

JOB DESCRIPTION & PERSON SPECIFICATION

1. Job title: Technician, Technical Support Team, Agricultural Crop Characterisation (ACC)

Centre: Plant Varieties and Seeds

Grade: B **Location:** Cambridge HQ

Reports to (Job title): Technical Manager

Line Manages (Job titles): N/A

2. Main purpose of role:

Team focus

Within the Varieties and Seeds Centre at NIAB, there are two teams carrying out technical services and contract research relevant to the agricultural, horticultural and food industries, the Agricultural Crops Characterisation Team (ACC) and the Ornamentals Crops Characterisation Team (OCC). The main focus of these two teams is the delivery of regulatory services, primarily for government (APHA, previously Defra) or international governmental organisations/ agencies such as CPVO and OECD. Within ACC, these statutory services include:

- The distinctness, uniformity and stability (DUS) testing of new varieties of agricultural crop plants for the granting of intellectual property rights (Plant Breeders' Rights, PBR)
- DUS testing for the purposes of National Listing (NL) of agricultural species as required under EU Directives.
- The activities of Seed Certification carried out to ensure compliance with regulatory standards as defined in UK legislation (principally the Seeds Regulations, 2010).
- Providing advice to the Animal Plant Health Agency (APHA) and the seeds industry in relation to the activities described above.

Services for clients (both internal and external to NIAB) are primarily focused around the physical characterisation, analysis and/or description of plant materials and plant products, using high throughput systems.

In addition a wide range of training, both for national and international clients, is provided as commissioned, primarily in the areas around the development or the implementation of the above mentioned regulatory services.

The main crops are cereals, oilseeds, herbage, sugar beet and pulses, although the range of crops and balance of workloads can vary from year to year.

Main function of the job

Technicians have responsibility within the Technical Support Team (TST) for the detailed day to day operational issues required to deliver the laboratory and field work associated with DUS and Certification. Each member of the team will have the capability to work across all crop species and across all DUS/Cert activities.

The Technical support team will carry out the following tasks, as organized and prioritized via the weekly TST meeting:

- All aspects of sample handling including preparation of material for drilling (sowing) and drilling as required
- Trial support work.
- Recording all species both outdoors and in the laboratory
- Collecting data using data loggers/tablets
- Crop inspecting after suitable training and gaining appropriate APHA Licences
- The laboratory techniques used in varietal identity
- Specific individual duties as allocated according to need and defined via annual objectives.

3. Financial authority/responsibility (e.g. delegated budget, authorisation level, approx value of contracts etc):

No specific responsibility, but all staff are expected to use resources efficiently and within budget.

4. Key relationships (external and internal):

The post is line managed by one of the Technical Managers, but as one of a team, the post-holder will work across all crop functions at different times, depending on the time of year/tasks required.

The post holder is expected to take an active part in TST meetings where the week's work is organized, and provide feedback on progress. After appropriate training, the post holder will be expected to work unsupervised when necessary and undertake individual responsibility for certain tasks.

There is no direct management although there may be some supervision of student/temporary workers at times.

5. Tasks/responsibilities (in order of priority)	Approx % of time
Carry out the recording of DUS and Certification trials. Using predefined protocols, to accurately assess plants. The work is on a range of agricultural species, and may include: Oilseed Rape, Cereals, Field Beans and Peas, Sugar Beet, Kale, Linseed and Herbage	30
Seed crop inspections using all valid inspection licences.	5
Certification and DUS sample handling, including sample registration and packetting for drilling.	25
Drill preparation for Certification and DUS trials, including: putting seed in order for a pre defined plan, use of the barcode system for traceability, planning in line with current protocols and procedures	10
Carrying out and assisting with laboratory tests to establish varietal identity and purity. Tests may be visual e.g.: sample examinations or established using other laboratory techniques.	10
A share of Team tasks which may include: Image analysis recording preparation, sample harvesting, various husbandry requirements, administrative work, temporary staff supervision, assisting with courses, and other trials related work.	20

6. Working conditions :

Office based, but extensive field work will be required under all weather conditions and at all times of year. Glasshouse and laboratory work are also essential components of this role. Occasional week-end working may be required.

The post involves constant contact with plants throughout the year. Sufferers from hay fever and/or other plant allergies could experience some problems.

7. PERSON SPECIFICATION**Education/Qualifications:**

Essential:	Desirable:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good general level of education (at least A levels or equivalent in biological/science subjects, or demonstrable equivalent experience) and proven numeracy and literacy skills. 	

Experience:

Essential:	Desirable:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Computer skills are essential, in particular ability to use Windows-based software (primarily Word and Excel). • A current, clean driving licence and the willingness to work away from NIAB HQ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience in field trials would be an advantage • A demonstrable strong interest in plants.

Specialist Training:

Essential:	Desirable:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current APHA crop inspection licences in Herbage, Cereals, Pulses and Fodder & Oilseeds must either be held, or will need to be gained within a defined period after appointment. Appropriate training will be provided. • Due to the nature of the work, normal colour vision is essential, and this will be tested. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Familiarity with use of data loggers/tablet PC's

Personal Qualities (skills, behaviours and competencies):

Essential:	Desirable:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good communication skills and the ability to work in a team • Ability to cope with high workloads and a constantly changing range of priorities/deadlines. • Ability to work unsupervised. • Ability to make impartial and independent decisions, and to handle confidential information appropriately. • A willingness to work to very specific protocols, with a high degree of accuracy and good record keeping, combined with a consistent approach and an observant eye for detail. • Ability to be self-motivated, to take a flexible and proactive approach. • Willingness to work outside in all seasons to carry out a range of duties some of which can be physically demanding 	

Date of Description: 14 June 2017**Compiled by: CT/MW/HM/ES**