

Head of Biology, Cancer Therapeutics and Director, Centre for Target Validation

Candidate information



Dr Olivia Rossanese
Head of Division of Cancer Therapeutics

Dear Applicant

The ICR is seeking an established research leader in cancer biology with a strong desire to discover innovative drugs to be the Head of Biology of the Centre for Cancer Drug Discovery (CCDD) and Director of the Centre for Target Validation (CTV). The appointee will provide scientific leadership for the CCDD biology discipline, champion scientific excellence and work closely with senior team leaders in the CCDD to provide strategic vision for the research and drug discovery portfolio. As CTV Director, they will collaborate with scientists across the ICR to identify target validation projects with therapeutic potential that are suitable to benefit from the Centre's dedicated resource and scientific expertise. Working with the CTV Deputy Director, they will ensure that ICR expertise in drug target identification is effectively translated to drug discovery programmes at ICR and with external partners. They will lead and participate in multidisciplinary projects to discover small molecule clinical candidates. They will lead a cancer biology research team and conduct their own independent academic research. They will have access to the ICR funded PhD student fellowship scheme.

The successful candidate will be an effective communicator who inspires others and is keen to train the next generation of cancer biologists. They will lead and support on academic grant applications and promote an entrepreneurial mindset to attract commercial funding into ICR's drug discovery research. They will forge and maintain collaborations with academic, commercial and clinical partners within the ICR and the wider community.

The role requires excellence in cancer biology, coupled with significant experience across the target identification to drug candidate phases. We envisage that applicants will have either significant commercial experience of successful drug discovery and development or have a strong academic track record in cancer biology and small molecule drug discovery; or will have a combination of both backgrounds.

We welcome applications from all qualified candidates; researchers from groups underrepresented at the scientific leadership level are especially encouraged to apply.

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Job description

Job title:	Head of Biology and Director of The Centre for Target Validation
Division:	Division of Cancer Therapeutics
Grade:	Team Leader
Hours / duration:	Full time (35 hours per week), Monday to Friday.
Responsible to:	Head of Division of Cancer Therapeutics.
Location:	Sutton, London

Context

The Division of Cancer Therapeutics has an unrivalled track record at discovering novel cancer treatments for the personalised treatment of cancer. Within the Division, the Centre for Cancer Drug Discovery (CCDD) is a multidisciplinary 'bench to bedside' centre, comprising 160 staff dedicated to the discovery and development of novel therapeutics for the treatment of cancer. We are one of the largest academic cancer drug discovery groups in the world and, together with our collaborators, have discovered 21 preclinical development candidates, 13 of which have been progressed to clinical evaluation, many with our partners in the ICR/Royal Marsden Drug Development Unit. Our drug abiraterone (Zytiga) has been approved in the US, Canada and Europe for late-stage prostate cancer.

The CCDD's mission is to develop personalised medicines by translating information from the cancer genome and cancer biology into drugs for patient benefit. We implement innovative drug discovery technologies, discover novel mechanism-based drugs, and develop these as rapidly as possible from the laboratory through to hypothesis-testing early clinical trials. We publish our work extensively and have a large network of collaborations with academia, biotechnology companies, and the pharmaceutical industry. Our teams are dedicated to the discovery of small molecule drug candidates, and to the development of high quality chemical probes to enable new cancer biology research. The Division of Cancer Therapeutics is based in state-of-the art laboratories in the new £75m Centre for Cancer Drug Discovery building, opened in 2020 on the ICR Sutton campus.

Within the Division of Cancer Therapeutics, we have established a Centre for Target Validation (CTV) that will accelerate the translation of ICR and collaborator research into drug discovery programmes. The Centre, CTV Director, and Deputy Director (joint appointment with the Breast Cancer Research Division) will deliver bespoke, hypothesis-driven data packages to support decision-making for launch of a drug discovery project. The Centre's dedicated resources, including biology, functional genomics, assay sciences, chemistry, and bioinformatics teams, will support joint

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Job description (continued)

project teams that combine the deep biological and therapeutic knowledge of ICR investigators with the validation and technical expertise of drug discovery scientists. Scientists in the Centre for Target Validation will work closely with colleagues in the ICR's Centre for Protein Degradation to exploit emerging technology and protein degradation tools for robust target validation experiments. The Centre for Target Validation will serve as a hub, connecting researchers to expertise and resources that will validate and streamline robust, targets into drug discovery programmes in the ICR's Cancer Therapeutics Unit or into collaborative programmes with external commercial therapy discovery partners.

The role will be based in the new Centre for Cancer Drug Discovery (CCDD) building at our Sutton campus. Laboratory and office spaces in the CCDD are exceptionally high quality, and the CCDD is home to a concentration of researchers with computational expertise.

The Position

Scientific leadership of CCDD Biology and the Centre for Target Validation; delivery of the validation and drug discovery portfolios.

Duties and Responsibilities:

Research

	Champion scientific excellence in the CCDD's biological discipline, set and drive the discipline's overall vision and strategy, ensure that the appropriate infrastructure and cutting edge technologies are in place and used effectively.
	Contribute to the overall the overall vision and strategy of the CCDD to enable the discovery of innovative drug candidates and their progression to clinical trials for patient benefit. Closely work with director and other senior team leaders to manage portfolio, resource, and funding decisions.
	Lead the ICR Centre for Target Validation and, together with the Deputy Director, be accountable for delivering progress on the Centre's target validation project portfolio.
	Lead the conception and implementation of robust, collaborative target validation projects, coordinating the research of the expert multi-disciplinary teams participating in the Centre. Lead collaborative decision-making on the Centre's portfolio of projects, including the entry of new projects, prioritization of resources, and milestone assessments.
	Lead an independent research group that contributes to the overall strategy and goals of the Division of Cancer Therapeutics; in particular, the discovery of innovative small molecule anticancer therapies and their progression to proof-of-concept clinical trial.

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Job description (continued)

	Lead and contribute to the submission of innovative, high quality academic grant applications to secure funding for CCDD / CTV research. Promote an entrepreneurial approach to achieve substantial commercial investment into CCDD drug discovery science.
	Maintain and promote a thorough and broad knowledge of cancer biology and an awareness of the latest drug discovery innovations and translational research at the preclinical to clinical interface.
	Foster strong collaborations with other scientists and clinicians at the ICR, the Royal Marsden, and wider community to deliver patient benefit, and maintain and grow the CCDD's global collaborative network within academic and commercial cancer research.
	Ensure biological research complies with the ICR's policies, rules and regulations including Health, Safety and Environment, scientific probity, and Intellectual Property.
	Motivate, supervise, and train members of the Team, including postdoctoral scientists, scientific officers, and postgraduate research students.
	Prepare the results of the Team's work for presentation and publication in learned journals and at national and international conferences consistent with the expectations of an academic position.
	All staff must ensure that they familiarise themselves with and adhere to any ICR policies that are relevant to their work and that all personal and sensitive personal data is treated with the utmost confidentiality and in line with the General Data Protection Regulations

Institutional Responsibilities

1	To manage budgets for the team
2	To be responsible for ensuring compliance with ICR and national regulations on safety and ethics that are relevant to the research programme.
3	To be responsible to the Head of Division with respect to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• ICR corporate responsibility to the public• ICR safety policy, rules and regulations• Returns required by external organisations• Disciplinary matters.

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4	To undertake such academic, administrative and managerial duties that could be reasonably expected of a Team Leader by the Head of Division and Chief Executive.
5	All staff must ensure that they familiarise themselves with and adhere to any ICR policies that are relevant to their work and that all personal and sensitive personal data is treated with the utmost confidentiality and in line with the General Data Protection Regulations.

Main Terms and Conditions

The post-holder will be employed by The Institute of Cancer Research,
The post will be at Career Faculty level in the ICR.

Salary

The post-holder's salary will be determined by the CEO of the ICR.

Visiting the Department

Applicants are invited and encouraged to visit the department informally by arrangement. The ICR are not empowered to pay travelling expenses or a subsistence allowance in connection with any such visits.

For an informal discussion and/or to arrange an informal visit please contact Dr Olivia Rossanese, Head of Division of Cancer Therapeutics Olivia.rossanese@icr.ac.uk

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Person specification

Education and Knowledge

PhD in biochemistry, biology, pharmacology or equivalent	Essential
In-depth knowledge and recent experience in an area of cancer biology relevant to oncology drug discovery	Essential
Knowledge of cancer cell biology, biochemistry, and pharmacology that enables a holistic view of opportunities in cancer drug discovery and an ability to constructively critique multidisciplinary research	Essential

Skills

Participation in a significant network of expertise in cancer biology and translational medicine such that the applicant is engaged with existing challenges and opportunities in cancer therapy	Essential
Ability to co-ordinate, plan and execute novel biology and target validation studies to a standard of international excellence	Essential
Ability to rapidly assimilate relevant information, clearly communicate recommendations and initiate appropriate actions.	Essential
Evidence of a strategic and inclusive approach to decision making.	Essential
Demonstrable ability to relate to, and collaborate with, colleagues in other scientific disciplines and to facilitate exchange of ideas across disciplines.	Essential
Ability to influence and successfully manage many stakeholders through effective relationship building and good communication.	Essential
Evidence of the ability to actively and successfully manage staff performance.	Essential
Evidence of effective budget management	Essential

Experience

Leadership experience of drug discovery within, or in collaboration with, the pharmaceutical or biotechnology industry as evidenced by publication and/or successful commercial projects	Essential
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Person specification (continued)

Leadership experience in cancer target validation as evidenced by publication and/or successful commercial projects	Essential
Experience in leading and contributing to individual drug discovery projects as part of a diverse portfolio	Essential
Leadership experience in successful portfolio management, including active decision-making across all stages of the drug discovery pipeline	Desirable
Experience of successful applications for and awards of substantial academic funding or commercial investment	Essential
Experience of training and mentoring staff and/or students	Desirable
Leadership experience of drug discovery within, or in collaboration with, the pharmaceutical or biotechnology industry as evidenced by publication and/or successful commercial projects	Essential
Leadership experience in cancer target validation as evidenced by publication and/or successful commercial projects	Desirable

General

Enthusiasm for work in an interdisciplinary environment towards the goal of developing a better understanding of the causes, molecular mechanisms, and treatment of cancer	Essential
Willingness to supervise postgraduate students for higher degrees	Essential
Highly motivated with a strong desire for excellence	Essential
Enthusiasm for effective collaboration	Essential
Good interpersonal and communication skills and a team player	Essential

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About our organisation

The Institute of Cancer Research, London, is one of the world's most influential cancer research institutions with an outstanding track record of achievement dating back more than 100 years. Our mission is to make the discoveries that defeat cancer.

As well as being one of the UK's leading higher education institutions in research quality and impact, the ICR is consistently ranked as one of the world's most successful for industry collaboration. As a member institution of the University of London, we also provide postgraduate higher education of international distinction.

We are also a charity and rely on the support of partner organisations, funders, donors and the general public.

Read more to find out about our history, culture, and achievements, and how our funders, supporters and partnerships help drive forward our work.

Benefits

We offer a fantastic working environment, great opportunities for career development and the chance to make a real difference to defeat cancer. We aim to recruit and develop the best – the most outstanding scientists and clinicians, and the most talented professional and administrative staff.

The annual leave entitlement for full time employees is 28 days per annum on joining. This will increase by a further day after two years' and five years' service.

Staff membership to the Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS) is available. The USS is a defined benefit scheme and provides a highly competitive pension scheme with robust benefits. The rate of contributions is determined by USS and details of the costs and benefits of this scheme can be found on their website. If staff are transferring from the NHS, they can opt to remain members of the NHS Pension Scheme.

We offer a range of family friendly benefits such as flexible working, a parents' group, and a maternity mentoring scheme. Other great benefits include interest free loans for discounted season tickets for travel and bicycle purchases, access to the NHS discounts website, a free and confidential Employee Assistance Programme which offers a range of well-being, financial and legal advice services, two staff restaurants, and access to a gym and sporting facilities at our Sutton site.

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Our values

The ICR has a highly skilled and committed workforce, with a wide variety of roles, each requiring different skills. But whether you work as a researcher, or work as part of our corporate team, your work and behaviour is underpinned by these six values. They are what bring us together as one team – as 'One ICR'.



Pursuing excellence

We aspire to excellence in everything we do, and aim to be leaders in our field.



Acting with Integrity

We promote an open and honest environment that gives credit and acknowledges mistakes, so that our actions stand up to scrutiny.



Valuing all our people

We value the contribution of all our people, help them reach their full potential, and treat everyone with kindness and respect.



Working together

We collaborate with colleagues and partners to bring together different skills, resources and perspectives.



Leading innovation

We do things differently in ways that no one else has done before, and share the expertise and learning we gain.



Making a difference

We all play our part, doing a little bit more, a little bit better, to help improve the lives of people with cancer.



Our values set out how each of us at the ICR, works together to meet our mission – to make the discoveries that defeat cancer. They summarise our desired behaviours, attitudes and culture – how we value one another and how we take pride in the work we do, to deliver impact for people with cancer and their loved ones.”

Professor Kristian Helin
Chief Executive