

IDENTIFICATION

Department	Position Title	
Aurora College	Agriculture Technician	
Position Number	Community	Division/Region
91-17561	Fort Smith	Research

PURPOSE OF THE POSITION

The Agriculture Technician supports agricultural research, outreach, and capacity building in Fort Smith. This position will oversee plant propagation, growth, and health for several research projects carried out through the South Slave Research Centre. They will maintain environmental conditions, collect data related to plant growth and health, and provide input to future research opportunities. They will also use their knowledge and passion about horticulture to engage youth and other community members in our mission to increase the amount of food grown locally.

SCOPE

The position is located in Fort Smith and reports to the Manager, South Slave Research Centre (SSRC). The incumbent will be responsible for operation and maintenance of closed environment systems, as well as maintaining outdoor plots. They will be responsible for growing different crops following research protocols for several field trials carried out through the SSRC. The incumbent is involved in problem solving and decision making to ensure crops are healthy while maintaining research protocols. They will collect and enter data, and generate simple reports. The position provides recommendations on equipment selection and research design.

The position will provide technical knowledge to decisions regarding plant health as well as contribute to research ideas. The incumbent performs daily troubleshooting, diagnosing and resolving of equipment, including technical equipment. They liaise with local partners as well as external researchers to support their food growing projects.

The incumbent will create innovative social media content and provide open houses to help share knowledge of SSRC's agriculture research practices and findings. They will also participate in other knowledge mobilization methods including presentations, workshops, and papers.

The technician must work within the context of Aurora College programs, policies, and procedures; Aurora College strategic and business plans; the Collective Agreement; and various other standards, guidelines, and agreements. The technician is a representative of the College and, therefore, plays a critical role in creating and promoting a positive image for the College and for research throughout the NWT and beyond.

RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Maintain controlled environment systems and field plots involved in research and outreach

- Maintain conditions in controlled environments, including growing media, ventilation and irrigation systems and controls
- Carry out hand-watering, install and maintain irrigation in outdoor plots when feasible
- Measure and mark plot areas and prepare land for cultivated crops.
- Operate machinery including small tractors, mowers, trimmers, and trucks.
- Maintain and repair agricultural facilities, equipment, and tools in order to ensure operational readiness, safety, and cleanliness.
- Set up laboratory or field equipment, and prepare sites for testing.

2. Support crop research including propagation, maintenance, and reporting

- Plant and maintain plants for the purposes of research and demonstration
- Collect and record plant health and growth data as per research protocols
- Collect native seeds and whips for propagation
- Perform crop production duties such as tilling, hoeing, pruning, weeding, and harvesting according to protocols.
- Research growing conditions for cultivars; devise methods and environmental controls for plants for which guidelines do not exist.
- Supervise pest or weed control operations including locating and identifying pests or weeds and finding appropriate solutions (preferably natural)
- Transplant trees, vegetables, and/or horticultural plants.
- Collect samples of soil, water, vegetation, crops and prepare for laboratory analysis, following protocol.
- Prepare simple data summaries, reports, and analyses that include results, charts, and graphs in order to document research findings and results.

3. Participate in communications, outreach and capacity building activities to increase interest in growing food locally

- Create social media and other communications approaches to help share knowledge of SSRC's agriculture research practices and findings ;
- Support workshops, demonstrations, open houses, and programming for schools, youth, camps, organizations, and community groups;

4. Participate in communications, outreach, and education activities that promote science and research, provide information to the public and various interest groups, and foster engagement between the community and Aurora College.

- Participate in relevant local events, meetings, gatherings, activities, etc. as an ARI representative;
- Collaborate with local organizations, community members, and others on activities and events encouraging engagement with science and research, knowledge transfer, and capacity building;
- Support research centre outreach initiatives: newsletter, speaker series, citizen science and youth engagement initiatives.

WORKING CONDITIONS

Physical Demands

The position spends a the majority of their day on their feet and requires activities such as lifting, balancing, walking, stooping, and handling of up to 30 kg of materials.

Environmental Conditions

The position spends a significant amount of time working outdoors and must be able to work under a range of environmental conditions.

Sensory Demands

No unusual demands

Mental Demands

Occasional travel to other offices, college locations, conferences, or other locations by road or small aircraft may be required.

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES

- Knowledge and skills related to horticulture, permaculture, silvaculture, and/or agriculture;
- Knowledge and experience in controlled environment systems, including technology
- Knowledge and experience with operation and maintenance of small farm machinery and tools
- Ability to trouble shoot and solve problems
- Proficiency in Microsoft Office, including Word and Excel
- Good communications skills, both orally and written
- Ability to think creatively and critically
- Ability to work under pressure, meet deadlines, and work on multiple projects simultaneously;
- Ability to work both as a member of a team and self-motivated with the ability to take on new challenges;
- Knowledge, experience, and an understanding of working in a cross-cultural environment and ability to interact with effectively with different cultural groups;
- Demonstrated administrative competence; and
- Ability to commit to actively upholding and consistently practicing personal diversity, inclusion and cultural awareness, as well as safety and sensitivity approaches in the workplace.

Typically, the above qualifications would be attained by:

Completion of a Diploma in Agriculture or Horticulture and 2 years farming or working in controlled environment systems.

Equivalent combinations of education and experience will be considered.

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS

Position Security (check one)

- No criminal records check required
- Position of Trust – criminal records check required
- Highly sensitive position – requires verification of identity and a criminal records check

French language (check one if applicable)

- French required (must identify required level below)

Level required for this Designated Position is:

ORAL EXPRESSION AND COMPREHENSION

Basic (B) Intermediate (I) Advanced (A)

READING COMPREHENSION:

Basic (B) Intermediate (I) Advanced (A)

WRITING SKILLS:

Basic (B) Intermediate (I) Advanced (A)

- French preferred

Indigenous language: Select language

- Required
- Preferred