



UNIVERSITY OF
LINCOLN

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JOB TITLE	KTP Associate – Coated Fish Products Improvement Technologist				
DEPARTMENT	Hilton Foods Seachill				
LOCATION	Estate Road 2. Grimsby, DN31 2TG				
JOB NUMBER	EL1250	GRADE	6	DATE	January 2026
REPORTS TO	Dr Graham Purnell				

CONTEXT

Hilton Foods Seachill (Seachill) and the University of Lincoln have been successful in winning a government grant through the Knowledge Transfer Partnership (KTP) scheme administered and managed by Innovate UK. This has created an exciting and innovative partnership opportunity between Seachill and the National Centre for Food Manufacturing in the College of Science at the University of Lincoln (www.lincoln.ac.uk/home/holbeach).

Hilton Foods is an International FTSE 250 company, and is a major supplier to UK, European and Australasian retailers. With new operations opening in Canada and Saudi Arabia. Hilton Foods products span different primary chilled protein categories including fish, meat, vegetable-based meat analogues, and a broad range of added value products. The company operates three manufacturing sites in the UK, two of which are operated by Seachill in Grimsby to produce fish and shellfish products.

Seachill is one of the largest seafood companies in the UK, producing natural fish and added value products including coated fishcakes, coated fish, prepakced salmon and white fish, and raw and cooked prawns.

A satellite campus of the University of Lincoln, The National Centre for Food Manufacturing (NCFM) is an essential resource for the UK's food industry with over 250 major companies accessing courses, technical services and research. Our clients include the major national and global food manufacturing businesses and leading supermarkets, and we collaborate with many international partners and universities. The NCFM has recently established a satellite laboratory and office in Grimsby on Europarc. Together these facilities offer outstanding sector-focused facilities, including a state-of-the-art food factory demonstrating cutting edge food automation.

We are looking to recruit a Food Science graduate (ideally MSc or PhD qualification) with some practical experience in the food industry and experience of performing scientific and technological investigations to evaluate and optimise food processing. The successful candidate will have academic and/or practical knowledge in food science, chemistry, biochemistry, engineering or related subjects.

The KTP Associate will drive and lead a two-year project which aims to develop and embed an innovative, science-led optimisation framework initially targeting improvements in fishcake production.

The KTP Associate will be based mainly at the Seachill Estate Road 2 site in Grimsby and will be subject to Seachill's employment practices and conditions of work. The National Centre of Food Manufacturing Grimsby office is less than 1 mile away from Hilton Foods Seachill's Laforey Rd site and 2 miles from its Estate Rd 2 site.

JOB PURPOSE

Designing a food process optimisation framework that integrates food science principles and process engineering to enhance production efficiency, minimise waste, and improve product consistency. Initially developing the framework with robust data to identify optimisation opportunities.

Addressing technical and operational challenges

- Using process mapping and science-based data analysis to optimise process control and ingredient interactions
- Applying food process science expertise to assess physical, chemical, and sensory attributes of products to map existing product performance and improvements
- Designing a food process optimisation framework that integrates food science principles and process engineering to enhance production efficiency and reduce waste
- To identify and evaluate emerging fish and food processing techniques

Project and risk management

- To manage the development and implementation of the optimisation framework with flexibility to adapt it according to changing business priorities and operational constraints
- Tracking progress against clearly defined project and business objectives
- To identify risks and implement risk mitigation strategies

People and change management

- Building a communication plan to embed the framework and ensure it is owned by the Seachill team for ongoing improvements
- Understanding the business complexity, objectives and constraints
- Demonstrate the commercial benefits as part of the evaluation
- Identify the stakeholders that can influence the implementation of optimisation opportunities
- Develop training materials and complete training with the Seachill team

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

Project Management
Perform project management activities, planning, scheduling, monitoring and reporting on progress of the KTP projects.
Research
To perform specified experimental trials under the direction of and with advice from the project supervisory team, to generate original knowledge, contribute to decisions about the project direction, and prepare reports on results, as required. Plan own day-to-day activity within the context of the required project programme, exhibiting a high degree of autonomy. Liaise with project supervisors to organise and set-up lab, pilot and factory experimental trials. Factory trials will be fully supported by the site production team. Contribute to the production of research outputs, including reports, papers and other publications, learning materials for use as NCFM module content, and preparation for and presentation at international research conferences.
Implementation of Findings
Take results from the experimental trials with consultation from Hilton Foods Seachill and implement them with the process. Conduct a robust food safety risk assessment to identify any potential issues with any new manufacturing methods proposed and implement risk mitigation strategies and measures.
Documentation
Produce project documentation and reports, outlining objectives and outcomes for each stage of the project and overall administration of the project plan. Produce a fully documented food process optimisation framework. Support writing Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and best practice guides for controlling key process parameters. Document a cost-benefit analysis to demonstrate the benefits from applying the framework. Produce training documentation and supporting presentations for workshops on use of the framework.
Liaison and Networking
Liaise with colleagues within Hilton Foods Seachill and the University, maintaining positive and effective working relationships; this is likely to include liaison with senior personnel in other organisations including customers, sponsors, funders and clients.

Where appropriate, participate in internal research activities, including seminars, research meetings and continuous professional development activities.

In addition to the above, undertake such duties as may reasonably be requested and that are commensurate with the nature and grade of the post.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Scope and dimensions of the role
The post holder will deliver the work as set out in the 2-year work plan, along with attending development courses, conferences and training events that are deemed suitable for the project delivery.

Key working relationships/networks	
Internal	External
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Other in-house technical, process development team, engineers, factory staff, marketing, sales and administrative staff• Lead Academic• Academic Supervisor• Senior Management and Departmental Managers• Finance Departments• KTP office	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• External clients, i.e. Hilton Foods Seachill customers and/or their representatives• University research and support staff and undergraduate and postgraduate students• Other KTP Associates• KTP Advisor• Funding bodies



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PERSON SPECIFICATION**

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Selection Criteria	Essential (E) or Desirable (D)	Where Evidenced Application (A) Interview (I) Presentation (P) References (R)
Qualifications:		
BSc in Food Science or Food Science and Technology or level 6 equivalent.	E	A, I
MSc and/or PhD Food Science or Food Science and Technology or equivalent	D	A, I
Experience:		
Experience of scientific analysis of food	D	A, I, P
Experience with experimental designs	E	A, I, P
Experience of researching and developing new and improved manufacturing process/method	E	A, I, P
Experience of conducting risk assessments of manufacturing process	E	A, I, P
Professional experience in food manufacturing industry	D	A, I, P
Interest in the food and drink industry, performing scientific and technological investigation in a University or food industry environment directed towards acquisition of new knowledge	E	A, I, P
Skills and Knowledge:		
Excellent numerical, written and verbal communication skills	E	A, I
Ability to work confidently with a range of people, both internally and externally	E	A, I
Resource management skills	E	A, I
Excellent organisation and self-management skills essential to adhere to KTP timeline and business requirements	E	A, I
Critical thinking and problem-solving skills	E	A, I
Competencies and Personal Attributes:		
Ability to manage and lead a project with multiple stakeholders	E	A, I, P
Professional and diplomatic approach to work at all times	E	A, I
Ability to learn and work in new technologies in a short time span	E	A, I
Enthusiastic about R&D	E	I

Creative and innovative	E	I
Hard-working with a determination to overcome problems and succeed	E	I
Desire and ability to learn new skills	E	A, I
Business Requirements:		
Flexible in working hours – to accommodate travel and weekend working	E	A, I
Ability to travel to/between remote sites	E	A, I
Legally permitted to work in the UK	E	A

Essential Requirements are those, without which, a candidate would not be able to do the job. **Desirable Requirements** are those which would be useful for the post holder to possess and will be considered when more than one applicant meets the essential requirements.

Author	SC, JB, GP	PBP	GPH
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