

Position Description

Position title	Molecular Plant Pathology Technician
Reports to	Leader Field Pathology
Business unit	Research and Development
Location	The position is located primarily in Tully
Direct reports	Supervision of casuals as required

Position details

SRA purpose	Sugar Research Australia invests in and manages a portfolio of research, development and adoption projects that drive productivity, profitability and sustainability for the Australian sugarcane industry. We have highly dedicated and passionate people working on industry-critical projects to deliver tangible value outcomes and impact for our industry stakeholders.
Business unit purpose	The Research & Development (R&D) business unit is the key interface between SRA and its industry partners, local productivity services and extension providers. The R&D business unit exists to create tangible impact for industry and is the primary pathway through which SRA converts research and development investments into benefits at the farm and mill. The overarching objective of the business unit is to build strong relationships with industry, develop an SRA-wide understanding of district-level productivity gaps and risks, and apply existing research as a basis for creating solutions/tools/products and services to generate industry productivity gains or manage risks to production. The success of the business unit will be measured in terms of the impact generated; including measurable improvements to district productivity (increased tonnes per hectare and sugar per hectare, together with reduced input costs per hectare), products or programs developed, delivered and adopted, and industry's satisfaction with SRA's overall service offering.
Position purpose	The principal role of Technicians is to provide scientific and technical support to Researchers. Within broad guidelines about approach and milestones, a Technician undertakes a broad range of technical duties requiring scientific knowledge and professional judgement to solve complex problems. Technicians may also have responsibilities for the management of technical facilities and/or services.
Key responsibilities	• Undertake molecular methods for detection of sugarcane pests and diseases in sugarcane juice, plant and soil samples. • Process and score soil samples for <i>Pachymetra</i> spores. • Assist with the operation and maintenance of the Tully Soil Assay Laboratory to ensure the timely delivery of high-quality data to clients. • Assist with the development of automated processes within the Tully Soils Assay Laboratory. • Participate in new research projects as required. • Ensure research data are recorded correctly. • Demonstrates commitment to fostering the continuous development of a safer, healthier and more sustainable workplace at SRA, in a way that would be expected for this position. • Adhere to SRA's policies, procedures, and Code of Conduct for Staff. • Ensure compliance obligations are upheld, and risks are managed. • Own your professional growth by engaging in development opportunities which enhance your skills and career.

- Any other duties as required from time to time.

Key success factors

Experience, knowledge and capabilities	Essential • Understanding of plant pathology and/or plant biology • Experience in the use of molecular techniques such as DNA extraction and qPCR • Demonstrated level of initiative and judgement on technical and scientific approaches, and on the practical aspects of trials / investigations. • Proven ability to conduct repetitive work within a laboratory setting and physical work in hot and humid environments. • Ability to use microscopes • Demonstrated ability to work within a team of managers/researchers/technicians /casuals and to take the lead in specific well-defined activities. • Excellent organisation skills and ability to manage competing priorities. • Demonstrated effective communication skills appropriate to the scope of activities required, and proven autonomy and self-sufficiency if required to carry out activities unsupervised. • Competency in computer skills and high attention to detail in respect to recording data and outcomes. Desirable • Plant pathology experience including laboratory and field-based skills • Experience culturing micro-organisms • A high level of initiative on both technical and operational issues • Experience working within sugarcane or other cropping industries.
Qualifications, licences and training	Essential • A current manual driver's licence is required to drive SRA vehicles. • Degree or Diploma level qualification in Agriculture, Horticulture, Molecular Biology, Environmental, Biological Science or related discipline from a recognised tertiary training entity is preferred, however candidates with relevant experience gained in service will also be considered.