



John Innes Centre

Unlocking Nature's Diversity



**Group Leader in Fundamental Biology of
Legumes Recruitment Pack**

Group Leader in Fundamental Biology of Legumes Job Description

Main Purpose of the Job:

Set up and lead an internationally excellent, independent research programme in fundamental plant biology with relevance for legume or other rotation crops.

Key Relationships

Internal: Work collaboratively with all levels of staff within the Institute to enhance the Institute's research and capabilities.

External: Collaborate and communicate regularly with staff on the Norwich Research Park, national and international collaborators, funding bodies, Government departments and industry stakeholders to enhance an independent research programme and represent the JIC.

Main Activities & Responsibilities:

Lead and manage an internationally recognised, high-profile and innovative research programme.

Make significant contributions to strategic thinking and planning of research.

Lead and manage a research team, taking responsibility for its outputs and impact. This will include selecting, supervising, mentoring, training and providing wellbeing support for postdoctoral researchers, technicians, students and visitors, supporting effective career development, maintaining high levels of performance in the team, and maintaining a positive research culture.

Disseminate research findings through the publication of peer-reviewed research papers, consolidate the Institute's international scientific reputation through participation in national and internal conferences and provision of expert commentary in a variety of media.

Submit grant proposals across a broad range of potential funders, securing substantial research funding to support the research programme.

Ensure that research and record keeping is carried out in accordance with best practice, institute policies and procedures and legal requirements.

Ensure that the research team complies with health and safety policy and guidance documents, and with quality assurance and data management procedures.

Manage the research group's budgets for consumables, grants and other funding, making cost-effective use of resources and minimising waste.

Enhance the wider social and economic impact of the Institute's research through influencing and developing partnerships and commercial opportunities with government, industry and other external parties.

Positively contribute to the effective leadership and management of the institute, through additional responsibilities, including committee and steering group membership, as and when required.

Commit to public engagement/science communication activities that raise the institute's profile and public awareness of science.

Act as an ambassador for the institute.

Any other duties that may be required, which are commensurate with the role of Group Leader.

Person Profile

Education & Qualifications

PhD or equivalent in relevant subject, Essential
Substantial postdoctoral research experience, Essential

Specialist Knowledge & Skills

Significant track record of internationally competitive research achievement, supported by a strong publication record in peer reviewed journals commensurate with years since PhD, Essential

Deep and broad understanding of the scientific background of the proposed research programme, Essential

Capacity to envisage and articulate the longer-term objectives and potential impact on UK agriculture of the proposed research programme, Essential

Ability to formulate and lead a research programme that will deliver innovative, world-class science, Essential

Knowledge of JIC/NRP research fields, underpinning an explanation of the benefits of locating the proposed research programme at JIC, Essential

Measures of esteem such as international invited talks, editorial appointments, membership of external grant or appointments panels etc, Desirable (essential for Tenured appointments)

Success in leading research and initiating interdisciplinary collaborations, Desirable (essential for Tenured appointments)

Relevant Experience

Demonstrated ability to plan and prioritise to ensure scientific ideas translate into delivery of research outcomes, Essential

Demonstrated commitment to the highest levels of integrity and best practice in science and scientific management, Essential

Experience with using legume model organisms, or other rotation crops, for fundamental research, or a realistic assessment of technical challenges using such models, Essential

Experience of motivating, managing and mentoring team members, including objective setting and regular informal and formal reviews of progress, Desirable (essential for Tenured appointments).

Evidence of winning external funding for the maintenance of a successful and sustainable research team, Desirable (essential for Tenured appointments).

Research project leadership and management experience in stand-alone and collaborative projects, Desirable (essential for Tenured appointments).

Interpersonal & Communication Skills

Strong team player: working with others with different skill sets to reach a common goal, sharing information and supporting colleagues, Essential

Effective and appropriate communication with people at all levels both inside and outside the Institute, Essential

Development and articulation of innovative approaches and cohesive scientific plans, Essential

Open-minded, determined and resilient approach to scientific planning and management, Desirable

Creation and fostering collaborative research networks, Desirable (essential for Tenured appointments)

Additional Requirements

Ability to travel nationally/internationally to facilitate collaborations and/or present seminars. (Reasonable adjustments will be considered. The Institute recognises the need for work-life balance/the need to support those with caring responsibilities), Essential

Exhibits a high level of motivation combined with a flexible approach, Essential
Promotes equality and values diversity, embraces the expected values and behaviours of all staff ensuring JIC is a great place to work, Essential

Exhibits enthusiasm for an immediate or future role in leading and developing JIC science and values, both within the Institute and wider, Desirable

Who We Are

The [John Innes Centre](#) is an independent, international centre of excellence in plant and microbial science, carrying out fundamental and strategic research, to train scientists and make our findings available to society. Our research makes use of a wide range of disciplines in the biological, chemical and mathematical sciences, including; cell biology, biochemistry, chemistry, genetics, molecular biology and computational biology.

We pride ourselves on being a welcoming and inclusive working environment for all. We have a diverse and multicultural scientific community and thrive on our European and international links, appointing staff from across the world. Any candidate who would like further information on current or anticipated immigration requirements can contact the HR Team on +44 (0)1603 450814 or nbi.recruitment@nbi.ac.uk.

We are proud to hold a prestigious Athena SWAN Gold award, recognising the impact of our work in promoting gender equality in science. We are also a proud member of the Stonewall Diversity Champion's programme, a founding signatory of the Technician Commitment and, as a Disability Confident employer, guarantee to offer an interview to all disabled applicants who meet the essential criteria for the post.

Department

Our [scientific departments](#) work across a range of disciplines including biology, chemistry, genetics, mathematical modeling, physics and information technology. The successful candidate will be able to align to the department that best fits their scientific programme.

Group Details

You will work alongside a diverse community of researchers across various disciplines, including expertise in applied mathematics, chemistry, microscopy and structural biology, as well as plant and microbial scientists, fostering a collaborative environment that encourages strategic input at all levels. JIC offers substantial support for professional development, research, and administrative tasks. Start-up research funding will be provided, in addition to well-funded facilities and extensive support.

Advertisement

Tenure Track Position:

Group Leader in Fundamental Biology of Legumes

The John Innes Centre (JIC) seeks a creative junior or more established researcher to set up and lead an internationally excellent, independent research programme in fundamental plant biology with relevance for legume or other rotation crops. The postholder is encouraged to address biological questions but with clear relevance to UK agriculture. Previous legume research experience is desirable, but not essential, and consideration will also be given to candidates that wish to build on and apply their previous experience with other plant species to legumes to solve agricultural challenges.

We welcome applications from scientists with different research expertise, including but not limited to genetics, genomics, metabolism, biochemistry and cell biology.

The successful candidate will be offered an initial six-year tenure-track position, with the opportunity to apply for tenure during this period, subject to review. If the candidate selected meets our tenure requirements we may consider appointing to a tenured position directly.

Facilities and Support

The role comes with a full-time Research Assistant for the group, a well-equipped laboratory, and additional support including a Laboratory Manager and media preparation team. You will also benefit from cutting-edge technology platforms, such as bioimaging and microscopy, proteomics, biochemistry, structural biology, crop transformation, and horticultural services. JIC's newly built 110-hectare field experimentation station integrates lab and field research on one site, providing a seamless research experience. Explore the full range of platforms [here](#).

Why Join JIC?

This is an exciting time to join JIC as we advance our ambitious Healthy Plants, Healthy People, Healthy Planet (HP3) vision and build new, cutting-edge facilities.

The HP3 project, in association with our colleagues at [The Sainsbury Laboratory](#) (TSL), is a £400 million investment in state-of-the-art laboratories, glasshouses, controlled environment chambers, and platform technologies offering unparalleled research infrastructure. These laboratories are planned to open in 2032, will be equipped with the very latest equipment in analytical biochemistry, genomics, bio-imaging and structural biology, supported by a dedicated new Data Centre with the very latest, future-proofed computational infrastructure and support in artificial intelligence and machine learning. The HP3 investment builds on the recognised position of JIC and TSL as a UK hub for plant and microbial science and an international centre of excellence.

You will work alongside a diverse community of researchers across various disciplines, including expertise in mathematics, physics, chemistry and structural biology, as well as plant and microbial scientists, fostering a collaborative environment that encourages input at all levels. JIC offers substantial support for professional development, research, and administrative tasks. Start-up research funding will be provided, in addition to well-funded facilities and extensive support.

The John Innes Centre is part of the wider vision of the [Norwich Research Park \(NRP\)](#), along with [The Sainsbury Laboratory, which focuses on plant-microbe](#) interactions and crop diseases, [The Earlham Institute](#) which studies living systems with [a strong emphasis on evolutionary functional genomics and informatics](#), and [The Quadram Institute which has leading programmes on food science, nutrition, and gut](#) microbiology. The NRP also

hosts one of the largest [teaching hospitals in the UK](#), with research strengths in gut health and nutrition, and the [University of East Anglia](#), which has world-leading research in climate science and international development, as well as strong science and engineering faculties. Collectively, the NRP employs around 3000 PhD scientists and is a vibrant, collaborative and intellectually stimulating research environment.

Norwich offers an outstanding quality of life, combining affordable housing, top-rated schools, and easy access to the beautiful [Norfolk coast](#). Discover why so many people choose to live and work here in our latest [publication](#), featuring case studies from staff who now call Norwich home. The comprehensive [Work in Norwich Guide](#) also provides valuable insights and practical information to help you make the move.

International applicants

We welcome international applicants and our dedicated recruitment team will guide you through [the different visa options and application processes](#). We will cover visa costs for the successful candidate and their dependants as well as the immigration healthcare surcharge (IHS) when you apply for your visa.

We provide a competitive start-up package, including full funding for a Research Assistant/postdoc, access to student schemes, core lab equipment and access to advanced platform services such as horticulture, bioimaging, and proteomics. With no teaching expectation, you'll have the freedom to focus fully on your research.

Find out more about our [pay and additional benefits](#) and about [life in the UK](#). If you are an international applicant and would like further information, please don't hesitate to contact our recruitment team nbi.recruitment@nbi.ac.uk.

Equality and Inclusion

JIC is committed to equality of opportunity for all employees and welcomes applications from candidates of all backgrounds, regardless of gender, ethnicity, or personal characteristics. JIC holds the prestigious Athena SWAN Gold award, recognising our dedication to advancing gender equality. We are also a Disability Confident Employer and a Stonewall Diversity Champion. We offer a stimulating and inclusive research environment, actively promote a family-friendly workplace with an onsite nursery and support flexible working arrangements. We particularly encourage applications from women and ethnic minorities. Find out more on our website [here](#)

Application Process

Interested applicants are invited to submit a single document containing:

- + CV
- + Cover letter explaining your motivation for applying for the Group Leader position at JIC
- + A description of current research activities (2-3 pages)

+ Short- and long-term research goals (2-3 pages)

We encourage you to highlight how your research could contribute to JIC's four strategic research programmes ([see here](#)).

Submit your application by **17:00 GMT 1 September 2026**.

For more information and details on how to apply, please visit our website at jobs.jic.ac.uk or contact the Human Resources team at 01603 450814 or nbi.recruitment@nbi.ac.uk

Interviews are tentatively scheduled for 13 and 14 October 2026 and will be held in person at the John Innes Centre.

Additional Benefits of Joining JIC:

1. Join an outstanding team of colleagues working across an unparalleled range of cutting-edge interdisciplinary plant and microbial science.
2. Competitive start-up package, including full-funding for a Research Assistant/postdoc (£42K), access to student schemes (£105K for a 4-year student), basic lab equipment (>£100K), and access to platform services such as horticulture, bioimaging, and proteomics (~£50-100K per year).
3. Access to state-of-the-art facilities, including field phenotyping (field station 10 minutes away by bike), growth rooms, glasshouses, bioimaging, chemistry, biophysics, metabolomics, proteomics, and structural biology platforms.
4. A flat management structure fostering a collegial atmosphere.
5. Over £400 million in new investment, demonstrating a commitment to JIC as the UK's centre of excellence in plant and microbial science.
6. Opportunities to influence science policy at regional, national, and international levels.
7. The benefits of living in Norwich—affordable housing, proximity to the coast (20 miles/30 km), and an attractive city and countryside. Norwich also has an international airport for easy travel.

The John Innes Centre is a registered charity (No. 223852) and is grant-aided by the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council. We are an Equal Opportunities Employer.