



Australian Government

Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research

CANDIDATE INFORMATION PACK

This pack provides some general information about the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR), and items you might find useful when applying for a position with ACIAR.

It is impossible to include everything you might want, so please contact us if you need any more information. You can visit our website or contact the person whose name is given as the contact officer for the position you are interested in.

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1. ABOUT ACIAR

ACIAR is an Australian Government statutory authority that operates as part of Australia's Development Assistance Program within the portfolio of Foreign Affairs and Trade. It was established in 1982 to assist and encourage Australia's agricultural scientists to use their skills for the benefit of developing countries as well as Australia. It contributes to Australia's Aid Program objectives of advancing Australia's national interest through poverty alleviation and sustainable development.

ACIAR's vision

ACIAR looks to a world where poverty has been reduced and the livelihoods of many improved through more productive and sustainable agriculture emerging from collaborative international research.

ACIAR's mandate

ACIAR's mandate is to:

- commission research into improving agricultural production in developing countries
- fund project-related training for partner-country scientists
- commission some development of results from its research
- communicate the results of agricultural research
- administer the Australian Government's funding contribution to the International Agricultural Research Centres

Since 1982 ACIAR has coordinated, managed and cooperated in over 700 research projects in more than 30 countries in Asia, the South Pacific, Africa and the Indian subcontinent. This has involved over 150 overseas organisations working in collaboration with more than 50 Australian research bodies.

Where ACIAR operates

ACIAR projects focus on problems that are widespread, within a country or across regions. Currently there are bilateral projects under way in around 30 developing countries, mostly in the Asia-Pacific region.

2. THE BENEFITS OF WORKING IN ACIAR

We have developed an employment package to help you get the most from your job in ACIAR and to assist in balancing your work and personal life. We have, or are currently developing, innovative policies and strategies to attract and retain a diverse workforce.

Pay rates

ACIAR has a comprehensive Enterprise Agreement with attractive salaries and conditions of service. You can take a look at our current Enterprise Agreement found on our website.

Free Parking

All staff at ACIAR have access to free onsite parking and a secure bicycle shed.

Salary packaging

You can salary package items such as superannuation and cars through our salary packaging arrangements.

Learning and development

Employees are encouraged to work with their supervisors to identify areas for learning and development and actively pursue these through a range of training courses, capability development programs which build management and leadership skills and specialised seminars and conferences.

We also offer attractive study assistance provisions to support formal study where relevant to ACIAR's needs.

Other benefits

We offer significant benefits such as:

- an attractive superannuation scheme;
- flexible working hours;
- four weeks annual leave;
- 18 days personal leave, incorporating sick and carer's leave;
- paid maternity and supporting partners leave;
- three months long service leave after 10 years service;
- reimbursement of healthy lifestyle initiatives;
- free tea and coffee; and
- an Employee Assistance Program.

And we are conveniently located opposite a childcare facility and close to public transport.

3. ACIAR VALUES, PEOPLE and CULTURE

Our values influence how we work and underpin the development of workplace culture. At ACIAR we are committed to demonstrating and upholding the APS Values and Code of Conduct as reflected below in the ACIAR values.

ACIAR Values

Impartial

ACIAR is apolitical and provides stakeholders with advice that is frank, open, fair, honest, timely and based on the best available evidence.

Committed to service

ACIAR exemplifies scientific and professional excellence, is objective, innovative and efficient, and works collaboratively to achieve the best results for Australian and International communities and the Government.

Accountable

ACIAR is open and accountable to the Australian and International communities under the law and within the framework of Ministerial responsibility.

Respectful

ACIAR respects all people, including their rights and their heritage.

Ethical

ACIAR demonstrates leadership, is trustworthy and acts with integrity in all that it does.

ACIAR Culture

In upholding our values we aspire to be:

- Partnership brokers, committed to partnerships that help reduce poverty.
- Leaders, pursuing excellence through innovation.
- Collaborators, building on our partnerships to succeed in our mission.
- Compassionate, mindful of the impact we have on others.

ACIAR People

With shared values we can foster our culture and develop our capability to deliver on government priorities in a dynamic and changing workplace.

Our people priorities are:

- To strengthen work health and safety systems to effectively manage risks in the workplace.
- Enhance capability by developing a skilled and diverse workforce to deliver on our mission.
- Foster a culture of wellbeing to encourage engagement in the workforce.
- Maintain a workplace that embeds our Values and encourages participation.

4. APPLYING for VACANCIES in ACIAR

If you are interested in applying for a vacancy in ACIAR, here are some hints to help you. For ACIAR vacancies your application should be written in a one Word formatted document, it should comprise:

- A Personal Details Form
- Your Résumé, including contact details for two professional referees; and
- A covering letter and Statement of Claims specifically addressing the selection criteria **OR**
- Sales pitch (check application requirements for each role to determine if Statement of Claims or Sales pitch required).

Selection documentation

Selection documentation in ACIAR contains two documents: the Position Profile (or Job Description) and the Selection Criteria. The Position Profile describes what the job is and the Selection Criteria details the skills and experience required to carry out the job.

The Position Profile

This is not the document you need to address specifically in your application, however it will be comprehensive enough to help you to understand the role of the position, and where appropriate assist in writing your 'Sales pitch'. Generally the Position Profile has four or five parts:

- The position title and its classification
- An overview of the role and function of the position
- The reporting and working relationships
- Any special conditions that apply to the position
- Key statements and associated activities

The Selection Criteria

When stated as part of the application process, this is the document you need to address specifically in your application. Selection Criteria are often divided into two parts: essential and desirable.

Essential criteria are those absolutely necessary to do the job, and you must be competent in them all to be competitive for the position. If you cannot meet all the essential criteria you will be minimising your chances for short listing or may even be automatically eliminated from the selection process.

Desirable criteria are those not necessary for you to have, but that would assist you in carrying out the job. Desirable requirements are often used to distinguish between two or more applicants who have met all the essential requirements.

Remember: In a competitive environment, your ability to satisfy the desirable criteria will become more important.

Understanding and Confidently Addressing Selection Criteria

Applicants often feel overwhelmed when faced with selection criteria. But from an employer's point of view, they provide an equitable means to measure each applicant's suitability to perform the duties of an advertised position. As a consequence, your ability to effectively demonstrate your level of competency against each selection criterion is very important.

To produce the best possible application, you need to have a good understanding of the skills and requirements of the advertised position. You must demonstrate to the selection panel that you can competently meet the essential requirements of the position and perform the associated tasks.

Responding to selection criteria can be tricky at first, so ask others such as friends and colleagues to help you to:

- Identify relevant experiences;
- Consider how you might use each experience as an example; and
- Decide which experiences best describe your behaviours in related activities and situations and highlight positive outcomes as a result of your involvement.

To address the selection criteria you should write about your skills, abilities and past work experience and provide written examples in your application to support your statements.

Remember to include transferable experience such as volunteer work, sporting bodies and club involvement that can be used as supporting evidence when addressing the criteria.

Remember ...

- Read and follow any instructions provided in the job advertisement or job application package
- Brainstorm with others to identify examples of your past behaviours that will highlight your competencies
- Address essential and desirable criteria separately
- Use clear headings for each criterion
- Include statements that highlight achievements and outcomes
- Check your spelling and grammar

How do I format my application?

How you format your application is important. Keep your application simple and well presented - this will inspire the selection panel to want to read more.

The following are useful tips to capture the attention of a panel:

- Type your name, job reference number and position title in the header and include page numbers in the footer
- Use lots of white spacing – it is easier on the eye
- Always number your selection criteria and bold the selection criteria to make it stand out from the text that addresses the criteria
- Dot points can be used as a substitute for large amounts of text
- As a general rule the maximum length per selection criteria should be half to one page in length
- Use standard typefaces such as Arial or Times New Roman (11 or 12 font size)

All applications should be emailed to the HR Manager and contain only one attachment, being one word formatted document, please do not email applications containing multiple separate attachments.

Some Basic Rules When Applying For a Position

- Gather your information early
- Obtain the selection criteria immediately
- Make sure you can demonstrate with evidence that you meet all the essential and desirable criteria to a high degree
- Plan your application and research the organisation
- Do not leave it to the last minute to apply - deadlines are normally non negotiable
- Detail your skills, abilities and experience and provide written evidence
- Address all the essential criteria and as many desirable criteria as possible
- Always ask another person to proof read your application

Make sure there are no grammatical or spelling errors in your application

5. WORKING UNDER THE PUBLIC SERVICE ACT 1999

Like other Australian Government departments and agencies, our work is governed by the *Public Service Act 1999* and our conditions are reflected in our Certified Agreement. There are some eligibility and legal requirements that you should be aware of when applying for positions with us.

Probation

Probation means a period of time (in ACIAR it is six months) where your performance is assessed before your employment is confirmed. Your supervisor will formally assess you at three and six months to ensure that you meet our performance, conduct and attendance requirements.

Citizenship

The *Public Service Act 1999* requires all people joining the Australian Public Service to be Australian citizens. If you are not an Australian citizen you must have permanent residency status in Australia to be eligible to apply for vacancies in ACIAR. The CEO may waive the citizenship requirement in exceptional circumstances but if you think this could be a problem, discuss it with the contact officer before applying for a position.

Redundancy benefit

There may be restrictions on the employment of people who have accepted a redundancy benefit from an Australian Government employer within the previous 12 months.

Health assessment

New employees may be required to undergo a health assessment to determine their fitness to carry out the duties of their position. We will arrange a medical appointment for you with Health Services Australia or the Travel Doctor if you are successful for the job.

Security and character checks

We will conduct a number of pre-employment checks before we offer you employment. For us to do this, you will be required to supply certified copies of the following documents:

- full birth certificate;
- marriage certificate (if it shows a name change);
- decree nisi/decreed absolute if associated with a name change;
- deed poll certificate if associated with a name change;
- current passport(s);
- Australian citizenship certificate;
- Driver's license or photo ID; and
- educational qualification(s) if applicable.

We require some roles within ACIAR to hold a security clearance. If you do not hold a security clearance we will require you to undergo a security check before your employment can be confirmed.

6. APS CODE OF CONDUCT

1. An APS employee must behave honestly and with integrity in the course of APS employment.
2. An APS employee must act with care and diligence in the course of APS employment.
3. An APS employee, when acting in the course of APS employment, must treat everyone with respect and courtesy, and without harassment.
4. An APS employee, when acting in the course of APS employment, must comply with all applicable Australian laws. For this purpose, Australian law means:
 - (a) any Act (including this Act), or any instrument made under an Act; or
 - (b) any law of a State or Territory, including any instrument made under such a law.
5. An APS employee must comply with any lawful and reasonable direction given by someone in the employee's Agency who has authority to give the direction.
6. An APS employee must maintain appropriate confidentiality about dealings that the employee has with any Minister or Minister's member of staff.
7. An APS employee must:
 - a. take reasonable steps to avoid any conflict of interest (real or apparent) in connection with the employee's APS employment; and
 - b. disclose details of any material personal interest of the employee in connection with the employee's APS employment.
8. An APS employee must use Commonwealth resources in a proper manner and for a proper purpose.
9. An APS employee must not provide false or misleading information in response to a request for information that is made for official purposes in connection with the employee's APS employment.
10. An APS employee must not improperly use inside information or the employee's duties, status, power or authority:
 - (a) to gain or seek to gain, a benefit or an advantage for the employee or any other persons; or
 - (b) to cause, or seek to cause, detriment to the employee's Agency, the Commonwealth or any other person.

in order to gain, or seek to gain, a benefit or advantage for the employee or for any other person.
11. An APS employee must at all times behave in a way that upholds the APS Values and the integrity and good reputation of the APS.
12. An APS employee on duty overseas must at all times behave in a way that upholds the good reputation of Australia.
13. An APS employee must comply with any other conduct requirement that is prescribed by the regulations.