

THE UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER
PARTICULARS OF APPOINTMENT
FACULTY OF SCIENCE & ENGINEERING
SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING
DEPARTMENT OF CHEMICAL ENGINEERING
RESEARCH ASSOCIATE IN COMMERCIAL MARKET RESEARCH FOR BIOCATALYSIS AND
ENZYME ENGINEERING
VACANCY REF: SAE-029200

Salary: Grade 6 £37,174 per annum
Hours: Full time (1 FTE)
Duration: Fixed term for up to 4 months
Location: Manchester Institute of Biotechnology

Enquiries about the vacancy, shortlisting and interviews:

Name: Prof Aline Miller

Email: Aline.Miller@manchester.ac.uk

Background

The University has been awarded funds from the Industrial Biotechnology Innovation Catalyst (IBIC) to support a short-term project, in collaboration with Imperagen, a spin-out from The University of Manchester's Manchester Institute of Biotechnology (MIB). Imperagen has developed a platform technology to accelerate enzyme development and support sustainable bio-based products and processes. To support commercial activity, Imperagen seeks a short-term secondment of a University staff member to assist with market research and business development, engaging with customers in chemical manufacturing while exploring new opportunities.

This position will be based in the Manchester Institute of Biotechnology (MIB) and at Imperagen's Manchester premises. The MIB is a cross-disciplinary research centre that brings together more than 400 researchers with expertise in the foundational sciences supporting industrial biotechnology, including: molecular biology; chemistry; biochemical-engineering; materials science; synthetic biology; analytics and computer science.

The successful applicant should have a strong background in biocatalysis and directed evolution and a good understanding of the industrial biotechnology sector. Candidates should have or expect to attain a PhD and have a thesis submitted prior to taking up the position.

Overall Purpose of the Job

The role will involve identifying key players and mapping opportunities in industrial biotechnology, with a focus on enzyme engineering. The project will deliver a stakeholder database and market assessment report, providing insights into global trends and partnerships. This collaboration will drive growth for Imperagen, facilitate knowledge exchange, and strengthen links between the University, IBIC, and the company.

The research associate will work under the supervision of Prof Aline Miller and alongside Imperagen's commercial team, gaining valuable non-laboratory based business experience and an insight into the commercial environment.

Key Responsibilities, Accountabilities or Duties

The range of responsibilities will include:

- Conduct market research to identify key players, trends, and opportunities in industrial biotechnology, with a focus on enzyme engineering
- Support business development activities, including direct outreach via email, calls, and virtual meetings
- Use Customer Relationship Management (CRM) software to document engagement and track business opportunities
- Attend team meetings and present findings and recommendations to the leadership team
- Conduct individual and collaborative research projects according to the overall needs of the research program
- Continually update knowledge and understanding in the field or specialism
- Deal with routine communication using a range of media
- Communicate complex information, orally, in writing and electronically
- Use creativity to analyse, interpret research data, and draw conclusions on the outcomes
- Contribute to collaborative decision making with colleagues in areas of research
- Plan and manage own research activity in collaboration with others
- Balance the competing pressures of research and administrative demands and deadlines
- Be aware of the risks in the work environment and their potential impact on their own work and that of others
- Post holders are required to familiarise themselves with the University's Equality and Diversity policies and to actively support these wherever possible

Person Specification

Working in a team, you will need good communication skills, exchanging technical information with scientists from different disciplines. You need to possess relevant computer skills and have strong analytical and problem-solving abilities. The role requires a well-organised, yet flexible, approach to working.

Essential Knowledge, Skills and Experience

- A degree in chemistry / biochemistry or similar, with practical laboratory experience or extensive work experience in a similar role
- A PhD in chemistry/ biochemistry / chemical biology / biocatalysis or a related subject
- Interest in biotechnology industry, commercialisation, business development and enterprise
- Ability to work collaboratively within a group and also to work independently, with minimal supervision
- Strong analytical and problem solving abilities, with the ability to learn new skills quickly
- Excellent communication skills
- Good time-management skills and organisational abilities
- Good computer skills – word processing / spreadsheets / presentations
- Experience of supervision and support of PhD students
- A flexible approach to working with the willingness to travel and work outside normal business hours (if occasionally required)
- Understanding of equal opportunity issues

Desirable Knowledge, Skills and Experience

- Experience and understanding of the biotechnology industry, commercialisation, business development and enterprise is desirable
- Practical experience of biocatalysis, laboratory evolution of enzymes, assay development, enzyme characterization, including the determination of kinetic parameters
- Experience of microbiology and molecular biology techniques, i.e. growth of micro-organisms, DNA preparation and manipulation (PCR), library generation, sterile techniques, protein purification