

Marine Institute Job Description

Position	Laboratory Analyst – Phytoplankton Laboratory
Grade & Contract	Laboratory Analyst Grade Temporary Specified Purpose Contract covering career break until 14th April 2028
Service Group	Marine Environment and Food Safety Services
Location	Castletownbere, Co. Cork with an initial 3-6month training period based at MI headquarters in Oranmore, Co. Galway.

Who will you Work With and What Will The Role Involve?

The Phytoplankton Laboratory Analyst will work as part of the Shellfish Safety Unit Team. This team is responsible for a wide range of monitoring and analytical services to clients including the Government, Food Safety Authority of Ireland, the Shellfish Industry and the EU. The Shellfish Safety Unit is the National Reference Laboratory for Marine Biotoxins in Ireland. The unit is part of the Marine Environment & Food Safety Services, which operates a number of programmes, and has engaged in an active Laboratory Accreditation programme.

The Phytoplankton Laboratory Analyst will primarily be responsible for undertaking analysis of phytoplankton samples. The analysis involves using light microscopy for the identification and enumeration of the full community of species in marine water samples from shellfish production areas, as part of the National Monitoring of Biotoxin in shellfish Programme. The analysis of samples may also contribute to wider monitoring programmes and relevant research initiatives. The role involves a high degree of taxonomic skill and the candidate will be expected to demonstrate a good understanding and knowledge in this area. The candidate will also need to demonstrate a good understanding of ISO17025. All work will be done within the quality system operated within the Marine Institute.

The work will primarily be carried out in the Marine Institute's facilities in Castletownbere, Co. Cork. with an **initial training period of up to 3 to 6 months based at Marine Institute's facilities in Oranmore, Co. Galway.** The length of training maybe shorter in duration and is dependent on previous expertise in the area. Assignments may also be carried out at other Marine Institute locations or in the field from time to time.

Phytoplankton National Monitoring Programme

A fundamental requirement for all research and monitoring programmes is the production of data of the highest quality. The Phytoplankton Laboratory is an essential part of the shellfish safety monitoring programme, and the production of fully quality assured, accredited, and timely information on the presence and distribution of toxic and harmful species is essential for the Irish Shellfish Industry. It is also important in providing advice to regulatory agencies tasked with the enforcement of production area management and harvesting permits. The laboratory operates a quick turnaround and requires analysts who can produce results accurately and consistently in a fast-

moving working environment. The Phytoplankton Monitoring programme is run under the auspices of the Competent Authorities, Sea Fisheries Protection Authority and the Food Safety Authority of Ireland and meets the requirements as laid down in EU Legislation 627/2019, where the Phytoplankton analytical test method is accredited to ISO 17025 standards by the Irish National Accreditation board.

What Will You Be Doing Every Day?

Principal Tasks:

This role requires a flexible approach to work and the possession of good inter-personal skills for working in a shared laboratory and office environment. Familiarity with the National Monitoring Programmes for Biotxin and Phytoplankton is a necessary attribute for this position. It would also be necessary for the candidate to have a full driving license and experience working in the field and at sea (on small boats or research vessels) as may be required. The working environment will involve many methods that are accredited to ISO 17025.

The candidate will be responsible for carrying out a range of duties consistent with the work described above. These include:

- Analysis of Marine water samples for identification and enumeration of phytoplankton species
- Input data into the Marine Institute databases and reporting on Phytoplankton results to management staff within the institute
- To contribute to all aspects of the MEFSS quality system as required, for example undertaking of internal audits and participation in various quality control groups.
- To contribute to assessment of data and assist with preparation of reports as required to update monitoring databases and assist with ad-hoc data reporting requirements
- Successful participation in inter-comparison exercises
- Liaise with stakeholders in the shellfish industry such as shellfish farmers, SFPA, FSAI and EPA on sample collection, preservation methods and preparation of sampling kits.
- Participation as required at meetings both internal and external and preparation of synopses of Phytoplankton monitoring for internal and external use.
- Assist in research projects in the area of phytoplankton monitoring and analysis, undertaken by the phytoplankton lab.
- Any other duties relevant to the post, grade and role as required from time to time.

What do You Need to Have Done to Apply for This role?

(Education, Professional or Technical Qualifications, Knowledge, Skills, Aptitudes, Experience and Training)

Essential / Important:

- A minimum of a third level Certificate in a relevant scientific subject.
- Demonstrated relevant work experience in a laboratory environment.
- Knowledge of phytoplankton taxonomy and ecology.
- Knowledge of using microscopes for identification

- Knowledge of instrument calibration and instrument troubleshooting.
- Experience in the use of standard office software packages.
- Willingness and ability to work at sea on board research vessels and field sampling visits as required.
- The ability to communicate effectively both verbally and in writing.
- Proven scientific and technical report writing skills.
- The ability to manage time effectively and work to deadlines.
- Demonstrated understanding of the requirements of an ISO 17025 accredited laboratory environment
- A full driving licence.

Ideally Nice to Have / Desirable:

- A scientific background in the area of Botany, Zoology, Environmental Science or similar
- Previous experience in a similar role
- Experience in field sampling for environmental monitoring programmes.
- Knowledge of marine/environmental science and plankton dynamics.
- Relevant analytical experience in the field of phytoplankton including taxonomy, and use of inverted light microscopes.
- Experience of participation in laboratory inter-comparison exercises.
- Experience working in a ISO 17025 Quality System

What else do you need to know?

(Special personal attributes required for the role)

- Dynamic and reliable.
- Self-sufficiency, while being a good team player.
- Excellent interpersonal skills.
- The ability to work to deadlines and manage time effectively.
- Experience in collaborating with scientists and members of a technical team.
- Ability to work on own initiative and progress work independently.
- Analytical approach to problem solving.
- Enthusiastic approach to the area of phytoplankton taxonomy and related research

Description of Service Group and the Wider Team

Marine Environment & Food Safety Services

Marine Environment & Food Safety Services (MEFSS) is a service area of the Marine Institute that plays a pivotal role in ensuring the safety of sea-food, preserving environmental health, providing a variety of policy supports and safeguarding fish health. Operating as an integral part of the Institute, MEFSS undertakes multifaceted responsibilities primarily through the execution of scientific monitoring and research programs, coupled with offering expert scientific interpretation and regulatory guidance to government.

MEFSS collaborates with various departments and agencies, including the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, Environmental Protection Authority, Department of Environment, Climate and Communications, Bord Iascaigh Mhara, Sea Fisheries Protection Authority, National Parks and Wildlife Service, and the Food Safety Authority of Ireland. This collaborative approach underscores the organisation's commitment to ensuring comprehensive and effective support across diverse domains. MEFSS ensures the highest quality standards with our laboratories accredited under EN ISO/IEC 17025:2017 for food safety, environmental monitoring, and fish health work. Furthermore, the Fish Health Competent Authority is ISO 9001:2015 certified, emphasising the organisation's commitment to excellence.

Shellfish Safety

Shellfish Safety in MEFSS involves rigorous monitoring and testing to ensure the safety and quality of shellfish products, contributing to the protection of public health. This includes adherence to established standards and regulations while actively collaborating with relevant authorities to maintain Ireland's superior shellfish health status. Collaborating with organisations such as the Food Safety Authority of Ireland and the Sea Fisheries Protection Authority, Shellfish Safety teams actively monitors seafood safety, upholding the reputation of the Irish seafood industry for high-quality products while adhering to national and international regulatory standards.

Who Will You Report to / Who will Manage and Support You?:

The successful candidate will report to the Scientific and Technical Officer in Phytoplankton Unit and the Shellfish Safety Unit Section Manager

What we offer

We value our staff, and we value their contribution to the work of the Marine Institute. In return for this, we provide benefits that promote a healthy work-life balance and which we hope will help them to develop professionally. These include personal and career development, work/life balance policies, an employee assistance programme, "Bike to Work" Scheme, staff medicals and annual flu vaccination.

Training

A full range of training will be provided as required, on the job and through appropriate courses. Training needs will be identified through the MI Performance Management Development System (PMDS).

Contacts:

Within the Marine Institute: Phytoplankton team and staff within Shellfish Safety and other team members within MEFS, Team Leaders, STOs, Senior Lab Analysts and Section Manager.

External: Liaison with aquaculture industry, Officials within the Sea Fisheries Protection Authority and the Food Safety Authority of Ireland

On a less regular basis you will be expected to work with colleagues in other Marine Institute service groups and with entities outside the Institute including other research institutes, educational institutions and government and EC bodies.

Salary:

Remuneration is in accordance with the Public Sector, Department of Finance approved Salary Scale for Laboratory Analyst Grade which runs from €38,884 - €64,455 on a full time basis per annum pro-rated with time worked. You will commence on the first point of the scale €38,884 and become a member of the Single Public Service Pension Scheme unless you are currently or have worked in the Public Sector in the past 6 months and are a member of another Public Sector Scheme.

Annual Leave:

Annual leave entitlement for a Laboratory Analyst Grade is 23 working days per annum pro-rated to reflect time worked. Annual leave entitlements are exclusive of Public Holidays. All leave must be approved in advance in line with Marine Institute leave policies and using time and leave management system in place, by your manager or their authorised representative.

Duration of Contract:

This temporary specific purpose contract of employment will be for a 4-year period up to the 14th April 2028. The successful candidate will be on probation for the first six months of this contract.

Who is the Marine Institute?

The Marine Institute is a non-commercial semi-state body, which was formally established by statute (Marine Institute Act, 1991) in October 1992.

Under the Act, the Marine Institute was given the responsibility:

“to undertake, to co-ordinate, to promote and to assist in marine research and development and to provide such services related to marine research and development, that in the opinion of the Institute will promote economic development and create employment and protect the marine environment”.

The Marine Institute is Ireland’s scientific agency responsible for supporting the sustainable development of the state’s maritime area and resources. We do this through conducting applied research and providing scientific knowledge, advice and services to government, industry and other stakeholders and users. This policy advice capacity, our broad mandate, and the research programmes we fund and undertake, give us a unique insight into the science-policy interface and make us an exemplar in the provision of integrated ocean knowledge.

The Marine Institute provides a broad range of essential scientific support to its parent department, the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM). There is an increasing demand from Government for the data and evidence that are essential to inform national policy and to underpin the state’s governance of our maritime area. Through laboratory, field and seagoing work, the Institute carries out statutory environmental, fisheries and aquaculture surveys, seafood testing and other monitoring programmes assigned by government. The Institute plays an important role in supporting the state’s response to the impacts of our changing seas and oceans, through working with the national and international scientific community to observe, study and understand our changing oceans. This essential scientific advice supports industry, protects consumers and underpins legislative and other obligations aimed at the protection and management of the marine environment.

Our vision - *The Marine Institute is a national and international leader in ocean knowledge that benefits people, policy and planet.*

Our Mission - *The Marine Institute provides scientific, research and development services to government, agencies, industry and society that support the sustainable use of our maritime area, the protection and restoration of marine ecosystems, and promote a shared understanding of the ocean.*

There are 6 broad service areas within the Marine Institute; (1) Ocean, Climate and Information Services, (2) Marine Environment & Fish Health Services, (3) Fisheries Ecosystems Advisory Services, (4) Irish Maritime Development Office, (5) Policy, Information and Research Services and (6) Corporate Services.

The Marine Institute 5 Year Strategic Plan (2023 to 2027) is available [Here](#)

How to Apply:

A C.V. and letter of application, summarising experience and skill set applicable to the position should be emailed to recruitment@marine.ie or posted to Human Resources at the Marine Institute, Rinville, Oranmore, Galway, H91 R673. All correspondence for this post should quote reference **MEFS/LA/PHYTO/CTB/MAY24**

Closing date for Applications:

All applications for this post should be received by the Marine Institute in advance of **12 noon on Thursday 23rd May 2024**. Unfortunately, late applications cannot be accepted.

Use of Data - all personal data and the information submitted for this application will be used solely for the purpose of this campaign, after which it will be deleted in line with our General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) Policy and data retention schedule. All information will be treated with the strictest confidence and accessed only by those involved directly in the campaign.

The Marine Institute is an organisation that champions Diversity, Inclusion & Equality for all. We encourage and welcome applications from anyone interested in this role.

Please do advise if there are any special accommodations required for the recruitment process. We are here to help you access opportunities with us.