

# University of Connecticut, Storrs, CT

## Educational Program Assistant 1: Home and Garden Center & Department Communications

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### **JOB SUMMARY**

The University of Connecticut is seeking applicants for a full-time position as an Educational Program Assistant 1. The ideal candidate is a dynamic and engaged individual with a strong interest in finding horticultural solutions and a passion for communicating with the public. This position has 80% effort in support of the Home and Garden Education Center (HGEC) and affiliated service laboratories, and 20% effort in support of communications for the Department of Plant Science and Landscape Architecture (PSLA). The HGEC is part of UConn Extension and this person will be the main point of contact for the Plant Diagnostic Lab, Turfgrass Disease Diagnostic Center, and the Soil Nutrient Analysis Lab. The selected candidate will join a team of exemplary staff and faculty members in the HGEC that strive to identify and educate the public and private entities on environmentally sustainable and economically feasible solutions for commercial and residential horticultural issues. The selected candidate would also be a member of and primary communications staff person for the Department of Plant Science and Landscape Architecture, which is recognized for service to Connecticut through graduate and undergraduate education, outstanding public-outreach programs associated with formal extension and engaged scholarship, and nationally competitive research programs.

### **Duties and Responsibilities for the Home and Garden Education Center (80%):**

1. Serve as HGEC's primary contact for the public, internal, and external units/parties about operations and services.
2. Receive, evaluate, and respond to horticultural questions from clients via email and phone, by providing further information, basic horticultural recommendations, or a referral to the appropriate contact at UConn, such as the Plant Diagnostic Lab or Soil Nutrient Analysis Lab.
3. Administer programmatic tasks and operational services to support the successful operation of the HGEC including regularly updating/reviewing/creating content for the Center's website.
4. Update, maintain, and submit reporting summaries of the Center's contact database.
5. Develop content, format, and distribute the Center's monthly e-newsletter with assistance from Center staff.
6. Research, write, and disseminate educational materials in accordance with University standards.
7. Support program outreach via presentations, websites, blogs, and social media.
8. Assist with setup and staffing of occasional educational outreach events that involves transporting, lifting, and moving boxes of program materials as well as tables, chairs, and other display items.
9. Participate in programming activities, such as the Work/Life Expo, flower shows, conferences, speaking engagements, etc. that require occasional travel to various locations throughout the state.
10. Direct activities of special payroll employees to fulfill goals as assigned by the Center Director.
11. Assist with training and evaluation of student workers, participants in the Master Gardener and Master Composter programs, and community volunteers.
12. Remain abreast and participate in relevant educational and professional opportunities and trainings.

### **Duties and Responsibilities for the Department of PSLA (20%):**

11. Serve as lead content creator for monthly Department newsletter and website.
12. Create and distribute the weekly Department seminar announcement.
13. Post and maintain job/event flyers on bulletin boards in the Department.
14. Serve as the primary contact for the Department e-mail account, responding to inquiries and forwarding opportunities to relevant groups in the department.
15. Take notes and distribute minutes of monthly faculty meetings.
16. Participate in weekly meetings with PSLA department staff.
17. Serve as part of the reception team for the Department when seated at the main office.

### **MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS**

- Bachelor's degree in plant science, agronomy, horticulture, plant pathology, entomology, soil science, or a related field and up to one year of experience working in a plant management field (nursery, greenhouse, farm, forestry, research lab, extension office, etc.) OR Associate's degree in plant science, agronomy, horticulture, plant pathology, entomology, soil science, or a related field and two to three years of experience working in a plant management field (nursery, greenhouse, farm, forestry, research lab, extension office, etc.).
- Comfortable handling plants, soil, insects, and pathogen culture material daily.
- Ability to regularly lift, carry, load, unload, and transport samples and equipment, and stand or sit for long periods of time.
- Excellent organizational, writing, and interpersonal communication skills.
- Knowledge of administrative methods relevant to a position serving the public.
- Demonstrated proficiency with Microsoft Products including Word, Excel, and PowerPoint.
- Valid driver's license and reliable transportation.

#### **PREFERRED QUALIFICATIONS**

- Bachelor's degree in plant science, agronomy, horticulture, plant pathology, entomology, soil science, or a related field and two or more years of experience working in a diagnostic laboratory, agricultural extension office, or similar higher education or public-service position.
- Experience working with organisms of significance to plant health and reproduction including pathogenic fungi/bacteria, nematodes, agronomic weeds, insect pests, invasive plants, or pollinators, such as honey bees.
- Experience working with videoconference software, such as Zoom or WebEx.
- Experience using social media in a professional setting.
- Experience designing or updating web pages and social media accounts using online tools (e.g., WordPress, Qualtrics, Twitter, Facebook, MailChimp).
- Experience with scientific writing methods (e.g., use of peer-reviewed sources, proper source citation practices) for writing technical and non-technical articles for the public audience.
- Familiarity with the Cooperative Extension System.

#### **TO APPLY**

Please apply online at <https://hr.uconn.edu/jobs>, Staff Positions, Search #497385 to upload a **resume, cover letter**, and contact information for **three (3) professional references**.