

Team Leader – Breast Cancer Drug Target Validation and Deputy Director, Centre for Target Validation

Candidate information



Dr Olivia Rossanese
Head of Division of Cancer Therapeutics
& Director, Centre for Target Validation



Professor Andrew Tutt
Head of Division of Breast Cancer
Research & Director of the
Breast Cancer Now Research Centre

Dear Applicant

The ICR is seeking a tenured laboratory Group Leader (Senior Scientist) to discover and validate cancer drug targets. The appointed individual will be a group leader with their own research relevant but not limited to breast cancer, and will also have the role of Deputy Director of a new Centre for Target Validation for therapy discovery at the ICR. This is described below.

Improving outcomes for those diagnosed with cancer demands the identification and validation of new drug targets in the disease. The ICR has established a Centre for Target Validation (CTV) that links its Cancer Therapeutics Division and partner Divisions in order to identify and validate potential drug targets that can be taken into successful drug discovery projects. The Centre will identify candidate targets from across the wide spectrum of ICR laboratories and carry out in-depth therapeutic target validation so that this informs the launch of successful drug discovery projects. Within the CTV, we have established the Breast Cancer Drug Target Validation Laboratory whose mission will be to identify and validate targets relevant in breast cancer and other malignancies.

We now seek a senior scientist to both lead this laboratory working on their own targets of interest and be the Deputy Director of the ICR's Centre for Target Validation (CTV). Suitably qualified candidates will be considered for appointment to the position of Director of the CTV.

The appointee will be a Senior member of ICR Career Faculty and will assist the Director of the CTV in leading and delivering the CTVs validation project portfolio. This position is a joint appointment to the Division of Cancer Therapeutics (Headed by Dr Olivia Rossanese) and the Division of Breast Cancer Research and Breast Cancer Now Research Centre (Directed by Professor Andrew Tutt).

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The Deputy CTV Director will work in close collaboration with senior 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. The Deputy Director will have significant interest and expertise in the identification and validation of therapy targets relevant but not limited to breast cancer.

The Deputy Director will lead the conception and implementation of robust, collaborative projects that further validate targets specifically for assessing suitability for therapy discovery, coordinating the research of the expert multi-disciplinary teams participating in the Centre with input from the laboratories that identified the target and the associated context of cancer therapeutic vulnerability.

As a Team Leader, the Deputy Director will also lead their own team of cancer researchers in:

- (i) Identifying and validating for therapy discovery candidate targets relevant to breast cancer and potentially other malignancies, including targets that exploit either cancer cell or supportive stroma specific dependencies in high recurrence risk subtypes of the disease. These targets may have been identified by the candidate themselves or been selected by the candidate in collaboration with others in the BCN research program or wider ICR
- (ii) leading multidisciplinary breast cancer and any relevant other associated cancer drug discovery projects that emerge from target validation work.

Dr Olivia Rossanese
**Head of Division of Cancer
Therapeutics & Director,
Centre for Target
Validation**

Professor Andrew Tutt
**Head of Division of Breast
Cancer Research & Director of
the Breast Cancer Now
Research Centre**

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Job description

Job title:	Team Leader – Breast Cancer Drug Target Validation and Deputy Director, Centre for Target Validation
Division:	Joint appointment to Division of Cancer Therapeutics and Division of Breast Cancer Research - Centre for Target Validation
Grade:	Team Leader
Hours / duration:	Full time (35 hours per week), Monday to Friday.
Responsible to:	Dr Olivia Rossanese , Head of the Division of Cancer Therapeutics & Director, Centre for Target Validation. Professor Andrew Tutt , Director BCN & Head of the Division of Breast Cancer.
Location:	Sutton

Context

Centre for Target Validation

The ICR has established a Centre for Target Validation that will accelerate the translation of ICR and collaborator research into drug discovery programmes. The Centre 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 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 Breast Cancer Now Toby Robins Research Centre

The Breast Cancer Now Toby Robins Research Centre at ICR, London brings together world leaders in breast cancer research under the Directorship of Professor Andrew Tutt *FMedSci*. Formed in 1999 at the ICR's central London home, the Breast Cancer Now Centre, core funded by Breast Cancer Now (BCN), has been at the forefront of many of the key breakthroughs in breast cancer research. The BCN Research

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Centre Programme is integrated with that of the BCN Research Unit at Kings College London. Examples of pioneering discoveries in the causes, underlying biology and treatment of the disease from the Centre/Unit include: (a) the discovery of PARP inhibitor synthetic lethality that has revolutionised the treatment of *BRCA1/2* mutant cancers, (b) step-change improvements in biomarkers and treatments for oestrogen receptor positive breast cancers, (c) innovations that allow treatment to be adapted according to evidence of response or resistance, and (d) advances in the dissection of breast cancer genetics and biology which are now informing the identity of the next generation of breast cancer treatments.

With colleagues in the ICRs Division of Cancer Therapeutics, the BCN Centre and Unit are discovering new drugs for use in the disease. In our work with the Clinical Studies Division in the ICR, our sister organisation The Royal Marsden Hospital and a wider UK trials network we are designing and conducting breast cancer clinical trials that will deliver new therapeutic approaches for difficult-to-treat forms of breast cancer together with the biomarkers that allow the best treatment to be selected for each patient. Our strategic relationship with these partners allows the Centre to function as a truly translational research centre, where laboratory discoveries can be translated into significant changes in how the disease is prevented, detected, and treated and where clinical phenotypes, such as drug resistance, can be dissected in the laboratory to identify targets and biomarkers for further validation that informs therapy discovery. The Breast Cancer Now Research Centre and its breast cancer clinical research partners at the Royal Marsden Hospital won the AACR 2022 Team Science Award recognising their impact on improvements in management and outcomes for breast cancer patients.

The BCN Centre houses 12 Faculty lead Teams together with several collaborative core support group (Bioinformatics, Histopathology and Molecular Pathology Core Facility and two Patient Derived Models groups (Organoid and PDX. The BCN Centre sits within Division of Breast Cancer Research) which is also lead by Professor Tutt.

Division of Cancer Therapeutics, housing the Cancer Therapeutics Unit

The Division of Cancer Therapeutics, housing the Cancer Therapeutics Unit (CTU), has an unrivalled track record at discovering novel cancer treatments for the personalised treatment of cancer. The Division also develops biomarkers designed to confirm the effectiveness of molecularly targeted therapies and help determine which therapy will benefit each patient.

The CTU 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, with our collaborators, have discovered 21 preclinical development candidates, 12 of which have

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Job description (continued)

been progressed to clinical evaluation 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 CTU'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. All necessary science disciplines and technologies are in place to make this possible. Our biologists work alongside medicinal chemists focusing on new molecular targets emerging from human genome and cell biology research. In addition, we collaborate closely with colleagues throughout the ICR and beyond. Drug discovery is carried out in highly focused multi-disciplinary project teams analogous to those in a biotechnology company, with patient benefit as the primary driver. We also publish our work extensively and have a large network of collaborations with academia, biotechnology companies, and the pharmaceutical industry. 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 2021 on the ICR Sutton campus.

The Position

Duties and Responsibilities:

Research

	Lead their own "wet lab" biology team of researchers identifying and validating for therapy discovery candidate targets relevant to breast cancer and potentially other malignancies, including targets that exploit either cancer cell or supportive stroma specific dependencies in high recurrence risk subtypes of the disease. These targets may have been identified by the candidate themselves or been selected by the candidate in collaboration with others in the BCN research program or wider ICR. Supervise, train, inform and motivate members of their team, including postdoctoral scientists, scientific officers and PhD students.
	Lead as Deputy-Director the ICR Centre for Target Validation and be accountable with the Director for the selection of targets in and progress of the Centre's target validation project portfolio.
	Assist the CTV Director in leading the conception and implementation of robust, collaborative target validation projects, coordinating the research of the expert multi-disciplinary teams participating in the CTV. Assist the CTV Director in leading collaborative decision-making with the CTV's Steering Group on the Centre's portfolio of projects, including the entry of new projects, prioritization of resources, and milestone assessments.

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	Collaborate with senior scientists across the ICR and with external partners, to identify target validation projects with therapeutic potential that are suitable to benefit from the Centre's resource and scientific expertise.
	Participate in portfolio management decisions, including streamlining of validation projects into drug discovery, either with the ICR Cancer Therapeutics Unit or commercial partners.
	Responsible for timely reporting on progress to internal and external stakeholders.

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.
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.

Conferment of an academic title of the University of London (e.g., Professor, Reader) will be considered for appropriately qualified candidates

Salary

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

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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 or Professor Andrew Tutt, Head of the Division of Breast Cancer Research by emailing caroline.carey@icr.ac.uk and copying Benjamin.Onwuegbusi@icr.ac.uk

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Person specification

Education and Knowledge

PhD in biochemistry, biology, pharmacology or equivalent	Essential
Expert knowledge of approaches to cancer target validation and application of functional genomics	Essential

Experience

Leadership experience in cancer target validation as evidenced by publication and/or successful commercial projects	Essential
Leadership experience in breast cancer biology as evidenced by publication and/or successful commercial projects	Essential
Leadership experience in <i>in vitro</i> , <i>ex vivo</i> and <i>in vivo</i> modelling of breast cancer as applied to target validation and drug discovery as evidenced by publication and/or successful commercial projects	Essential
Leadership experience in cancer drug discovery as evidenced by publication and/or successful commercial projects	Desirable
Leadership experience in functional genomics as applied to target validation as evidenced by publication and/or successful commercial projects	Essential
Leadership experience in triaging potential projects prior to their inclusion in a drug discovery pipeline 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	Desirable

Skills

Ability to co-ordinate, plan and execute cancer target validation studies to the highest scientific and ethical standards	Essential
Ability to assimilate relevant information and initiate new areas of research	Essential

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Demonstrable ability to relate to and collaborate with colleagues in other scientific disciplines and to facilitate exchange of ideas across disciplines	Essential
Proven successful project leadership skills	Essential

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