Sample Preparation 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 seeking to recruit scientists to support the continued lab operation across a range of roles. Staff are required to work a shift pattern, enabling continuous operation of the centre 18 hours per day; this may increase to 24 hours per day with a third shift pattern introduced if needed.

We are seeking Sample Preparation Scientists for this project.

This is based on a 9-month FTC with competitive salaries and set shifts.

Pattern 1: Tuesday – Friday (6.15am – 3.15pm or 3pm – 12am)
Pattern 2: Saturday – Monday (6.15am – 3.15pm or 3pm – 12am)

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.
- Following SOPs.

Summary:
This role involves receipt and preparation of swab samples, for RNA extraction and PCR analysis. Primary duties are removal of specimen transport tubes from kit packaging, racking and pipetting samples into 96 well plates according to the safety guidelines, while using PPE and sample containment.

- Sorting samples into racks and pipetting samples into 96 well plates via manual and semiautomated methods.
- Identifying and processing samples that may be compromised or do not meet established criteria according to defined processes and procedures
- Completing viral inactivation steps
- Tracking of samples using LIMS system
- Operation of larger scale liquid handling automation (Biomek Iseries).

Individuals will be trained on a specific sample preparation procedure, and will receive training on proper, safe handling and processing of samples according to a specific SOP.

Requirements:

- Strong basis in biosafety, experience with handling human biological samples and working at containment level 2.
- Educated to degree level within a scientific discipline, or equivalent lab experience.
- Attention to detail, able and willing to perform routine, manual tasks.
- IT literate and confident interacting with LIMS system
- Can work with minimal supervision, use reasoning when faced with unfamiliar scenarios.
- Demonstrable skills in interpreting and recording results
- Can pick skills up quickly and apply in a laboratory-based environment.
- Experience using larger scale laboratory automation.