

Marine Institute Job Description

Position	Team Leader —Shellfish Microbiology
Grade & Contract	Contract of Indefinite Duration – Team Leader Shellfish Microbiology, Shellfish Safety, MEFSS
Service Group	Marine Environment & Food Safety Services (MEFSS)
Location	Marine Institute, Oranmore, Co. Galway, Ireland The Marine Institute has a Blended Working Policy in Place

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

This important role supports our organisation in delivery of its essential work programmes. This role provides candidates with the opportunity to work in a diverse organisation which invests in and celebrates its people.

The successful candidate will lead the Shellfish Microbiology Team in the Shellfish Safety Section of the Marine Institute and will be responsible for the team activities and delivery of the day-to-day running of the National Reference Laboratory and food safety testing programmes. This will include scheduling and overseeing all testing activities carried out by the laboratory. The successful candidate will also develop and deliver research work in the area of shellfish microbiology and public health.

The Marine Institute is National Reference Laboratory (NRL) for shellfish microbiology. The functions of the NRL is carried out by the shellfish microbiology team in the Marine Institute. These functions include providing a high quality analytical service for detecting and quantifying human pathogenic viruses and indicator bacteria in shellfish. The laboratory methods are accredited and maintained to ISO/IEC 17025:2017 standards. The shellfish microbiology team is engaged in a number of research projects primarily related to detection of human pathogenic viruses in shellfish.

In addition, the Shellfish Microbiology Team Leader provides high level technical advice on food safety and related water quality issues to the key stakeholders in Ireland. This includes the Sea Fisheries Protection Authority, Food Safety Authority of Ireland, Irish Water, Environmental Protection Agency, Bord Iascaigh Mhara and Industry organisations.

The Marine Institute is currently undertaking a review of organisation structure, which when complete may impact the roles and duties of employees and bring about change. Any impacts or changes will be communicated.

What Will You Be Doing Every Day?

Principal Tasks:

Management

- Manage Shellfish Microbiology work programmes and associated budgets to ensure delivery of agreed outputs on time and within budget.
- Line management responsibility for designated staff within the shellfish Microbiology Team
- Provide technical advice to the shellfish safety section management team on microbiological and molecular biology issues
- Manage all duties associated with the functioning of the National Reference Laboratories

for shellfish microbiology.

Laboratory testing

- Manage delivery of laboratory testing services for norovirus and other relevant foodborne viruses in shellfish
- Provide co-ordinated laboratory response to shellfish associated foodborne incidents and rapid alert situation
- Manage delivery of *E. coli* testing services within the team to generate results for classification of shellfish production areas
- Organise and supervise Official Control Laboratories (OCLs) in Ireland to undertake *E. coli* analysis for classification.
- Ensure ongoing participation in, and compliance with, the ISO17025 quality system and act as Technical Manager for accredited test methods.
- Contribute to the management and operational running of the Molecular Biology Unit in MEFS.

Science

- Provide scientific leadership and motivation for staff within the Shellfish Microbiology Team.
- Participate (attend and present) in relevant national and international scientific conferences
- Proactively engage in developing collaborative research opportunities at a National and European level
- Manage current research activities within the Shellfish Microbiology Team
- Maintain up to date knowledge with novel molecular approaches to pathogen detection in shellfish. Introduce new procedures into the laboratory where appropriate.

Advice

- Act as a national expert for shellfish microbiology food safety to support and promote the production of high quality and safe shellfish in Ireland
- Support competent authorities in Ireland to make annual classifications for shellfish production areas based on *E. coli* monitoring data.
- Provide technical expertise and advice on specific shellfish microbiology issues to the competent authorities for food safety in Ireland.
- Actively participate in the Molluscan Shellfish Safety Committee
- Provide technical expertise and advice to Irish Water and the Environmental Protection Agency and other stakeholders on water quality issues relating to shellfisheries
- Participate in relevant National Reference Laboratory activities at the EU level and ensure dissemination of information from such activities to stakeholders in Ireland
- Participate in national fora on shellfish safety and water quality as require

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 relevant degree in a biological science.
- Minimum of three years of relevant post qualification work experience.
- Extensive knowledge of the food safety issues associated with the microbiological contamination of bivalve shellfish

- Practical experience of using ISO methods for the detection of *E. coli* and *Salmonella* sp. in bivalve shellfish
- Extensive knowledge and practical experience of using diagnostic molecular techniques for the detection of foodborne virus in food matrices
- Extensive practical experience of developing, validating and using real-time qPCR methods
- Experience of managing an ISO 17025 accredited molecular biology laboratory
- A proven ability to effectively manage projects, budgets and people.
- Experience of leading a team.
- Excellent interpersonal and diplomatic skills.
- A high level of computer literacy including the use of standard MS Office software packages.
- The ability to communicate effectively both verbally and in writing with a range of audiences.
- The ability to work unsupervised, using one's own initiative.
- Proven scientific report writing skills
- Experience of undertaking field work in aquatic environments

Ideally Nice to Have / Desirable:

- A post graduate degree in a molecular biology related discipline.
- Practical experience of using diagnostic molecular techniques for the detection of foodborne virus in shellfish
- Experience of collaborating with international research institutes in the area of shellfish safety
- A track record of collaborating with the Irish shellfish industry and other stakeholders in the management shellfish safety
- A track record of scientific publication in the area of shellfish food safety

What else do you need to know?

(Special personal attributes required for the role)

- Dynamic, reliable and self-sufficient.
- Strong leadership qualities with excellent communication skills.
- The ability to remain focused and deliver when multiple important deadlines coincide.
- Solutions orientated with excellent initiative and problem-solving skills
- Being a good team player.
- Excellent interpersonal skills.
- Proven experience in collaborating with scientists and members of a technical team.
- Possess a diplomatic manner, with the ability to resolve issues.
- An ability to work in an organised manner and progress work independently.

Description of Service Group and the Wider Team

Marine Environment & Food Safety Services (MEFSS) provide government agencies, industry and other clients with marine licensing advice, food safety, environmental and fish health scientific services; through the implementation of monitoring and research programmes and the provision of advice and regulation. The successful candidate will be based in MI Headquarters in Rinville, Oranmore, Co. Galway.

- We provide expert integrated advice to Government in support of sustainable development and management of the marine environment; and technical support on implementation of European and national food safety and environmental legislation.
- Working with the Food Safety Authority of Ireland and the Sea Fisheries Protection Authority, we monitor seafood safety, supporting the Irish seafood industry's reputation for high quality products and meeting national and international regulatory requirements.

- We undertake monitoring of marine environmental health under the OSPAR convention and Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) and MEFSS works with the Environmental Protection Agency in delivering significant components of the Water Framework Directive (WFD) monitoring programme.
- We test for fish and shellfish diseases and aim to maintain Ireland's superior fish and shellfish health status, supporting the aquaculture industry and inland fisheries sector.
- We undertake national and international collaborative research projects in support of our core monitoring and advisory services.
- Our fish health unit is the national authority responsible for implementation of EU and national aquatic animal health legislation. We oversee and monitor the movement of finfish and shellfish into, out of, and within Ireland.

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

The successful candidate will report to the Section Manager, Shellfish Safety Unit, MEFSS.

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:

Day to day contact with members of the Shellfish Microbiology Team and the wider shellfish safety section.

Frequent contact with members of MEFSS

External:

Frequent and ongoing contact with members the Irish shellfish industry.

Frequent contact with competent authorities for food safety in Ireland.

Regular contact with EPA and Uisce Eireann regarding microbiological quality of shellfish production areas.

Regular contact with national and international scientific collaborators including staff in relevant European National Reference Laboratories and Union Reference Laboratories.

Salary:

Remuneration is in accordance with the Public Sector, Department of Finance approved Salary Scale for Team Leader Grade which runs from €75,448 - €92,011 on a full-time basis per annum pro-rated with time worked. You will commence on the first point of the scale €75,448 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 Team Leader Grade is 27 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 role comes with the offer of a Contract of Indefinite Duration that will be issued subject to successful completion of a nine-month probationary period and consistent satisfactory performance.

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 **MEFSS/TL/Shellfish/Feb26**

Eligible Candidates must be:

1. A citizen of the European Economic Area (EEA). The EEA consists of the Member States of the European Union, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway.
2. A citizen of the United Kingdom (UK); or
3. A citizen of Switzerland pursuant to the agreement between the EU and Switzerland on the free movement of persons; or
4. A non-EEA citizen who is a spouse or child of an EEA or UK or Swiss citizen and has a stamp 4 or a Stamp 5 visa.

Closing date for Applications:

All applications for this post should be received by the Marine Institute in advance of **12 noon Friday, 13th of February 2026**. 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.