

JOB DESCRIPTION & PERSON SPECIFICATION

1. Job title: Technical Manager for DUS testing, Agricultural Crop Characterisation (ACC)

Centre: Plant Varieties and Seeds

Grade: E

Location: Cambridge, HQ

Reports to : Senior Technical Manager

Line Manages : Several staff at B-D level

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 Fera, and Defra) or international governmental organisations/ agencies such as OECD and – currently - CPVO. 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 or equivalent.
- The activities of Seed Certification carried out to ensure compliance with regulatory standards as defined in UK legislation (principally the Seeds Regulations, 2011).
- Providing advice to the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA), Defra 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.

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

The post holder is expected to become a recognized expert in the DUS assessment of agricultural crops as tested at NIAB, with emphasis on one or more particular crops or crop groups, which may change from time to time according to technical requirements and business need.

Working as a deputy to the Senior Technical Manager, the post holder delivers the day to day aspects of the relevant testing programme, according to the requirements of APHA PVS, UPOV and CPVO. This includes assisting with the administration, organising and participating in the set up, drilling and establishment of the trial, assessment and recording according to internationally agreed protocols, data processing and liaison with NIAB statisticians, the decision making process, preparation of reports and descriptions, and the management of the reference collections.

Training and development of support staff and ensuring a consistent approach is a strong focus, as is working collaboratively with all members of TST to deliver the workload for the year across all sectors. Additionally the post holder will teach and/or demonstrate on external training courses when required, and will maintain appropriate Crop Inspectors licenses in order to be able to do so.

The post holder takes a lead role in ensuring that the team is working to up to date CPVO Entrustment requirements [or future equivalent] and must have the skills to be nominated as in internal NIAB auditor for DUS trial work if required.

The post holder works with the Senior Technical Manager to champion development and innovation within the existing testing system, and together with other technical staff must be a driving force in promoting innovation and R&D projects in the support of new approaches to characterisation of all crops DUS tested at NIAB. Image analysis, both at the lab and field scale is a strong focus here, as is the ability to liaise effectively with the team conducting the statistical analysis of the trials.

The post holder also takes a proactive role within IT redevelopment projects, scoping the needs of relevant testing and associated administrative requirements to the development team working under the head of IT.

A number of designated ACC staff provide technical and policy advice to APHA/Defra and represent the UK on their behalf in various international working groups such as the UPOV TWA. The post holder must be able to contribute effectively in this area, mainly in support of others but having the ability to participate more directly if required.

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

No direct financial responsibility, but responsible for active participation in the annual team budget setting process, including proactive input into the assessment of permanent staffing requirements, budget for temporary and agency staff, arrangements for trials and crop relevant CAPEX bids.

Subsequently, ensuring that relevant allocated resources are used effectively and economically within the agreed budget.

The post holder will also be responsible for providing reliable financial and other administrative information to support the Service Managers working on the APHA contract [EMS, CT, MW].

4. Key relationships (external and internal):

The post holder is line managed by the Senior Technical Manager, DUS, and works as collaboratively as one of a number of ACC managers with responsibilities for different work areas, overseen via the STMs and HCC.

The post holder is responsible for the line management of several technical and admin support staff.

The post holder's work will be undertaken with input from the ACC Technical Support Team [TST]. Clear work planning and leadership are critical here, as is liaison as necessary with other NIAB staff inputting into ACC trials work [farm, statisticians etc] to achieve mutually acceptable outcomes.

Effective relationships with NIAB's R&D teams are critical to the scoping, development and timely delivery of development projects.

Required to liaise with external customers such as APHA, CPVO, Plant Breeders and Seed Merchants when appropriate, and also to teach/demonstrate on trade courses, and must be confident in doing so.

Tasks/responsibilities (in order of priority)	Approx % of time
Management and delivery of the DUS trials to the agreed protocol and deadlines, as required by STM.	65
Liaison with applicants and other external customers and stakeholders.	5
Taking lead on IT and new methods development, e.g. IA; contributing towards technical and policy advice to APHA and Defra [e.g. in preparation for UK participation in international working groups]	10
Management, training and development of staff including teaching and/or demonstrating on Crop Inspectors courses; ongoing personal development	20

6. Working conditions :

The role is office based, but extensive field work is required [often off site] and the post requires the holder to be willing to work outside in all weather conditions.

The post involves constant contact with plant material and sufferers from hay fever and/or other plant allergies could experience some problems.

UK and foreign travel is required.

Due to peaks in workload it may not be possible to take holiday at certain times of the year.

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

Essential:	Desirable:
<p>A recognised degree in a relevant science subject, preferably agriculture, crop science, plant breeding or agricultural botany.</p> <p>Understanding of plant breeding systems and the behaviour of different crop types.</p> <p>Sound knowledge of statistical techniques and their practical application.</p> <p>Competent and confident user of Word, Excel, PowerPoint and Access.</p> <p>Current, clean UK driving licence and the willingness to drive to trials away from NIAB HQ.</p>	<p>Understanding of molecular techniques and their application within the plant breeding industry.</p>

Experience:

Essential:	Desirable:
<p>A minimum of 2 years specific practical experience relevant to the post, for example within the plant breeding/seeds industry.</p> <p>Excellent organizational and communication skills, and the proven ability to manage, train, motivate and support people to deliver to precise requirements and deadlines.</p> <p>Ability to work to very specific protocols, ensuring a high degree of accuracy and consistency and good record keeping from the entire team.</p> <p>Ability to cope with high workloads and a constantly changing range of priorities/deadlines.</p> <p>Ability to work unsupervised and prioritise conflicting workloads for self and others.</p> <p>Proven ability to interpret complex data and to write cogent, concise and accurate reports to deadline.</p> <p>Proven experience in project management.</p> <p>Experience of field-scale trialling.</p>	<p>Some agronomic experience to facilitate working with the NIAB agronomist.</p>

Specialist Training:

Essential:	Desirable:
<p>Direct experience in DUS testing, including both trial organisation and assessment at the appropriate level.</p> <p>Current APHA crop inspection licences in Herbage, Cereals, Pulses and Fodder & Oilseeds must either be held, or will need to be gained within a reasonable period after appointment.</p> <p>Appropriate training will be provided.</p>	
Personal Qualities (skills, behaviours and competencies)	
Essential:	Desirable:
<p>Strong interest and plants and agriculture.</p> <p>Ability to make impartial and independent decisions, and to handle confidential information appropriately.</p> <p>Ability to drive change and innovation, both small-scale and at the level of new techniques.</p> <p>Confident communicator, with ability to present ideas to a wide range of audiences.</p>	
Date of description: 5/1/2018	Compiled by: 9/2016 MW/EMS, reviewed 1/2018 EMS