

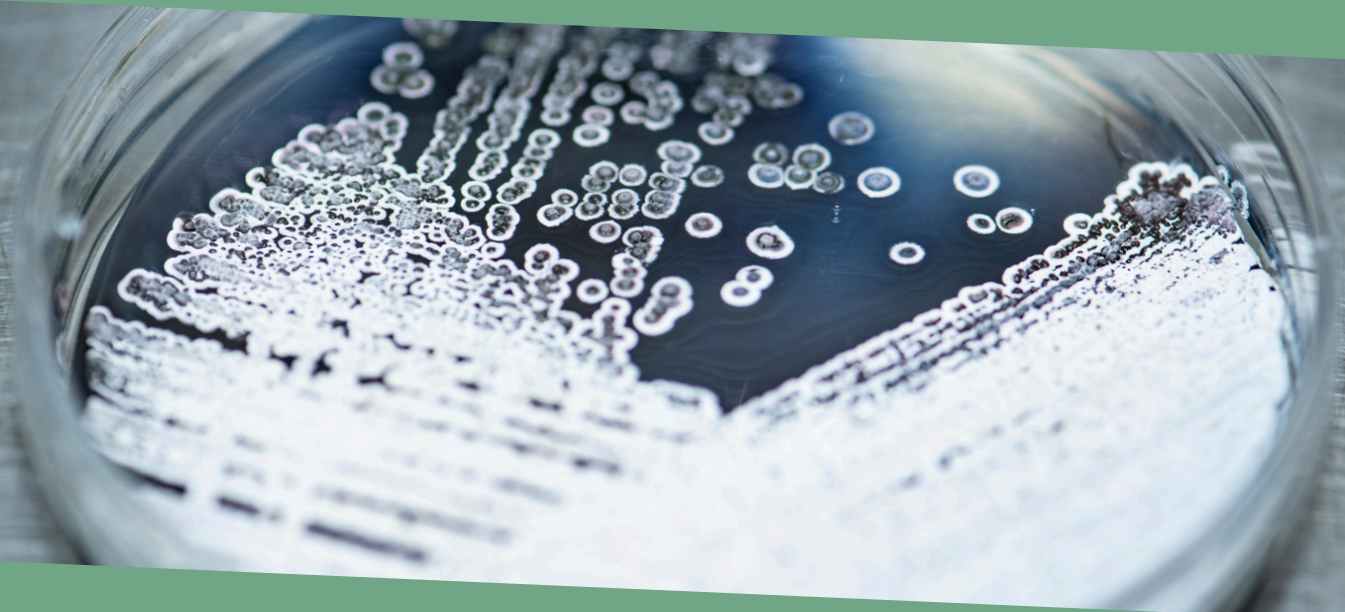


John Innes Centre

*Unlocking Nature's Diversity*



## Independent Fellowship in Plant-Associated Microbial Interactions Recruitment Pack



## **Independent Fellowship in Plant-Associated Microbial Interactions**

Microbial communities and their complex interactions within natural environments are increasingly recognized as essential to ecosystem health and sustainability. Beneficial associations between microbes and plants, for instance, play a pivotal role in enhancing soil health and promoting plant growth. These interactions contribute to nutrient solubilization, tolerance to abiotic stress, suppression of pests and pathogens, and biological nitrification inhibition.

The John Innes Centre (JIC) recognises the critical importance of this rapidly evolving field and invites applications from visionary scientists for an Independent Research Fellowship focused on microbial communities and their interactions. We welcome candidates with expertise and interests in any aspect of microbial or fungal communities and their interactions with host organisms, particularly where these interactions contribute to plant and soil health.

Relevant research areas include, but are not limited to rhizosphere and phyllosphere microbiology; microbial evolution; molecular and/or structural aspects of plant-microbe or plant-fungal interactions; the molecular biology of soil-dwelling bacteria or fungi; interspecies chemical signalling; bacteria/fungus-virus interactions in the soil; soil microbiology; microbial community modelling; and plant genetics in the context of microbial interactions.

This position will come with access to JIC's extensive resources and state-of-the-art plant growth facilities. The candidate will join a vibrant microbiology and plant science research community, providing excellent opportunities for internal collaboration and research synergy.

The successful candidate will be offered an initial five-year Independent Fellowship position, with the opportunity to transfer to a three-year tenure-track Group Leader appointment at the end of this period, subject to review. If the candidate selected meets the requirement for tenure-track prior to the end of the five-year Fellowship an earlier transition is possible, again subject to review.

### **Facilities and Support**

The role comes with a full-time Research Assistant/PostDoc 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 (X-ray crystallography and cryo-EM), crop transformation, invertebrate rearing facilities, 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](#), is a £400 million investment in state-of-the-art laboratories, glasshouses, controlled environment chambers, and platform technologies offering unparalleled research infrastructure. These laboratories, which will open in 2030, 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 molecular biology, mathematics, chemistry and biochemistry, microscopy 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. As a microbiology research leader, you will also be a member of the [Centre for Microbial Interactions](#), which exists to promote collaboration and synergy between the >100 microbiology labs based on the Norwich Research Park.

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](mailto: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, recognizing 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 the following documents:

- + CV
- + Cover letter explaining your motivation for applying for the Independent Fellowship 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 **close of play Friday 5<sup>th</sup> September 2025**.

For more information and details on how to apply, please visit our website at [jobs.jic.ac.uk](http://jobs.jic.ac.uk) or contact the Human Resources team at 01603 450814 or [nbi.recruitment@nbi.ac.uk](mailto:nbi.recruitment@nbi.ac.uk).

Interviews are tentatively scheduled for **14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> October 2025 in the John Innes Centre, Norwich Research Park, Norwich, NR4 7UH**

### **Additional Benefits of Joining JIC:**

1. Join an outstanding team of colleagues working across an unparalleled range of cutting-edge interdisciplinary microbiology and plant science.
2. Competitive start-up package, including full-funding for a Research Assistant/postdoc (£42K per year), access to a range of PhD student schemes (£105K for a 4-year student), basic lab equipment (up to £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, and 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), 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.

### **Independent Fellowship in Plant-Associated Microbial Interactions**

#### **Job Description**

#### **Main Purpose of the Job:**

Create and lead an internationally excellent, independent discovery programme in microbial or fungal communities and their interactions with hosts, particularly where these interactions have beneficial effects on plant & soil health, with the potential to underpin increased agricultural sustainability.

#### **Key Relationships**

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

**External:** Work collaboratively with staff on the NRP, academic and industry collaborators, funding bodies, Government and other stakeholders to enhance the Institute's research and capabilities.

#### **Main Activities & Responsibilities**

Lead and manage an internationally recognised, high-profile and innovative research programme in the field of microbial interactions.

Make significant contributions to the 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, 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 impact of the proposed research programme, Essential

Ability to formulate and lead a research programme that will deliver innovative, world-class science in molecular host-microbes interactions or a related field, 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

Success in leading research and initiating interdisciplinary collaborations, Desirable

### **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 of motivating, managing and mentoring team members, including objective setting and regular informal and formal reviews of progress, Desirable

Evidence of winning external funding for the maintenance of a successful and sustainable research team, Desirable

Research project leadership and management experience in stand-alone and collaborative projects, Desirable

### **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 the institute 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 microbiology and plant 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. This includes molecular and environmental microbiology, biochemistry, chemistry, cell biology, plant genetics and 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 x. 450888 or [nbi.recruitment@nbi.ac.uk](mailto: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, providing internal clusters of expertise within the institute who will be able to support and advise on specialised aspects of the candidate's day-to-day research. 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 molecular biology, mathematics, chemistry and biochemistry, 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.