



Candidate Information Booklet

Quality Assurance Manager (Livestock Science)- Higher Scientific Officer

IRC300577

Completed Application Forms must be submitted no later than 12 noon
on Friday 5th April 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.

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 Gender 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 or call 0800 1 300 330.

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

Feedback -_AFBI is committed to providing feedback to assist the development of current and future applications.

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 6th May 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.

This is how we do great science.

Great people. Great science.

Sustainable Agri-Food Sciences Division

The Sustainable Agri-Food Sciences Division (SAFSD) employs scientific, technical and support staff across its five scientific based branches.

It is a highly multidisciplinary team with a central focus on sustainable farming. In doing so its overarching goal is to drive innovations and science which deliver positive outcomes for livestock and plants, the environment they are grown in as well as the wider economy. This multi-disciplinary team explores all aspects of the food supply chain taking research and scientific exploration from the soil through to the plant, the animal, and the resultant food quality and nutritional value. It also works with colleagues at VSD to ensure animal health and food safety is optimised. A key element of the work also examines quantitative and qualitative socioeconomic impacts.

SAFSD utilises a highly instrumented platform across livestock and land management to service its main deliverables of research and innovation and monitoring and surveillance. SAFSD also collaborates extensively with other research organisations, industry and government departments locally, nationally and internationally. A key drive within SAFSD is to produce high quality peer reviewed publications whilst also ensuring the practical translation of science through an active dissemination programme.

SAFSD Branches

Economic Research Branch undertakes quantitative and qualitative socioeconomic research to inform agri-food and rural policy development and industry decision making, regionally and nationally. Environmental economics, linked with the local, national and international economy is of increasing prominence in this branch.

Food Science Branch delivers research in the areas of optimising eating quality and nutritional quality in meat, dairy and other food products, together with evaluating novel processes for extending shelf-life and increasing safety.

Grassland and Plant Science Branch underpins DAERA's policy development on plant health and delivers scientific advances in areas such as grass breeding, testing and agronomy, plant health and land management.

Livestock Production Sciences Branch links fundamental livestock science to systems level research to deliver innovations which drive sustainability within the agri-food sector and advance scientific knowledge.

Statistics and Data Science Branch provides statistical analyses, consultation services and data analytics to bring forward data driven solutions for a sustainable agri-food industry and our environment. It also supports a wide range of scientific research projects and statutory work carried out by AFBI.

This job role sits within the Livestock Production Sciences Branch in partnership with the Statistics and Data Science Branch.

About the Livestock Production Sciences Branch

Livestock Production Sciences is one of five Branches within the Sustainable Agri-Food Sciences Division in AFBI and aims to address the global challenges of food security and sustainable intensification. The aims of the Branch are to develop and sustain an integrated research effort with national and international recognition in sustainable livestock production and welfare systems, thereby

- developing sustainable practices within a competitive industry
- providing a scientific basis for government policy
- enhancing the quality of the environment.

The work of the Branch links fundamental science to systems level research to deliver innovations for the agri-food sector and scientific knowledge in ways that assist policy makers and industry partners. An innovative approach is taken linking large-scale applied research studies undertaken on farms across Northern Ireland to strategic research and development at AFBI Hillsborough and further to more fundamental research in partnership with other AFBI Branches and external research organisations.

Work within LPS Branch continues to develop to meet the requirements of the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA), other government departments, NGO's and industry within a policy environment of ever-increasing emphasis on promoting competitiveness in the marketplace, food security, delivering an improved environment and addressing animal welfare concerns. Scientific outputs from LPS Branch underpin government policy on livestock production, welfare, environment and renewable energy issues.

LPS Branch research and development is also promoting innovation in the agri-food sector and our outputs are key drivers of strategic initiatives in the industry including technology transfer programmes led by the College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise. In addition, LPS Branch provides analytical services for livestock feedstuffs, manures and agri-food products for DAERA and the agri-food sector.

The research platform comprises an instrumented research farm at AFBI Hillsborough with satellite facilities at AFBI Loughgall and AFBI Stormont.

AFBI Hillsborough is a full academic member of the Centre for Innovation Excellence in Livestock (CIEL), which is a UK industry led consortium of academia and industry. The main aim of CIEL is to increase the competitiveness of the UK Livestock industry through collaborative research and development. AFBI's membership of CIEL has brought substantive investments in precision technologies to the farm platform across dairy, beef, sheep and pig.

Job Information and Employee Benefits

This post is based on a permanent full-time vacancy. 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 £32,880 - £34,011 within which pay increases will be on an incremental basis provided staff performance reports are satisfactory.

Starting salary will normally be at the minimum of the scale except for existing AFBI staff for whom starting salary may be determined by either promotion or re-grading terms if these are more favourable.

Working Hours

The successful candidate will normally be required to work 5 days each week, totalling 37 hours. On occasions the duties may include some evening and weekend working. AFBI operates a flexi working system.

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.

Location

The successful candidate will be based at AFBI Hillsborough, Co. Down BT26 6DR. However, they may, on occasion, also be expected to work at other sites in Northern Ireland as required.

Hybrid working can also be considered.

Travel

The post may entail travel locally, nationally, and internationally and for this reason the successful applicant will require access to a form of transport which will permit them 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.

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 unrivalled benefits package. For further information please click [here](#).

Further Information

Further Information about the post may be obtained from Claire O'Reilly, People Operations & Workforce Planning Advisor on 028 90255036.

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](#).

Job Background

An opportunity currently exists within AFBI for a permanent HSO within LPS branch within the Sustainable Agri-Food Science Division. The successful applicant will report to the Head of the Branch.

The main role of the post relates to:

The 'Animal Scientific Procedures Act (1986)', regulates the use of animals in scientific research in the UK. The Act requires a rigorous system of controls on scientific work on living animals, including the need for both the researcher and the project to be separately licensed, stringent safeguards to ensure the care and welfare of animals.

ISO 9001 Quality Management Standards which through several quality management principles including a customer focus, the motivation and implication of management, the process approach and continual improvement. helps ensure that customers get consistent, good-quality products and services..

The main duties of the post will include:

- To further develop and deliver processes/systems to ensure compliance with regulatory requirements in relation to livestock scientific research primarily ASPA but also ISO9001.
- Internal audit
 - Conduct regular internal audits and inspections to support staff in the delivery of ASPA requirements and help ensure continual improvements and promotion of a culture of care.
 - Conduct periodic internal audits and inspections to support staff in the delivery of ISO9001 standards. Includes utilisation of QA management software.
- External audit/inspection
 - Assist in the coordination and delivery of external audit/inspection.
- Advice/support
 - Through maintaining up-to-date knowledge and skill in relation ASPA as well as QA methodologies provide guidance and advice to staff through a range of means (one-one, staff notices, updated staff handbooks, workshops etc)
- On occasion assist in other branches within AFBI through reviewing processes, delivery of internal audits and providing recommendations.
- Prepare summary reports of progress and assist with annual returns and reports both for internal and external parties.
- To establish and maintain external collaboration to relevant organisations to understand the best practices in the field.

- To maintain up-to-date knowledge and skill in relation to ASPA, ISO and QA management methodologies.

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

Eligibility Criteria

Applicants must demonstrate in their application form that they possess the following criteria, by the closing date:

- 1a. Degree or equivalent in a scientific discipline and 1 year employment experience in a quality assurance role within a scientific environment assisting a team or organisation to achieve or maintain recognised external accreditation standards.

OR

- 1b. HNC (a level 4 qualification) or equivalent and 2 years employment experience in a quality assurance role within a scientific environment assisting a team or organisation to achieve or maintain recognised external accreditation standards.

AND

2. At least 2 years' experience of collecting and collating evidence at audit/inspection to support continual improvement in a service, product, or process including provision of training/guidance for staff.
3. Proven experience in the use of MS Office skills and a digital quality management system.

Applications will also be considered from applicants with relevant formal qualifications considered by the selection panel to be of an equivalent or higher standard to those stated.

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.

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 (*if applicable*) applicants will also be expected to display the following qualities and skills at interview:

1. Professional Knowledge and Skills

Marks available: 60 Minimum standard: 36

2. Making Effective Decisions

Marks available: 10

3. Collaborating and Partnering

Marks available: 10

4. Delivering at Pace

Marks available: 10

5. Managing a Quality Service

Marks available: 10 Minimum standard: 6

Total Marks Available: 100

Overall Pass Mark: 60

COMPETENCE BASED INTERVIEWS

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