

Biology laboratory technician



Kirsten Garus, biology laboratory technician and permanent deputy of the laboratory management in the group Architecture and Brain Function at INM-1 of Forschungszentrum Jülich since 2019

Tasks and responsibilities

- Preparation, set-up, execution, evaluation and documentation of experimental studies in the field of brain research
- Laboratory organization
- Technical guidance of trainees, apprentices, students and doctoral candidates, e.g., in the area of occupational health and safety
- Deputy quality officer for the laboratory area of the INM-1
- Permanent representation of the head of the laboratory

A typical day at work

“Carrying out an experiment requires some planning. What will I need? Are all the chemicals and the equipment available? Will I need help in carrying it out? Of course, the cost-benefit factor also plays a role and whether the result that will come out of the experiment will really be meaningful. For example, if I want to carry out an Ag-Nissl staining on a human brain section, I have a look the respective protocol to find all the necessary information on the experimental set-up and the solutions. The brain sections are stained according to the protocol and then handed over to the team at the scanner farm after sufficient drying. Documentation plays an immensely important role.

In addition to the daily laboratory work, there are of course orders for all necessary consumables and reusable materials, the provision of solutions and glassware as well as laboratory chemicals. Requests for quotations, as well as the technical guidance of trainees, apprentices, students and doctoral candidates are also part of the daily business.

Furthermore, as a permanent substitute for the head of the laboratory, I also take over his tasks if he is otherwise occupied.”

Skills required

“Organisational skills, the ability to work in a team, perseverance and motivation. Even a ‘bad’ result is a result and should be an incentive for improvement.”

Most enjoyable aspects of the job

“After 30 years of professional experience, I can say that I still love my job because it is extremely versatile.”

A great place to work

“The collegial environment, the respectful treatment of each other and the FZJ as a whole is excellent.”

Balancing work and family life

“The flexible working hours and the possibility to work from home – work permitting – is a great advantage in balancing work and family.”