

Position Title:	Research Associate
Reports To:	Science Team Leader - GenomNZ
Direct Reports:	Nil
Group:	Digital Agriculture
Key Relationships:	Laboratory employees, Scientists, Internal and external customers, Supplies and Service agents
Location:	Invermay Campus, Mosgiel, Dunedin

WHO WE ARE

As part of the Government's reset of the science, innovation and technology system, on 1 July 2025, AgResearch, Manaaki Whenua – Landcare Research, Plant & Food Research, and Scion merged to form the New Zealand Institute for Bioeconomy Science, trading as the Bioeconomy Science Institute.

This merger has created a world-class research organisation of globally significant size and scale, with over 2,000 employees — including scientists, researchers, and support staff. It brings together fundamental science knowledge and expertise in the natural resources that underpin the bioeconomy and the native estate, alongside applied research capabilities in manufacturing, agritech and biotech, and the food and fibre sectors.

Our people drive innovation and commercial outcomes in the bioeconomy, using research and technology to support enduring economic growth and resilience, a healthy environment, and positive social outcomes for Aotearoa New Zealand.

This position sits under the current AgResearch group of the Bioeconomy Science Institute.

POSITION SCOPE & PURPOSE

The Research Associate provides laboratory management and technical support to achieve research and commercial objectives by the GenomNZ team based at the Invermay Campus (www.agresearch.co.nz/genomnz). Working closely with the Animal Genomics team, GenomNZ provides genomic solutions including parentage assignment, genomic relationships and single gene tests for animal breeders and researchers in the agricultural and aquaculture industries.

This role is responsible for planning, carrying out, and reporting on specific high throughput sample processing and SNP-based genotyping workflows inside the framework of an accredited commercial genotyping laboratory. The Research Associate will work with others to support the delivery of timely and accurate results for commercial contracts in accordance with legislative requirements and manage key day-to-day laboratory operations. A significant level of initiative, independence, interpersonal skills and originality is required.



KEY ACCOUNTABILITY AREAS

DELIVER LABORATORY SERVICES

- Deliver consistent high quality laboratory services to GenomNZ customers as per service level agreements.
- Understand and conduct routine and non-routine testing of samples using most appropriate laboratory techniques and instrumentation.
- Prepare, develop and update laboratory guidelines, manuals, and SOPs in line with best practice.
- Ensure laboratory services meet legislative requirements.
- Arrange and sign-off all induction training required for people to enter and work in the laboratory.
- Train technical people to deliver technical laboratory services.
- Apply effective workflow management and monitor technical activities within area of expertise, adjusting priorities or re-directing resources if needed to ensure timely delivery to downstream laboratory or analysis activities.
- Purchase and monitor general inventory and supplies for testing services, ensuring stock records are accurate as per business policy and procedures.
- Ensure proper maintenance and calibration of general laboratory equipment and coordinate repairs and upgrades as necessary.
- Work with and support the wider team to achieve business goals and meet customer needs.
- Communicate effectively with internal and external customers, and suppliers and service agents.
- Undertake other responsibilities as required to reflect changing demands.
- Ensure agreed objectives are delivered within budget.

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT AND SCIENTIFIC EXCELLENCE

- Actively share information, knowledge and expertise to facilitate BSI-wide success.
- Exercise independent judgment in the evaluation, selection, adaptation and modification of standard techniques, processes and criteria within the boundaries of an accredited environment.
- Regularly monitor laboratory performance and quality metrics for area of responsibility, lead investigations to resolve technical issues and implement strategies for improvement.
- Devise new approaches to problems encountered; works within conventional practices but may incorporate complex features.
- May contribute to research outputs and achievement of research project milestones.
- Maintain an active involvement in the wider genomics research communities.
- Be actively involved with development, validation and implementation of new/improved test methods in consultation with more experienced scientists when required.
- Actively participate and contribute as a source of expert advice or comment recognised by peers and industry groups.




HEALTH AND SAFETY

- Maintain current knowledge of BSI's Health and Safety Management policies, systems, and procedures.
- Ensure awareness of own responsibilities and the procedures to follow in relation to health and safety.
- Identify and report any hazards, near misses or incidents as per prescribed policy and procedures.
- Demonstrate safe workplace behaviour by taking all practicable steps to ensure own and other's safety in the workplace.
- Attend scheduled Health and Safety training and development initiatives on a regular basis.

ORGANISATIONAL OBJECTIVES

- Apply and implement prescribed project management methodology into all project work.
- Apply principles of continuous improvement by taking ownership for identification, analysis and investigation of work-related matters with the intent to improve, manage compliance and initiate best practice in our place of work.
- Actively participate in and contribute to performance conversations and personal development.
- Embrace the AgResearch Values framework and develop own behaviours to support these Values on a continuous basis.
- Take responsibility to understand and apply AgResearch policy, processes, systems, and procedures on a daily basis.
- Commit to accurate and timely information sharing and recordkeeping as per set organisational standards.
- Perform additional tasks, duties and/or responsibilities as directed by your people leader.
- Assist and support AgResearch business across different science groups and business units, as agreed with your people leader.

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

- Ensure that all information created or received during the course of your work is managed as per  AgResearch Information Management policy. This includes naming, storing, classifying and ensuring it is available to other staff as per the policy.



PERSON SPECIFICATIONS

The ideal candidate will demonstrate the following qualifications, experience, and capabilities:

EDUCATION & QUALIFICATIONS

- Postgraduate or undergraduate qualification preferably in genetics or a related field of study
- At least 3 years' practical laboratory experience as a Senior Technician in a relevant field.

CAPABILITIES & EXPERIENCE

- Experience which includes managing resources and/or a technical support facility would be an advantage.
- Specific knowledge and practical laboratory experience in DNA extraction methodologies and genotyping technologies such as sequencing or microarrays is highly desirable.
- Confidence in operating, and understanding, complex laboratory equipment and associated software.
- Proven skills in handling and processing large numbers of samples in an accurate, timely and efficient manner.
- Proficient computer skills with knowledge of Microsoft and Excel (working knowledge of Microsoft Access is also desirable).
- Evidence of strong organisational and multi-tasking skills.
- An eye for detail and commitment to delivering work to a high degree of quality.
- Demonstrated experience in the application of scientific methodologies and following rigorous development and documentation procedures when implementing new or revised tests and procedures.
- Experience in sharing knowledge and coaching others within area/s of expertise.
- Effective people supervision abilities.
- Knowledge and interest in New Zealand pastoral agricultural and aquaculture industries.
- Experience with safe and effective use of chemicals.
- Clear understanding and demonstrated ability in applying principles behind intellectual property.



COMPETENCIES

Organisational wide competencies – these are the competencies determined by the organisation as critical to every role.	
Accountability	Accepts responsibility for one's actions regardless of outcomes.
Caring About People	Displays sensitivity towards the attitudes, feelings, or circumstances of others.
Developing People	Provides support, coaching, training, and career direction to others.
Integrity	Acts honestly in accordance with moral or ethical principles
Driving Results	Accomplishes goals, completes tasks, and achieves results.
Leveraging Diversity	Respects and values individual differences to obtain a desired effect or result.
Relationship Building	Develops collaborative relationships to facilitate current and future objectives.
Self-Development	Actively acquires new knowledge and skills to remain current with and/or grow beyond job requirements.
Role based competencies – these are the competencies required to perform this role.	
Planning & Organising	Coordinates and directs activities to help achieve business objectives.
Detail Focus	Performs work with care, accuracy, and attention to detail.
Presenting to Others	Conveys ideas and information to groups.
Networking	Builds and maintains a system of strategic business connections.
Financial Insight	Applies financial knowledge to achieve organisational goals and objectives.
Quality Focus	Strives to meet quality standards and produce quality work products.
Customer Focus	Provides courteous, timely, and helpful service to encourage client loyalty.
Solving Problems	Identifies solutions given available information.
Teamwork	Collaborates with others to achieve goals.
Time Management	Plans and prioritises work to maximise efficiency and minimise downtime.

