PCR Scientist

As part of the UK Government’s National Testing Strategy for COVID-19, a new testing centre has been established in Cambridge through a collaboration between AstraZeneca, GSK and the University of Cambridge. The COVID-19 Cambridge Testing Centre, located on the Cambridge Biomedical Campus, opened in April, and is making a significant contribution to the national testing effort. The high-throughput testing laboratory was purpose designed and is equipped with state-of-the art automation and innovative scientific processes.

In line with the continuing Government ‘Test and Trace’ strategy, the Cambridge Testing Centre is expected to continue its testing operation into 2021. To help maintain sustainability of the centre Charles River has been asked to join the collaboration and we are now seeking to recruit over 200 scientists to support the continued lab operation across a range of roles. Staff in the laboratory will be required to work a shift pattern, that enables continuous operation of the centre 18 hours per day; this may increase to 24 hours per day with a third shift pattern introduced in the future should demand necessitate.

We are seeking **PCR Scientists** for this project located in Central Cambridge.

The role is based on a 9-month Fixed Term Contract with competitive salary packages and set shift patterns as specified below.
Pattern 1: Tuesday – Friday (6.15am – 3.15pm or 3pm – 12am)
Pattern 2: Saturday – Monday (6.15am – 3.15pm or 3pm – 12am)

Scientists will work in teams to prepare samples with a validated COVID-19 method. All roles require:

- Work in BSL2 laboratory (Biosafety Level 2)
- Work with human biological specimens.
- Work with samples which may contain SARS-Cov-2.
- Working and communicating across a fast-paced cross organisational team.
- Strictly following SOPs.

**Responsibilities**
This role will involve performing the RT-PCR reaction setup including manual pipetting and automated plate preparation using benchtop automation equipment. Following this, scientists will be responsible for taking the samples once ready and setting up the assay on the qPCR instrument. There will be PPE supplied for the level of exposure and will have to strictly adhere to the specific COVID-19 Testing SOP.

Further Responsibilities include:
- Transferring samples from 96 well plate to 384 well plate using benchtop liquid handling automation with minimal mistakes.
- Preparation of PCR reaction mixtures and appropriate controls
- Operation of Roche Lightcycler PCR instrumentation
- Root cause analysis of any errors or problems
- Maintenance of bench space, ensuring that the area is kept clean, tidy and free from contaminants

**Requirements:**
- Educated to degree level or higher within a molecular biology focused discipline
- Expert skills in setting up and carrying out qPCR studies, ideally at 384 well scale – including the programming of qPCR machines
- Able and willing to perform routine, manual tasks accurately
- Demonstrable skills in identifying anomalous results and being able to highlight and investigate the source
- Excellent communication and problem-solving skills