

JOB DESCRIPTION

Senior Biology Technician



HARROW
SCHOOL

DEPARTMENT	Biology
REPORTS TO	Head of Biology
RESPONSIBLE FOR	Biology Technicians
WORKING PATTERN	Contract will provide further details and open to flexibility. Likely working pattern is 40 hours per week during term time plus two weeks during the holidays.
ISSUE/REVISION DATE	April 2026

BACKGROUND

Harrow School is one of the world's most famous schools. Founded in 1572 by a local yeoman farmer, John Lyon, under a Royal Charter granted by Queen Elizabeth I, it is located on a 324-acre estate encompassing much of Harrow on the Hill in north-west London. Around 830 boys aged 13 to 18, who come from all over Britain and across the world, live in the School's 12 boarding Houses, and there are about 120 academic staff and over 500 support staff.

All members of staff work to a single, unifying purpose: to prepare boys with diverse backgrounds and abilities for a life of learning, leadership, service and personal fulfilment.

THE BIOLOGY DEPARTMENT

The Biology Department is housed in the brand new Biology Schools and consists of seven teaching laboratories, one research laboratory, a seminar room, departmental office and a large prep room. There are eight teachers and these are supported by a Practical Biology Coordinator and a subject specialist technician. With a new building (opened 2024) and sector leading facilities, the department are excited to develop its practical offering at both GCSE and A level and also to extend beyond this with pupil-led research projects and outreach activities. The teaching staff are enthusiastic about developing the highest quality lessons and to work with a first class practitioner who will take responsibility for the running of the prep room, management of the technicians and delivery of all experimental aspects of the departmental operations.

Whilst lessons take place Monday to Saturday mornings as well as Wednesday and Friday afternoons, projects are not limited to class time and therefore the department is often operating in a range of capacities throughout the week. Lessons are a mix of single and double lessons lasting 40 minutes and 85 minutes respectively.

THE ROLE

The post holder will be responsible for coordinating and preparing all practical work across the department including the maintenance of safety of equipment, specimens and other resources. They will be responsible for coordinating the work of Biology technicians, the completion of pupil-led independent research projects and facilitating the delivery of outreach work using facilities within the department such as the greenhouse. They will ensure the correct and timely preparation, maintenance and safety of biology practicals and prep room including compliance with health and safety regulations and laboratory best practice.

The Biology department are very keen to ensure that the postholder, provided all required practical work is completed to the required standard, has the flexibility to develop practicals and projects for the benefit of Harrow pupils and therefore welcomes individual interests and research ideas.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES AND DUTIES

This job description reflects the core activities of the role and is subject to change as the department and the post holder develop. The School expects that the post holder will recognise this and will adopt a flexible approach to work. In addition, the post holder will be expected to undertake such other duties within the scope of the role as may be required by the line manager.

LEARNING SUPPORT

- Coordinate, plan, prepare and assist with biology practical classes, including setting up apparatus, specimens, and demonstrations and preparing solutions and other materials.
- Ensure that practicals are aligned with schemes of work, health and safety and exam board requirements and are delivered on time.
- Assist in trialling and developing new demonstrations and investigations to enhance teaching and learning delivery as well as update resources and experimental protocols.
- Contribute to teaching and learning CPD sessions by demonstrating or advising on proper and safe use of materials and equipment for practical activities.
- Coordinate and organise pupil-led research projects (such as the CREST award) and manage use of the department's research lab to facilitate these projects.
- Support (as and when required) students and teachers in lessons as well as coordinate A level required practical catch up sessions to ensure all pupils are given every opportunity to pass the practical endorsement of their A level qualification.
- Coordinate and contribute to the delivery of the department's provision of out of school learning activities e.g. clubs, extra-curricular activities as well as outreach work.
- Ensure equipment and electrical connections, chemical solutions and other materials are left/stored in a safe and secure condition, ready for re-use and comply with industry guidance.
- Ensure laboratories are ready before and after lessons and that used materials are disposed of according to the correct CLEAPSS guidance.
- Maintain, calibrate and test biology lab equipment and instruments to ensure safe and reliable functioning and to undertake basic repairs where it is practical to do so.
- Clean and maintain equipment including the neutralisation and cleaning of spillages, as well as the cleaning of glassware and other equipment.
- Organise and maintain all living organisms in a safe, healthy condition for observation and experimental purposes including, but not limited to, feeding and caring for display organisms and maintaining populations of organisms for practical investigations. Similarly, where applicable, to assist in the collection of live material.
- Liaise between managers/teaching staff and support staff. Any other reasonable duties as required by the Head of Biology to ensure the smooth running of the Biology Department.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

- Ensure that Health and Safety requirements and other relevant regulations, such as Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH), CLEAPSS responsibilities are adhered to and observed across the department in collaboration with the Head of Department. This role will involve undertaking regular checking procedures and risk assessments, as appropriate to the work area and ensuring training on these is up to date.
- Be aware of, and to comply with, departmental/ school instructions and procedures relating to health and safety at work as well as ensuring all practical work follows these procedures.
- Take responsibility for ensuring the department rules in accordance with CLEAPSS guidelines, including providing CPD sessions to teaching staff.
- Create and maintain risk assessments for biology practicals and prep room activities using CLEAPSS guidance.
- Run departmental health and safety induction for new staff.
- Create, maintain and manage the safe working practice in preparation/storage/teaching area including advising on safety issues and modifying practicals where necessary.
- Be confident with dealing with chemical spillages and run training for staff on how to manage spillages/ breakages following the appropriate regulations.
- Be responsible for the safe storage of equipment and materials, and the disposal of waste materials and products in accordance with the relevant regulations, guidelines and school procedures.
- Coordinate the maintenance of all safety equipment used by technicians, teaching staff and students to the highest standard. This can, although not exhaustive, include: conducting safety checks, reporting faults via MICAD and/or arranging repairs with external providers.
- Maintain accurate records, reports and required follow ups of health and safety issues or near misses.
- Keep dead specimens in good condition and organise disposal using GL374 or updated CLEAPSS guidance.
- Manage continued professional development by keeping up to date with health and safety requirements and developments in practical science (attending courses and reading publications).

TEAM SUPERVISION AND TRAINING

- Line management responsibility for technicians in the Biology department, including on-the-job training and the allocation and checking of work for quality and quantity in collaboration with the Head of Department.
- Provide support to technicians in managing their workload and identifying training needs.
- Manage and support the CPD of other Biology technicians and support teaching staff CPD on practical matters and health and safety.
- Manage the induction of Biology technicians and teaching staff and ensure technicians are confident with the location, use and action of risk assessments.

STOCK MANAGEMENT AND AUDITING

- Manage and organise stores, including procurement of supplies, invoicing and processing expenses.
- Document purchases, manage the departmental budget alongside the Head of Subject and contribute to financial planning to ensure high quality provision is sustained.
- Keep and maintain stock records, order and control stock of reagents, consumables, apparatus, living specimens and chemicals through an inventory – whilst seeking best value for money with prudent financial management in mind.
- Pack, unpack, check and record apparatus and chemical inventory as part of monitoring and managing stock inventories and audits as required.
- Organise the disposal of expired substances in accordance with CLEAPSS waste management guidance.
- Assist with the production of an annual audit and inventory of the Science equipment.
- Assist with purchasing materials from local shops when required.
- Work with the Head of Department in identification of short, medium and long term maintenance/ equipment replacement so that appropriate planning and budgeting can be put in place.

GENERAL

- To contribute to planning, development and organisation of systems, procedures and policies ensuring manuals, instructions and guidance are updated accordingly.
- To contribute to the Health and Safety of students and other staff in accordance with Health and Safety regulations.
- Fully abide with the School's safeguarding policy and the staff code of conduct as well as cyber-security, risk management and health and safety policies.
- Take responsibility for your own professional development, continually keep updated about new initiatives in Science, in particular with CLEAPSS updates, and participate in training and other learning activities and performance development as required.
- Develop constructive relationships and communicate in a professional manner.
- Recognise your own strengths and areas of expertise and use these to advise and support others as well as be reflective and proactive in adaptation of practices for their benefit.
- Identify opportunities to streamline and improve provision within the department.
- Undertake such other duties as may be required from time to time commensurate with the level of the post. The particular duties and responsibilities attached to the post may vary from time to time without changing the general character of the duties or the level of responsibility entailed.
- Contribute to the overall ethos/work/aims of the school and the department.

WORKING ENVIRONMENT

- Duties will normally be undertaken in form rooms or laboratories within the School.
- There will be use of chemicals or toxic materials and/or some use of power tools.
- Lifting and movement of resources and equipment will often be required, using trolleys where appropriate.
- Duties will involve standing for extended periods of time and feeding live animals on occasions.

Harrow School is committed to promoting and safeguarding the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to adhere to and ensure compliance with the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection policies and procedures at all times.

In the event of a successful application, candidates will be required to undergo child protection screening appropriate to the post, including, but not limited to, reference checks with past employers, an Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check (including Children's Barred List information) and prohibition checks. This post is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and therefore all convictions and cautions, reprimands and final warnings (including those which would normally be considered as "spent" under the Act) must be declared, subject to the DBS filtering rules. It is a criminal offence for any person who is barred from working with children to attempt to apply for a position at the Harrow School. Please refer to the School's Recruitment, Selection and Disclosure Policy for more details.

QUALIFICATIONS, EXPERIENCE AND ATTRIBUTES

Post holders will be expected to demonstrate the following:

QUALIFICATIONS

Essential

- Good basic education to A-level in at least one (preferably more) science subject or equivalent
- Relevant science qualification: ideally Biology or Life Sciences (degree or equivalent) or extensive experience in a Biology Technician role
- CLEAPSS training courses completed including (but not limited to): CLEAPSS Senior technician/ Science department H&S auditing

DESIRABLE

- Health and safety qualifications
- First aid qualification
- Biology-related degree

KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE

ESSENTIAL

- Experience working in a laboratory environment, preferably in an educational setting
- Experience of preparing practicals for GCSE, and A Level (or equivalent)
- Strong understanding of A level practical endorsement requirements and systems, including competencies and assessment criteria
- Strong understanding of the requirements of writing and updating risk assessments as well as creating systems to ensure these are being followed throughout the department
- Proven track record of safe handling of chemicals/ specimens/ living organisms
- Strong knowledge of health and safety legislation relevant to school laboratory (COSHH, risk assessment, safe storage and disposal).
- Familiarity with specialist biology equipment such as microscopes and experience of utilising relevant equipment
- Experience of modifying and adapting practicals to ensure more effective and successful data collection
- Knowledge of running a prep room and the required checks to be made on a regular basis (yearly, termly, weekly, daily)

DESIRABLE

- Experience of supervising or coordinating technical staff
- Experience of working with CREST project pupils and coordinating projects and ensuring methodologies are sensible and practicable
- Experience of teaching practical activities to small groups or classes of young people
- Experience and/or knowledge of developing and maintaining a greenhouse with a variety of specimens
- Experience of leading and/or organising practical activities for primary school aged children
- Experience of managing a budget and keeping accurate and up to date spending records.
- Experience of writing health and safety policies bespoke to a Science/ Biology department
- Experience of training technicians and “upskilling” staff with practical/ health and safety CPD

SKILLS AND ABILITIES

ESSENTIAL

- Good technical skills: maintenance, calibration, troubleshooting of apparatus and equipment.
- Excellent organisational skills; ability to manage time, resources and competing demands.
- IT literate – able to use laboratory software, data logging, record-keeping systems and spreadsheets.
- Ability to work independently and self-manage work.

- Ability to think independently and synthesise systems that are efficient and fit for purpose (particularly practical requests), not necessarily just follow what has always been done
- Excellent written and oral communication skills to ensure health and safety compliance both through conversations with staff and pupils and in written risk assessments relevant to the prep room.
- A command of spoken English which is sufficient to enable the effective and safe performance of the role, including the ability to speak with confidence and accuracy and the ability to listen and respond appropriately.
- Ability to undertake all physical aspects of the role specify e.g. lifting weights of up to 20kg.
- Ability to contribute innovative ideas to lesson plans that support and enhance learning.
- Ability to communicate respectfully and professionally with all staff, pupils and visitors.
- Uses initiative to solve problems and find ways to work more efficiently.
- Strong ability to document and organise systems for the use of others.

PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES

ESSENTIAL

- Friendly and collaborative team member
- Responsive and flexible to adapt to changing workload demands and new organisational challenges
- Reliable and helpful at busy times to provide a smooth department service
- Self-motivated and driven to provide the highest standards, an inspiring working environment and to complete tasks to required timescales.
- Reflective and proactive in controlling own professional development
- Supportive nature with all staff and pupils

SCHOOL VALUES AND BEHAVIOURS

All staff are expected to conduct themselves in line with the School's values which are: **Courage, Honour, Humility** and **Fellowship**. While the School's values set out what matters most to us, the behaviours below are intended as a shared set of expectations to refer to, and standards to aspire to, in our dealings with others. They are the practical application of our values.

COURAGE

- We remain optimistic and purposeful in a disrupted world.
- We take responsibility for our decisions, even the hard ones.
- We always challenge poor behaviour in ourselves and others.
We are open to new ideas, and seek fresh challenges.

HONOUR

- We keep our promises.
- We act with integrity – doing the right thing, even when it is difficult or when no one is watching.
- We respect and value our traditions whilst setting them in the context of today.

HUMILITY

- We work hard to serve others within the School and across our wider communities where possible putting their interests before our own.
- We give and seek honest and appropriate feedback, reflect on our failures and learn from them.
- We support each other through challenges and whatever the outcome, we celebrate those that took part.

FELLOWSHIP

- We respect each other and value our differences, knowing that we are more effective and more resilient working together.
- We are kind and inclusive; we value the contribution that each of us makes.
- We role model the behaviours that we would like to see in others; we ask only of others what we would be prepared to do ourselves.