

THE ORGANIC RESEARCH CENTRE

JOB DESCRIPTION

JOB TITLE: ASSISTANT RESEARCHER – CROPS & AGRONOMY (G6)

12 month fixed-term position with possibility of extension

RESPONSIBLE TO: PRINCIPAL RESEARCHER (G8)

BACKGROUND

The Organic Research Centre was founded 40 years ago and from the outset has been the only UK organisation focussed on research into organic farming systems. ORC works in partnership with organisations across the UK and Europe to support transition to organic and agroecological farming and food systems. Much of our work is on commercial farms across the country, co-designing with farmers and other stakeholders research aimed at solutions to economic, environmental and ethical challenges. The values of our research are participation, integration (of disciplines) and diversity – from genes to ecosystems.

JOB ROLE

We are seeking an MSc qualified early-career researcher to join the team and support implementation of new research projects, including major initiatives funded through the EU's Horizon Europe programme. The role will Active areas of research include organic plant breeding and variety testing as well as organic matter management, composting systems, and fertiliser efficiency, working across organic, regenerative and conventional farms. In this way we encourage applicants with broad interest and research experience relevant to farm systems and their sustainability. The role will involve working with field- and desk-based data: its collection, management, analysis and interpretation. There will also be opportunities for knowledge exchange and stakeholder engagement according to interests, skills and experience. The expected duties of the researcher will be:

1. Carry out research in the fields of agronomy and ecology, as part of the Crop diversity and agronomy research programme. The core trial programme focuses on understanding and developing more sustainable methods for organic and low-input cereal production, by integrating varietal evaluation, cropping systems surveys and management innovations, as part of the LIVESEEDING project. In addition field research is also required for our Soil Systems projects which focus on organic matter management and compost systems as well as fertiliser efficiency. As such, specific duties will include the following:
 - 1.1. To engage with a network of farms and selected trial sites in England and Wales, and with relevant stakeholders in the seed and food supply chain,
 - 1.2. To be responsible for the day-to-day delivery of ORC's field-based crops and soils research including experimental setup, farmers interviews, cereal agronomy, weed and disease assessments, soil assessment and sampling, soil and/or plant samples processing,
 - 1.3. To generate, manage and curate research datasets,
 - 1.4. To conduct literature reviews and database searches.

2. The collection, entry/organisation and quality-checking of data (primary, secondary, quantitative and qualitative) in support of projects in other research areas. This will be through a range of methodological approaches, from fieldwork to online surveys and questionnaires, training upon each of which will be given.
3. Contribute to project reports, scientific papers and other outputs through data-analysis, data visualisation and writing.
4. Contribute to knowledge exchange activities as opportunities arise through the research activities, including:
 - Presenting findings at farmer events, scientific conferences, and other appropriate meetings and events
 - Assisting with the organisation and running of events
 - Disseminating information through social media, ORC and Agricolgy website research webpages and ORC bulletins.
5. To support colleagues within the research team to:
 - Supervise students and interns as needs arise, ensuring that they are aware of their duties and responsibilities and are helped to develop to achieve their greatest potential within their role at ORC
 - Ensure effective communication and team-working.
6. Develop an awareness of relevant research in other institutes and develop own skills, knowledge and understanding.
7. Undertake training to be able to continue meeting the requirements of this role and develop your potential as a member of ORC staff.
8. Provide other information and support or undertake other activities as required, including responsibilities not listed above that may be allocated in your annual work plan.
9. Participate in the Staff, Research and other team meetings as appropriate.

Personal Specification of Research and Field Assistant

Attribute	Essential	Desirable
Qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MSc in an Agriculture related degree 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Postgraduate qualifications in a relevant discipline
Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agricultural research experience including field data collection, literature reviews and data management • Data analysis • Report writing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crop science research experience • Interaction with farmers, e.g. in focus groups • Designing and implementing surveys
Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broad understanding of farm systems • Excellent knowledge of Excel including working with formulas • Good organisational skills and attention to detail • Computer literate with Windows and MS office • Good communication skills both written and oral, in a variety of styles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specialist understanding within crops/agronomy or other relevant area • Understanding and familiarity with data analysis tools/languages, e.g. R, SQL, Python • Database management • Project management
Personal qualities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-motivated • Independent and able to work alone and as part of a team • Enthusiastic and flexible • Able to contribute to the wider activities undertaken by ORC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interest in organic farming, food systems, agroecology and the environment • Interest in working with organic farmers and business actors
General ability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Willingness and ability to travel where and when needed in the UK 	
Additional requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Able to work at home • Clean full driving licence • Willingness to work additional hours at peak times 	

ACTIVITIES	GENERIC ROLE REQUIREMENTS
1 Communication	<p>Write up research work for publication</p> <p>Deal with routine communication using a range of media</p> <p>Communicate complex information, orally, in writing and electronically</p> <p>Preparing proposals and applications to external bodies, e.g. for funding and contractual purposes</p> <p>Communicate material of a specialist or highly technical nature</p>
2 Teamwork and motivation	<p>Work with colleagues on joint projects, as required</p> <p>Collaborate with colleagues on areas of shared research and knowledge transfer interest</p> <p>Attend and contribute to relevant meetings</p>
3 Liaison and networking	<p>Liaise with colleagues, students/interns, co-operating producers/research partners and others</p> <p>Build internal contacts and participate in internal networks for the exchange of information and to form relationships for future collaboration</p> <p>Build external contacts and join external networks to share information and identify potential sources of funds</p>
4 Service delivery	<p>Contribute to the production of research bids, aimed at meeting the funders' requirements</p>
5 Decision making	<p>Make decisions on matters affecting own research projects</p> <p>Contribute to collaborative decision making with colleagues in areas of research</p>
6 Planning and organising resources	<p>Manage own research and administrative activities, with guidance if required</p> <p>Use research resources, laboratories and workshops as appropriate</p> <p>Plan and manage own research activity in collaboration with others</p>
7 Initiative and problem solving	<p>Deal with standard problems and help colleagues resolve their concerns about progress in research</p> <p>Resolve problems of meeting research objectives and deadlines</p> <p>Develop ideas for generating income and promoting research area</p> <p>Develop ideas for application of research outcomes</p>
8 Analysis and research	<p>Develop research objectives and proposals for own or joint research</p> <p>Conduct individual and collaborative research projects</p> <p>Use new research techniques and methods</p> <p>Use initiative and creativity to identify areas for research, develop new research methods and extend the research portfolio</p>

<p>9 Sensory and physical demands</p>	<p>Sensory and physical demands will vary from relatively light to a high level depending on the discipline and the type of work</p> <p>Carry out tasks that require the learning of certain skills</p>
<p>10 Work environment</p>	<p>Balance with help the competing pressures of research and administrative demands and deadlines</p> <p>Is required to be aware of the risks in the work environment and their potential impact on their own work and that of others</p>
<p>11 Pastoral care and welfare</p>	<p>Show consideration to others</p>
<p>12 Team development</p>	<p>Carry out induction and provide support to new members of the team</p>
<p>13 Knowledge transfer/ learning support</p>	<p>Contribute to the organisation and content of knowledge transfer events/ short courses relevant to areas of research activity and specialist knowledge</p> <p>Be involved in the assessment of student/intern knowledge and supervision of projects</p> <p>Assist in the development of student/intern research skills</p>
<p>14 Knowledge and experience</p>	<p>Continually update knowledge and understanding in field or specialism</p> <p>Translate knowledge of advances in the subject area into research activity</p> <p>Possess sufficient breadth or depth of specialist knowledge in the discipline and of research methods and techniques to work within established research programmes</p> <p>Engage in continuous professional development</p> <p>Understand equal opportunity issues as they may impact on areas of research content</p>