



Higher Scientific Officer - Genomics and Evolutionary Dynamics Candidate Information

Sept 2026

The Institute of Cancer Research

About our organisation

We are one of the world's most influential cancer research institutes with an outstanding record of achievement dating back more than 100 years. We are world leaders in identifying cancer genes, discovering cancer drugs and developing precision radiotherapy. Together with our hospital partner The Royal Marsden, we are rated in the top four centres for cancer research and treatment worldwide. As well as being a world-class institute, we are a college of the University of London.

We came second in the league table of university research quality compiled from the Research Excellence Framework (REF 2021). We have charitable status and rely on support from partner organisations, charities, donors and the general public. We have more than 1000 staff and postgraduate students across three sites – in Chelsea and Sutton.

About our Centre

The Centre for Evolution and Cancer (CEC), within the Division of Cancer Biology, is a multidisciplinary centre, comprising around 50 staff dedicated to understanding cancer evolution and leveraging this knowledge for translational benefit. Our interests span early detection through to treatment of metastatic disease. The CEC brings together expertise in evolutionary theory, computational biology and bioinformatics together with cutting-edge research ability in cell and molecular biology to provide a stimulating and creative interdisciplinary environment where new approaches to tackling cancer can thrive.

Higher Scientific Officer - Genomics and Evolutionary Dynamics

Candidate Information

About our team

The Genomics and Evolutionary Dynamics team combine molecular and cellular biology together with mathematical and computational modelling to study the evolution of malignancy. We focus on early detection in the gastrointestinal tract, colorectal cancer evolution and treatment response, and pan-cancer genomics. We perform basic research into the biology of the human body in health and disease and translate our findings to improve clinical care of patients affected by cancer.

We are based at the ICR Sutton site within the Centre for Evolution and Cancer, located in the outstanding facilities of the new Centre for Cancer Drug Discovery building. The team is highly experienced in computational biology and mathematical modelling that is closely coupled to biological and clinical data. We are leaders in multi-omic data generation and integration, and using this in-house data together with large publicly available datasets, we apply the principles of evolutionary biology and ecology to understand the natural history of cancer.

You will be joining a highly diverse and interdisciplinary team of about 20 people, consisting of clinicians, biologists, mathematicians and computational scientists.

This is a largely wet-lab based position, where the post-holder will contribute to experimental analysis of our “Boomers” project. In this exciting work we are analysing the DNA of archival colorectal cancers dating back to the 1950s to determine why early-onset colorectal cancer incidence has rapidly increased in recent decades ([link to BBC News coverage of our study](#)).

Our ideal candidates will be highly motivated, have excellent organisational skills, and a strong track record in performing genomics-based research in an academic setting. Experience of handling human tissue samples and patient data is also a requirement. Senior scientists will provide full training in new techniques, and support will be available for attending training courses and appropriate academic meetings.

Our mission
is to make the
discoveries that
defeat cancer.

Higher Scientific Officer - Genomics and Evolutionary Dynamics

Candidate Information

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

Higher Scientific Officer - Genomics and Evolutionary Dynamics

Candidate Information

Job description

Department / division: Centre for Evolution and Cancer
Division of Cancer Biology

Pay grade / staff group: Higher Scientific Officer

Hours / duration: Full time (35 hours per week), Monday to Friday. Fixed term contract for 1 year, with possibility to extend

Reports to: Prof Trevor Graham

Main purpose of the job: Cataloguing of colorectal cancer samples, and performing lab-based research

Duties and responsibilities specific to the role

Perform wet-lab based genomic experiments, likely to involve:

- DNA/RNA extraction and quality control
- Generating libraries for next-generation sequencing, for example methylation-resolved whole genome sequencing

Organisation and maintenance of a new database of patient samples

Contribute to experimental design, optimisation and troubleshooting

To work closely with dry-lab and clinical colleagues to refine workflows as needed

General duties and responsibilities

To attend and participate in the Centre's academic activities, e.g. laboratory and journal club meetings, research group meetings and weekly seminars.

To make research initiatives and original contributions to the research programme wherever possible and to contribute freely to the team research environment in a manner conducive to the success of the research project as a whole.

To maintain appropriate databases, keeping accurate written and computerised records and to ensure that these records are stored in a secure place and to maintain confidentiality of all electronically stored personal data in line with the provisions of the Data Protection Act.

To prepare reports and scientific publications to disseminate results from the programme of research.

Undertake such other duties as may be reasonably expected by the line manager or Head of Department.

Higher Scientific Officer - Genomics and Evolutionary Dynamics

Candidate Information

General

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
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Any other duties that are consistent with the nature and grade of the post that may be required.
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To work in accordance with the ICR's Values.
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To promote a safe, healthy and fair environment for people to work, where bullying and harassment will not be tolerated.
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This job description is a reflection of the present position and is subject to review and alteration in detail and emphasis in the light of future changes or development.
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Higher Scientific Officer - Genomics and Evolutionary Dynamics

Candidate Information

Person specification

Education and Knowledge

PhD in molecular biology or other relevant area.	Desirable
MSc in molecular biology or similar	Essential
Undergraduate degree in biological or quantitative subject.	Essential

Skills

Ability to extract DNA/RNA from archival patient samples	Essential
Ability to perform next generation sequencing experiments	Essential
Good communication skills and the ability to interact effectively with other team members.	Essential
Good observation skills, attention to detail and ability to keep appropriate records.	Essential
Ability to work independently and to demonstrate initiative in planning and designing experiments.	Essential
Good time management skills and a proven ability to organise and prioritise workload to meet deadlines.	Essential
Ability to prepare scientific reports and present data at regular project meetings.	Essential
Ability to interpret the scientific literature and incorporate this into the project	Essential
Ability to maintain accurate and up to date records	Essential
High level of computer literacy	Essential

Experience

Hands-on experience in performing DNA/RNA extractions, ideally from archival samples, and ideally in an academic research lab	Essential
Experience of working in an academic research laboratory	Essential
Experience of working with human tissue samples and patient data	Essential
Hands-on experience in performing next-generation sequencing protocols in the wet-lab	Essential
Knowledge of somatic evolution and/or cancer evolution	Desirable

Higher Scientific Officer - Genomics and Evolutionary Dynamics

Candidate Information

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 2 years' and 5 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.

Further information

You may contact Prof Trevor Graham for further information by emailing trevor.graham@icr.ac.uk. This job description is a reflection of the current position and is subject to review and alteration in detail and emphasis in the light of future changes or development.