted in instances where identification cannot be shown.

# You want to change the world. So do we.

[Agri-Food and BioSciences Institute \(AFBI\)](#) is a leading provider of scientific research and services to government, non-governmental organisations and commercial organisations. We are sponsored by our key stakeholder, the Department of Agriculture Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA).

Our customers include a range of local, national and international commercial companies, Northern Ireland and UK Departments, Agencies and associated bodies in the European Union.

As a leading institute of research, we tackle the complex challenges of our industry through purpose-driven science. We are a community with a common goal: to leave the world better than we found it. Are we ambitious? Definitely. Are our ambitions achievable? Absolutely. AFBI has been defying scientific boundaries to create measurable, scalable and enduring solutions to agri-food and marine science complexities in Northern Ireland - and beyond - since 2006.

We are delighted that you are considering joining us.

Of all the many factors that come together to make AFBI what it is, nothing is more important than our employees. Every area of our service delivery is underpinned by a number of dedicated teams working in synchrony to ensure the provision of scientific excellence. Across our four divisions, every team member, from those on the scientific front to those working behind the scenes in one of our offices, plays an essential role in delivering our long tradition of excellence, whilst helping to propel future discoveries. Together we are better.

Our People Vision is to:

Attract, empower and grow purpose-driven staff with the passion and capability to pursue excellence, embrace technology and cultivate innovation and change.

Great people. Great science.

# About Finance and Corporate Affairs Division (FCAD)

Finance and Corporate Affairs Division is based primarily at AFBI headquarters, Newforge Lane, Belfast but with staff deployed at some of the larger sites.

It supports the AFBI Chief Executive and the Executive Management Team (EMT) in securing and deploying the financial, people and infrastructure resources of AFBI. The division has a key role in ensuring that AFBI is an efficient, effective, sustainable and accountable organisation with high standards of governance.

FCAD also includes the Research Support Office which identifies research, funding and commercial opportunities.

## FCAD Branches

- Corporate Affairs
- Corporate Projects
- Finance
- Governance and Performance
- People & Culture
- Research Support and Corporate Communications
- Information Systems

# About Information Systems Branch

AFBI Information Systems Branch (ISB) provides IT services to public and private sector customers in computer support and application development which enables the branch to underpin AFBI's scientific remit and develop working relationships with external bodies.

## **Computing Services**

- Management of AFBI's line of business IT Infrastructure and services
- Provision and maintenance of business and scientific computing support
- Development, deployment and management of bespoke software solutions
- Management of the corporate IT budget
- Development, implementation and monitoring of IT usage policies
- Development and implementation of an IT strategy to meet current and projected business needs

ISB consists of an energetic team of individuals working together to support the IT needs of the organisation and the wider agri-food industry. ISB comprises two main work areas: IT Infrastructure & Technical Support, and Application & Database Development, where staff work in a stimulating and rewarding environment whilst being encouraged to maintain a healthy work-life balance. The team regularly engage with the full range of AFBI scientists in addition to external clients and are therefore involved in a wide variety of interesting and cutting-edge projects.

# Job Background

The post holder will report to an ICT Level 6, and the main duties of the post will be as follows:

The Senior Software Developer will be part of a skilled computing applications team involved in the development of business, scientific and communications software for both internal and external public and private clients. The role is responsible for translating business requirements to technical requirements, analysing current business problems in current systems, as well as troubleshooting and tracking business/technical flow problems.

1. End-to-end development of web and Windows based applications in support of scientific, business and industry facing software solutions.
2. Analyse, maintain and extend AFBI-developed legacy systems.
3. Meet and communicate with internal and external stakeholders in the system requirements gathering process, discussing options, leading to specification of projects.
4. Provide end-user technical support and manage system change requests, establishing the priorities of development support.
5. Design and develop relational databases in conjunction with the Database Administrator.
6. Input to the development of in-house standards in relation to software security, software quality and best practice standards.
7. Deliver knowledge transfer sessions to both internal and external clients.
8. Document according to best practice, including business requirements and software design specifications, test plans and review reports.
9. Manage development staff from pooled resource.

**This list is not exhaustive, and the successful candidate will be required to carry out other duties as allocated by management.**

# Job Information and Employee Benefits

Currently 1 post available. A reserve list will exist and will be held for a period of 12 months from the date of interview, to cover any similar vacancies which may arise.

## **Salary**

Currently the salary for the post will be within the range £34,524 – £35,712. In addition, the post will attract an annual ICT allowance of £3,713 immediately.

Pay increases will be on an incremental basis provided staff performance reports are satisfactory.

Starting salary will be at the minimum of the scale.

## **Working Hours**

The successful candidate will normally be required to work 5 days each week, totalling 37 hours. AFBI operates a flexi working system.

## **Location**

The successful candidate will be based at AFBI Newforge, 18a Newforge Lane, Belfast, BT9 5PX, however, they may, on occasion, also be expected to work at other sites in Northern Ireland as required.

Our IT team follows a hybrid schedule working in-office two days a week and remotely for the rest.

## **Travel**

The post will require access to a form of transport which will permit the successful candidate to meet the requirements of the post in full.

## **Pre-employment checks**

Pre-employment checks consist of a qualification check and an AccessNI check. The security check required for this post is basic level. HRConnect will provide your details to Experian who will undertake this check. This is a two-part process during which all communications will be issued to you electronically.

## **Annual Leave**

In addition to the usual public and privilege holidays, there is an annual leave allowance of 25 days, increasing to 30 after five year's satisfactory service.

## **Probationary Period**

The post holder will serve 12 months' probation in the new post. This will commence from the date of appointment. At the end of the probation period a formal review will be conducted.



## **Professional Development**

We believe in our employees and understand the importance of investing in ongoing development. Support for professional development will always be considered.

## **Employee Benefits**

AFBI offers employees an excellent benefits package. For further information please click [here](#).

## **Further Information**

Further Information about the post may be obtained from AFBI People & Culture by emailing [FCADpeopleandculture@afbini.gov.uk](mailto:FCADpeopleandculture@afbini.gov.uk)

For information on how the recruitment process will be managed and for further recruitment and selection resources, please click [here](#).

For information on our equal opportunities, please click [here](#).

# Eligibility Criteria

Applicants must, by the closing date for applications provide evidence in their application form which demonstrates that they satisfy the following essential criteria.

1. At least a level 4 qualification in Computing, Software Engineering or other discipline relevant to Information Systems and Information Technology. (Only those courses where a computing content of 50% or more can be demonstrated to the satisfaction of the panel will be considered relevant. The onus is on you to provide sufficient details to demonstrate this)
2. A minimum of 2 years' experience of systems analysis gained within a working environment, including each of the following:
  - a) Development of software solutions utilising a software development framework for building and running applications on Windows such as the Microsoft .NET Framework or .NET Core;
  - b) Requirements gathering, functional specification, design, development, testing, implementation and maintenance of custom software applications for a range of clients;
  - c) Relational database design and development.
3. Demonstrable experience of successfully delivering effective software solutions against deadlines using project management techniques.

**Relevant or equivalent** qualifications: give the type of qualification and date awarded (the date awarded is the date on which you were notified of your result by the official awarding body). If you believe your qualification is equivalent to the one required, the onus is on you to provide the panel with details of modules studied etc so that a well-informed decision can be made.

## SHORTLISTING

In the event that shortlisting is required the selection panel will reach a decision as to whether or not an applicant meets criteria 2 and 3 on a scored basis, with a minimum score set. Only those applicants assessed as meeting all essential criteria will be eligible to proceed to the next stage of the selection process.

However, in the case of a high volume of applicants AFBI may decide to limit the number of applicants it invites for interview in a proportionate manner. In this instance all applicants who meet the essential requirements will be listed in merit order according to their total score and the highest scoring applicants will proceed to interview.

## PERSON SPECIFICATION

This position is analogous to Staff Officer Level in the NICS.

Candidates will be expected to demonstrate the skills and competencies set out in the Essential Criteria. In addition, they will also be required to demonstrate competency in Professional Knowledge & Skills pertaining to this post together with the skills and competencies set out in the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) competency framework at Level 3 for the purpose of personal and professional development.

Selection panels will design questions to test the applicant's knowledge and experience in each of the above areas and award marks accordingly.

**You should refer to the behaviours listed under level 3 of the relevant competence areas.**

To view the NICS Competency Framework, please click [here](#).

## Interview Criteria

In addition to satisfying the eligibility criteria and shortlisting criteria applicants will also be expected to display the following qualities and skills at interview:

**1. Professional/Specialist/Technical ability**

**Marks Available: 40      Minimum Standard: 24**

**2. Changing and Improving**

**Marks Available: 20      Minimum Standard: 12**

**3. Delivering at Pace**

**Marks Available: 10**

**4. Making Effective Decisions**

**Marks Available: 20      Minimum Standard: 12**

**5. Collaborating and Partnering**

**Marks Available: 10**

**Total marks available: 100**

**Overall pass mark: 60/100 (60%)**