
Appointment Brief

Audit & Risk Committee non-executive

March 2026



Audit & Risk Committee non-executive



Dear Applicant,

At the Institute of Cancer Research (ICR) we are looking for an exceptional candidate to join us on our Audit and Risk Committee. In a non-executive role. We are particularly interested in candidates who can advise on Digital and Cyber Security risk matters.

The ICR is one of the most influential cancer research institutes with an outstanding track record of achievement dating back more than 100 years. Our mission is to make the discoveries that defeat cancer through world-leading research and excellent learning and teaching.

ICR's Audit and Risk Committee is a sub-Committee of the Board of Trustees, the ICR's governing body. The Committee is responsible for assuring the Board on the adequacy and effectiveness of the ICR's:

- Risk management, control and governance
- External financial audit and internal audit
- Value for money
- The management and quality assurance of data

The candidate will have specialist experience in cyber security and digital transformation projects and processes.

Experience in the scientific, healthcare and/or higher education sectors would be helpful but is not essential. Financial experience would be helpful but not essential. We particularly welcome applications from women, and candidates who are from black and ethnic minority backgrounds.

The pack provides information about the ICR and the non-executive role. I look forward to hearing how you could help us achieve our goals.

Nigel Jones
Chair of the ICR Audit & Risk Committee

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About our organisation

Founded in 1909, the ICR has been at the forefront of making discoveries in cancer for over 100 years. The ICR provided the first convincing evidence that DNA damage is the basic cause of cancer, laying the foundation for the now universally accepted idea that cancer is a genetic disease. The ICR also made some of the first discoveries of carcinogenic compounds in coal tar and cigarette smoke, indicating the potential link between smoking and lung cancer.

The ICR has been a pioneer in cancer drug discovery since the 1950s when scientists at the ICR were the first in Europe to develop chemotherapy agents for cancer. Since 2005, the ICR has discovered 21 preclinical drug candidates, and has taken 13 new drugs into clinical trials. One of those is abiraterone, which is extending the lives of men with advanced prostate cancer around the world. The ICR's work in drug discovery was recognised with the award of the Queen's Anniversary Prize in 2018.

The ICR has also made some major contributions to modern high precision radiotherapy techniques, improving cancer control, and reducing risk of toxicity. ICR has over 1,100 staff and over 200 postgraduate students, based in two locations adjacent to the Royal Marsden NHS Foundation Trust facilities in London in Chelsea and Sutton. As a member institution of the University of London, the ICR provides postgraduate education of international distinction. The ICR is also a charity, and relies on vital support from research grants, charity donations and royalty income.

Our vision for the future

The ICR's vision is to transform the lives of cancer patients through world-class research and education, and by growing our impact on society.

Cancer patients are living longer and with a better quality of life. Advances in our understanding of cancer have paved the way for a new generation of treatments and cures. But there is still much work to do. Cancer continues to claim far too many lives.

We work with our clinical partner The Royal Marsden NHS Foundation Trust, and organisations across the UK and internationally, to transform the lives of cancer patients and their families.

Our five-year strategy [Defeating Cancer](#) (launched in 2022) aims to accelerate progress for cancer patients by harnessing the latest scientific knowledge and technology to drive innovation in treatment. We see cancer research as an ecosystem, with close interconnections between our

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research, teaching and our knowledge exchange work to maximise our impact for patients.

The strategy also sets ambitions for the ICR's financial sustainability; we will be financially responsible, will grow and diversify our income and will spend our money efficiently where it can best further our mission.

Leadership at the ICR



- **Professor Julia Buckingham** leads the Board of Trustees and has oversight of its sub-Committees.
- **Professor Kristian Helin** is the ICR's Chief Executive and President, and has overall leadership responsibility for the organisation, its stewardship, and the delivery of the ICR's scientific strategy.
- **Professor Clare Isacke** joined the ICR in 2013. She has been Dean of Academic & Research Affairs since 2019 and sits on the Board of Trustees in that capacity.
- **Paul Norris** joined in the ICR in 2008. In 2023 he was appointed the ICR's Chief Financial Officer. He has joint responsibility with the Chief Research and Academic Officer for Professional Services and provides broader organisational leadership and support.
- **Barbara Pittam** joined the ICR in 2006. In 2023 she was appointed the ICR's Chief Research and Academic Officer with responsibility for Academic and Research services as well as providing broader organisational leadership and support.

Income and expenditure

Despite the current challenges to the higher education sector, we have been able to continue to maintain and build our research, thanks in part to our robust invention income and our reserves. In the academic year 2024/25 our total income was £131.4m. 50% of our income came from competitive grants, 21% from competitive public funding as a higher education institution, 12% from donations and endowments, 9% from royalty income and 9% from tuition fees, investments and other sources.

Operating expenditure was £156.1m, of which 77% was spent on research and education, including investment in our 2022–27 research strategy. A further 18% of our spending is on infrastructure supporting our research. This included the ongoing investment in cutting-edge new research facilities to underpin our strategy and ongoing work to realise the ICR's digital vision.

We spent more funds than we received during the year 24/25, reflecting our Board of Trustees' decision to invest a portion of our accumulated reserves in a number of research strategy priorities.

The ICR's latest Annual Report and Financial Statements can be found [here](#)

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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.

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The Institute of Cancer Research is a:

- World-leading cancer research institute
- Higher education institution, and a postgraduate college of the University of London
- Exempt charity regulated by the Office for Students
- Company limited by guarantee, incorporated in 1954 and its objects, powers and framework of governance are set out in its Articles of Association

The Board of Trustees is ICR's governing body. Trustees are responsible for ensuring the ICR pursues its charitable objects, complies with its constitution and relevant legislation and regulations, applies its resources exclusively to its objects, and enacts cancer research of the highest international standard. They carry the responsibility of company directors of the ICR. Further information on our Trustees can be found [here](#).

Non-executives sit on a number of the Board's sub-Committees to provide subject matter expertise in key areas. These voluntary roles are vital in providing scrutiny and assurance at Committee level, and enhance the non-executive skill set available to the Board. Whilst the ICR's non-executives are not Trustees, they are expected to operate to the same high standards and principles.

The Board delegates the day to day running of the organisation to the ICR's Chief Executive, who is assisted by the ICR's Executive Board.

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Role description

Role and Purpose of the ICR's Audit & Risk Committee

Purpose:

To assure the Board of Trustees about the adequacy and effectiveness of:

- Risk management, control environment and governance
- External financial audit and internal audit
- Value for money
- The management and quality assurance of data

Membership:

- Chair of Audit and Risk Committee, who is a Trustee appointed by the Board and sits *ex officio* on the Board of Trustees.
- Another member of the Board of Trustees
- Up to three non-executives.

Duties:

The role we are seeking to fill is one of the three Non-Executive members of the Audit and Risk Committee who helps to deliver the objectives of the Committee together with the other members. For this particular Non-Executive appointment, we are looking for someone who can do the following:

Cyber Security & Digital Matters

- To assure the Board of Trustees about the adequacy and effectiveness of the ICR's governance, risk management and control environment, including financial, operational, cyber, digital and data-related risks.
- Promote a culture where cyber resilience is understood as part of the charity's overall governance and risk management
- Oversight of management's cyber maturity roadmap and investment in cyber resilience and digital controls.
- Oversight of cyber and digital risks arising from third-party suppliers, research partners, and NHS interfaces.
- Assurance over the protection of sensitive research data, patient-related data and intellectual property.
- Assurance over technology, cyber and data controls through internal audit reviews, independent assessments or external benchmarking where appropriate.
- Ensure the organisation regularly identifies, assesses, and prioritises cyber risks and has adequate policies, controls, and frameworks in place
- Ensure the organisation has an up-to-date incident response plan, business continuity plan, and disaster recovery arrangements

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In addition, the successful candidate would be assisting the other Non-Executive members of the Audit and Risk Committee with the following duties:

External and Internal Audit

- To advise the Board of Trustees on the appointment and terms of the External Auditor and Internal Auditor, and the provision of any non-audit services by them
- To monitor annually the performance and effectiveness of External and Internal Audit
- To promote co-ordination between the internal and external auditors.
- To agree the external audit plan with the External Auditor
- To discuss with the External Auditor any problems and reservations arising from the interim and final audits, including a review of the Management Letter
- To review the Internal Auditor's audit risk assessment and strategy, its annual plan and annual report.
- To recommend and prioritise areas of the ICR where Internal Audit will be beneficial
- To review the findings of the Internal Auditors and management's response, and other audit-based recommendations
- To keep under review the effectiveness of the risk management, control environment and governance arrangements

Financial

- To recommend to the Board of Trustees for approval the ICR's financial statements and to review the supporting end of year information
- To ensure that all significant losses have been properly investigated and that the Internal and External Auditors and the Office for Students' Accounting Officer have been informed.
- To oversee the ICR's policy on fraud and irregularity and to ensure any significant losses are investigated

Other matters

- To promote economy, efficiency and effectiveness
- To oversee the ICR's Whistleblowing (Public Interest Disclosure) Procedure, including being notified of any action under that procedure
- To consider the adequacy of the processes and controls for the management and quality assurance of data submitted to the Higher Education Statistics Agency, the Student Loans Company, Office for Students, Research England and other bodies.
- To receive, review and highlight recommendations from relevant reports from the Office for Students, Research England and other organisations

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As an ICR non-executive, the postholder will be expected to abide by the ICR's Code of Best Practice for Trustees and Committee members.

Risk Management

- To review on behalf of the Board the ICR's overall approach to risk management, risk appetite and risk policy
- To review at each meeting the ICR's strategic risk register and, on rotation, directorate risk registers
- To inform the Board of any issues on risk as appropriate, including significant incidents

Candidate Description

We are looking for a non-executive with expertise in cyber security and Digital matters. The candidate will have an understanding of Cyber and Information Security principles and awareness of threat landscapes specific to the sector. Strategic IT or digital transformation experience is desirable.

Experience

- Experience working in an organisation that has undergone significant digital transformation, including oversight of major IT, digital, or data-system change programmes
- Experience of establishing strategic partnerships to finance technology transformation; and,
- An appreciation of, and a belief in, the impact of technology on improving operations and driving innovative science within an organisation.
- Experience participating in or overseeing business continuity or incident-response planning including previous oversight of a cyber incident, breach investigation, or significant IT outage.
- Experience in organisations similar in size, complexity, or digital maturity.
- Experience assessing technology-related risk at a strategic level.

Essential skills

- Ability to interpret cyber-risk dashboards, assurance reports, and audit findings.
- Understanding of proportionality—balancing cyber risk against limited resources.
- Awareness of core cyber-risk concepts: e.g., phishing, ransomware, data breaches, system resilience, insider threats, and supply-chain risk.

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Desirable skills & Experience

- Experience in the scientific, healthcare and/or higher education sectors would be helpful but is not essential.
- Financial experience would be helpful but not essential
- Prior experience serving on or supporting in a management or non-executive capacity a board, audit committee, or risk committee would be helpful.

Terms of appointment

The role of ICR non-executive is unpaid, but all reasonable expenses will be paid. Non-executives are responsible to the Chair of the relevant Committee and ultimately to the ICR's Board of Trustees. Non-executives are usually appointed for an initial term of four years, which may be renewed for a further period of up to four years. There is a probationary **period of 12 months**.

Time commitment

The role will require regular attendance at Audit & Risk Committee meetings and preparation time for meetings. The Committee usually meets four times a year in person for a half-day meeting at ICR's offices in Chelsea or Sutton.

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How to apply

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Candidates should apply for this role through the [ICR vacancies portal](#). For further information please contact Secretariat@icr.ac.uk

Deadline for applications is 29th March 2026. Interviews will be held during April 2026.