



Head of Strategic Planning and Data Quality Candidate Information

January 2025

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.

Research Services

The Research Services function plays a pivotal role in supporting the research community at the ICR, encompassing the following teams: Research Operations, Strategic Grants, Research Policy and Partnerships, and Strategic Research Partnerships.

Together these teams provide proactive support across key areas, including faculty recruitment, research committees, systems and information management, and grant coordination.

Our mission
is to make the
discoveries that
defeat cancer.

This is an exciting time to join The Institute of Cancer Research and Research Services as we embark on the implementation of 'Stratus', a new Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) Programme. The post holder will be a member of the Delivery Programme playing an important role providing leadership in terms of data quality and data curation.

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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

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Job description

Department / division: Research Services | Research Operations

Pay grade / staff group: PS2 | Professional Services

Hours / duration: Full time (35 hours per week), Monday to Friday. Non-time-limited

Reports to: TBC - Research Services

Functional Report: Chief Research and Academic Officer and Director of Research Services

Accountable to: CEO as ICR's Accountable Officer for Office for Students and Research England reporting

Main purpose of the job: To provide vision and leadership for data strategy, ensuring regulatory compliance and supporting the ICR's academic and research objectives.

Duties and responsibilities:

Coordinate all ICR statutory data returns to ensure timely and accurate data returns and work with the Chief Research and Academic Officer to maximise core funding streams

Compile and publicise an annual schedule of reports and returns due to external agencies, particularly including statutory returns. Monitor responses and deadlines.

Work with various teams to ensure completion of these data returns: for example Human Resources for the HESA Staff Record, the Academic Systems team for HESES, HESA Data Futures, and the Business and Innovation Office for HE-BCI. This will include advising on the interpretation of guidance and modelling of different scenarios.

Provide independent oversight of all the data returns and raise queries with relevant teams as relevant. Provide assurances to the Chief Research and Academic Officer on their quality and funding implications

Collect and update Academic Time Allocation Survey (ATAS) data for Transparent Approach to Costing (TRAC) and sit on the TRAC Oversight Group.

Lead and coordinate the collection of monitoring returns for Research England funding allocations, e.g. Research England targeted allocations, HEIF Annual Monitoring Statement

Provider Profile return to the HESES and HESA Data Futures returns over which the post holder liaises with Academic Systems

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Provide leadership in terms of data quality/curation across the ICR through chairing the Data Quality Review Group (DQRG) and playing a key role in Stratus (the ICR's ERP) implementation

Refresh and chair the ICR Data Quality Review Group, with membership from departments across the ICR involved in statutory returns to share best practice.

Ensure all returns to HESA are provided accurately and on time each year through the DQRG.

Key member of the Stratus Delivery Group.

Ensure our Stratus system implementation ensures efficient and accurate data reporting.

Develop efficient and effective institution-wide systems to support the reporting requirements and where necessary interact with other corporate services to ensure The ICR maintains and develops good systems for data returns.

Liaise with other ICR/Royal Marsden NHS Foundation Trust (ICR's hospital partner) departments as necessary in relation to accountability obligations.

Together with the Research Operations Manager, maintain oversight of the ICR's formal organisational structure. Ensuring that changes in Faculty are reflected by ensuring that new group leaders and new members of honorary faculty are set up with a group and that the overall record of the organisation structure is modified when groups start, change or leave and these updates are disseminated appropriately.

Building and maintaining networks across the HE sector to maintain up to date expertise and to share best practice.

Support the ICR Research Excellence Framework preparations with a focus on data underpinning the submission, particularly relating to the HESA Staff Record, HESA Data Futures and the OfS Annual Finance Return.

Research Services provide authoritative expert advice to all levels of the organisation on the development of assessment strategy and submissions through detailed knowledge of the REF Guidance on Submissions and Panel Criteria and Working Methods. This includes assembling, modelling, interpreting and analysing information and preparing regular briefing documents as required.

Lead on areas of the REF submission that relate to data linked to statutory returns (including the identification of eligible staff) and other internal data.

Coordinate the ICR's processes on the determination of Research Only staff who meet the criteria for research independence in the context of REF 2029.

Utilise REF knowledge to ensure HESA returns are accurate and align with the ICR's REF submission.

Work in conjunction with Academic Systems team to incorporate institutional data, support internal and external assessment exercises, and the eventual transfer of submissions to the REF submission system.

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Lead on the ICR response to any external audit requests and, where appropriate, ensure that the necessary evidence is prepared ahead of need.

Monitor, advise and coordinate response to changes in Higher Education regulation and funding

Modelling of OfS and Research England funding (with support from the Records & Returns Officer in the Student Systems team/ Research Information Officer) and provide regular reports to senior management.

Working with the Education and Library Services directorate, maintain a log of ICR compliance with ongoing OfS terms and conditions of registration, taking measures to address any potential shortfalls or areas of risk.

Support the ICR Chief Executive in Accountable Officer-level communications and ensure that any regulatory requirements are met (e.g. Reportable Events).

Develop and maintain a working knowledge of research funding policy and guidance to optimise the ICR's position and provide reports to the Executive Board and Board of Trustees.

Attend external meetings such as the London Higher Planners Group and London Higher Research Group in order to maintain sector knowledge and build networks.

Ensure appropriate dissemination and discussion of key regulatory (e.g. Office for Students), funding changes and prepare responses to consultations that are likely to be impactful on the ICR.

Advise the Executive Board and other senior management on specific matters relating to academic and research activity, as and when requested, in order to support strategic decisions including writing and presenting committee papers.

Lead business intelligence and cross-organisational projects to support funding diversification, bid writing and increase grant income

Through line management of the Research Information Officer, ensure the ICR has high quality data on grant applications and awards to inform future funding strategy.

Involvement in internal income generation committees and working groups, particularly providing expertise on public funding and related data matters.

Ensure Stratus delivers improved grant reporting for researchers and professional services teams.

Working with the Finance and Business & Innovation Directorates improve support for researchers in costing their research to maximise overhead recovery for ICR.

Manage other projects in the areas of research funding and planning, and provide data, reports to inform these initiatives.

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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

Any other duties that are consistent with the nature and grade of the post that may be required.

To work in accordance with the ICR's Values.

To promote a safe, healthy and fair environment for people to work, where bullying and harassment will not be tolerated.

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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Person specification

Education and Knowledge

Educated to degree level	Essential
A good understanding of Higher Education regulation and funding.	Essential
Awareness of use of data for regulation e.g. Office for Students data strategy	Essential
An understanding of the research environment.	Essential
Employment within a Higher Education Institution, or similar environment, with line management experience.	Essential
Experience of managing the preparation and submission of external data returns including providing high-level quality assurance for the data.	Essential
Knowledge of UK research funding environment and technical costing methodologies.	Essential
A good first degree in a scientific discipline.	Desirable
A successful track record in information management and systems development.	Desirable

Skills

Able to think strategically, interpreting complex information, putting information in context and having a clear view of the “big picture”	Essential
Strong ability to interpret, validate, and reconcile large datasets (such as financial, staff, or research data) to provide fit for purpose management information	
Aptitude to develop related IT systems capable of translating regulatory or funding-body requirements into practical data solutions.	Essential
Ability to lead continuous improvement processes	Essential
A high degree of computer competency, in particular detailed understanding of the design and use of databases, spreadsheets and reporting tools, and the ability to apply this aptitude to new systems	Essential
Ability to critically review current approaches with a view to identifying both opportunities for development and solutions to administrative problems	Essential

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Able to interact confidently with ICR staff at all levels of seniority and demonstrate strong influencing skills

Essential

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Project management skills and a proven track record of delivery	Essential
Ability to work quickly and apply new skills in the workplace	Essential
Ability to work on numerous projects simultaneously whilst maintaining attention to detail	Essential
Excellent numeracy, written and verbal communication skills	Essential
Evidence of proactive and alternative approaches to tasks	Essential

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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 Emma Pendleton for further information by emailing emma.pendleton@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.