RNA 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, initially enabling 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 RNA Extraction 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 will 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 fully automated RNA extraction workflows and volunteers should be comfortable performing this while using PPE. This role will require individuals to work in teams of two-three to operate Beckman I series robotics to perform automated magnetic bead RNA extraction procedures and track sample through the LIMS system.

Further Responsibilities include:
• Accurate data analysis of results, highlighting and reporting any anomalous results
• Helping to programme the robotic platforms as needed, ensuring that the protocols are correct and fit for purpose
• Maintenance of bench space, ensuring that the area is kept clean, tidy and free from potential contaminants
• Engagement with a remote data analysis team to monitor instrument performance and QC and respond in real time to troubleshoot and resolve any issues.

The following are minimum requirements related to this position:
• Educated to at least degree level within a life sciences discipline with specific molecular biology focus
• Proven track record in working on RNA extraction studies
• Further experience in using and programming automated liquid platforms is highly desirable
• Strong data management skills are essential, you will need to be able to interpret and collate various data sets
• Attention to detail, able to work meticulously and with accuracy