

Position Description

Date: October 2026

Ref: 2097

Position | Tūranga: Internship – Characterising Harakeke Fibre

Responsible to Tō kaiwhakahaere:	Science Team Leader, Stewart Collie, Scientist, Peter Brorens, Massey University Professor, Faith Kane
Group Tari:	Smart Foods and Bioproducts
Function Wāhanga:	Bioproduct and Fibre Technology
Team Tīma:	Bioproduct and Fibre Technology
Location Wāhi:	Tuhiraki, Lincoln
Employment Type Momo Mahi:	Fixed Term – 12 weeks
Korn Ferry Grade Taumata Korn Ferry:	12

Organisational context

The Bioeconomy Science Institute Maiangi Taiao is New Zealand's newest public research organisation, formed through the merger of AgResearch, Plant & Food Research, Manaaki Whenua - Landcare Research, Scion, and the New Zealand Food Innovation Network. Our purpose is to drive innovation and commercial outcomes in the bioeconomy, using research and technology to support enduring economic growth and resilience, a healthy environment and beneficial social outcomes for New Zealand. We pursue opportunities to lift innovation, commercial outcomes, and adoption of advanced technology to drive economic growth across New Zealand. Through world-leading science, we drive innovation across agriculture, horticulture, forestry, aquaculture, biotechnology, and manufacturing. We protect and enhance ecosystems, strengthen biosecurity and climate resilience, and develop cutting-edge bio-based products and technologies.

We honour Te Tiriti o Waitangi and embed te ao Māori throughout our transformation journey. As we come together, we are committed to learning and growing together through inclusive, equitable, and culturally responsiveness ways of working. All roles contribute, in ways relevant to their work, to giving effect to our Te Tiriti commitments through partnership, participation, protection and equity.

Role purpose | Te Take o te Tūranga

This internship will contribute to building our knowledge and capability in the characterisation of harakeke (New Zealand flax) fibre.

Working alongside researchers, the successful candidate will investigate methods for fibre extraction, testing and analysis to better understand the physical characteristics and performance of harakeke fibres. The project combines laboratory experimentation, microscopy, data analysis and method development, contributing to future research into sustainable and bio-based materials.

The internship provides an opportunity to develop practical research skills while contributing to work that explores the potential of one of Aotearoa New Zealand's most important natural fibre resources.

Accountabilities | Ngā whakaritenga

Research and Laboratory Activities

- Extract and prepare harakeke fibres for testing and analysis.
- Conduct tensile testing to assess fibre strength and performance.
- Use optical microscopy and scanning electron microscopy to examine fibre structure and characteristics.
- Assist with developing and refining methods for fibre processing and characterisation.
- Maintain accurate laboratory records and experimental documentation.
- Analyse and interpret data collected during the project.

Reporting and Communication

- Summarise research findings and experimental results.
- Contribute to project reports and presentations.
- Present outcomes and recommendations to project supervisors and team members.

Team Contribution

- Work collaboratively with scientists, technicians and other students.
- Contribute positively to a safe and inclusive laboratory environment.
- Participate in project meetings and discussions.

About you | Ō Pūmanawa

You may be studying materials science, engineering, chemistry, biological sciences, environmental science, biotechnology, physics, or another related discipline.

We're looking for someone who is curious, practical and interested in understanding how natural materials perform and can be applied in future products and technologies.

You will likely:

- Enjoy hands-on laboratory and experimental work.
- Be comfortable learning new techniques and using specialised equipment.
- Have strong analytical and problem-solving skills.
- Be organised and able to accurately collect and record data.
- Communicate findings clearly in both written and verbal formats.
- Work effectively both independently and as part of a team.
- Have an interest in sustainable materials, natural fibres and scientific research.

An appreciation of, or connection to, Māori culture, mātauranga Māori or te ao Māori would be advantageous but is not essential.

Health, Safety, And Wellbeing | Hauora, Haumaru Me Te Oranga

- Contribute to a positive health, safety and wellbeing culture by taking reasonable care for their own health, safety and wellbeing and that of others; complying with legislative requirements, organisational policies and standard operating procedures; reporting hazards, incidents, near misses, and safety observations; and promoting psychological wellbeing through open communication and the early recognition of stress, fatigue, and mental health concerns.

Organisational objectives | Ngā Whāinga Tōpūtanga Katoa

- Actively develops and applies the cultural capability relevant to their role and contributes to giving effect to the organisation's Te Tiriti o Waitangi Framework
- Ensures that all information created or received during your work is managed as per the Institute's Information Management policy. This includes naming, storing, classifying, and ensuring it is available to other employees.
- Actively participates in the Bioeconomy Science Institute Maiangi Taiao performance process, including setting objectives and having a robust development plan. Proactively and constructively contributes to performance conversations and personal development.
- Takes responsibility to understand and apply Institute policy, processes, systems, and procedures daily.
- Commits to accurate and timely information sharing and recordkeeping as per set organisational standards.
- The accountabilities set out above are not exhaustive. Therefore, it may be necessary for you to undertake other reasonable accountabilities as required, which are within your abilities.