

Connecting job seekers and bioscience employers on PEI

www.peibioalliance.com

by Heidi Riley

On PEI, over 1,000 people work at the approximately 30 bioscience companies and related research and academic institutes that are part of the bioscience cluster.

“As businesses deal with their everyday needs such as doing research and getting their products to market, creating a human resource plan for the company is not always top of their agenda,” says **Denise Bulger**, Human Resource Specialist with the **PEI BioAlliance**.

The PEI BioAlliance connects the partners of the bioscience cluster through events such as national and international conferences, guest speakers, and regular networking events. The BioAlliance brings together companies, research organizations, and government agencies by sharing information and resources, determining areas of need, strengthening networks and facilitating business-building initiatives.

One component of the BioAlliance Human Resources Strategy is to help employees, employers, training institutions, and students to network and interact with all partners involved in building a bioscience-based workforce of the future.

Denise’s role also includes keeping in contact with post-secondary and secondary educators to discuss issues such as meeting workforce needs of local employers and assisting in programs to get students excited about science.

On-line job postings and more

The website has a wealth of information for employers, employees, and those interested in finding a job in bioscience on PEI. You can also find out about PEI bioscience companies, their products, and bioscience-based research.

The **Careers** section has current job postings from PEI companies. A sample of the 50 positions posted over the past year includes:

- Production Worker
- Receptionist
- Logistics Manager
- Documentation Specialist
- Quality Assurance
- Human Resources Coordinator
- Health, Safety and Environment Manager
- Analytical Development Principal Scientist
- Yeast Fermentation Process Development Specialist.

Skills and educational requirements

“Production workers may not need scientific skills, but they do need good work ethics and the ability to work within a scientific world. Technical jobs may require a biotechnology diploma from Holland College, whereas scientists typically require a BSc, MSc or PhD.”

Services for employers

The **Bioscience Tool Kit** on the PEI BioAlliance website provides information on recruiting and selecting staff, including writing job descriptions, interview questions, employee funding programs, free job posting sites, and guides for hiring international workers.

“We want to ensure employers have a resource to draw on,” says Denise. “There are tips for everything from posting a job to creating HR policies and procedures.”

“Employers and university students are welcome to contact the BioAlliance about funded internship programs for all levels of post-secondary students. Grants can be used to partially fund a student working for a company for the summer or a semester. We can help employers understand available funding opportunities through provincial and federal government programs.”

“Presently, we are creating a guide for attracting and retaining international workers, because some of the specialized positions that employers are seeking to fill can not be filled from our local or national workforce. Attracting and retaining an international workforce is important for bioscience-based employers. **SkillsPEI** has been a very important supporter of our work in this area.”



Denise Bulger, Human Resources Specialist, PEI BioAlliance.

Services for job seekers

Job seekers will also find the Bioscience Tool Kit helpful to do research related to their job search. For example, in the job descriptions category, it also outlines skills needed and a list of potential interview questions.

Applying the questions to your own skills and previous experiences and preparing answers in advance can help you organize your thoughts and can help you give better answers during an interview.

Job seekers can also contact Denise directly. “When job seekers identify a company that might be a good fit, we can help connect them with the appropriate people to get more information.”

“We also post job seekers’ profiles on our website. Employers can check the listings to find someone who meets their needs.”