ICR The Institute of Cancer Research

Scientific Officer

Cancer Dynamics team
Dr Stephen-John Sammut

Candidate Information

August 2025

The Institute of Cancer Research

About the role

The Cancer Dynamics Laboratory, headed by Dr Stephen-John Sammut, focuses on developing computational and experimental frameworks that model changes in breast cancer biology during treatment using high dimensional multiplatform profiling to develop personalised precision cancer therapies (Sammut et al, *Nature* 2022, PMID:34875674). The lab has extensive expertise in the molecular profiling of early and metastatic breast cancer (PMID: 31141692) and we have contributed to the deep characterisation of its mutational (PMID: 27161491) and methylation landscapes (PMID: 34518533) as well as the development of dynamic models that predict relapse and survival (PMID: 30867590).

We are seeking to recruit a highly motivated Scientific Officer to assist with the day to day running of the laboratory and support translational studies on tissues and samples obtained from patients with breast cancer.

The successful candidate will be a part of a highly collaborative team of experimental scientists, computational biologists and physicians at the ICR and Royal Marsden Hospital. You will be responsible for the receipt, processing and storage of clinical samples received into the laboratory, and will need to work to Good Clinical Practice/Good Clinical Laboratory Practice (GCP/GCLP) standards. You will liaise closely with Clinical researchers in the Royal Marsden Hospital and will contribute towards the running of experimental projects within the research laboratory. Within this role, you will develop experience in bulk and single cell multi-omic profiling technologies. Most importantly, you will play a key role in the delivery of the next generation of biomarker-based personalised precision medicine clinical trials.

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The successful candidate must have a bachelor's degree in biomedical science, molecular biology, genomics or another related discipline, with demonstrable knowledge and experience of managing and handling biological samples. A Master's degree in Biological Sciences or related discipline is highly desirable but not essential. Practical experience in Next Generation Sequencing (NGS), single cell sequencing and/or molecular biology protocols is highly desirable but we will be delighted to consider very motivated individuals who can demonstrate excellent relevant laboratory skills. Good communication skills, including excellent written and spoken English, are essential.

About our organisation

The Breast Cancer Now Toby Robins Research Centre at the ICR is the first centre in the UK entirely devoted to breast cancer research. Our goal is to advance research into the causes, diagnosis and treatment of breast cancer. It is located in state-of-the-art laboratory space, with excellent core facilities and funding.

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 top in the league table of university research quality compiled from the Research Excellence Framework (REF 2014).

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.

Our mission is to make the discoveries that defeat cancer.

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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:	Division of Breast Cancer Research
Pay grade / staff group:	Scientific Officer
Hours / duration:	Full time (35 hours per week), Monday to Friday. Fixed term contract for 2 years
Reports to:	Dr Stephen John Sammut
Main purpose of the job:	To support the processing of samples obtainted from patients recruited to translational breast cancer studies. To assist with day to day running of the laboratory and contribute to the development of bulk and single cell molecular phenotyping technologies.

Duties and responsibilities:

Specific duties:

To liaise with Clinical Study Coordinators and assist with sample collection from clinical research sites (Royal Marsden Hospital).
To be responsible for clinical sample receipt and processing (including but not limited to processing of tumour tissue, blood and stool samples) predominantly at the ICR in Chelsea, and occasionally in Sutton when cross cover is required.
To store processed samples safely according to local standards and policies.
To accurately maintain sample processing databases and laboratory notebook records.
To carry out and support laboratory activities such as cell culture duties, lab organisation and ordering.
To perform bulk and single cell next generation sequencing experiments, including library preparation.
To carry out analyses on the data from experiments performed and to adjust plans according to outcomes.
To work under supervision and consult where appropriate.
To participate in and contribute to regular group meetings.
To contribute to the preparation of reports on the work carried out by the laboratory and produce work suitable for high-quality, high-impact publications.
To work in a flexible but organised manner.

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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

BSc in biomedical sciences/molecular biology or related subject	Essential
Minimum of one year of experience in relevant laboratory	Essential
Demonstrable knowledge of proper handling and storage of biological specimens	Essential
Demonstrable knowledge of cancer biology	Desirable
Demonstrable knowledge of molecular biology	Desirable

Skills

Proven ability to rapidly learn new techniques	Essential
Meticulous attention to detail for record keeping	Essential
Ability to work effectively and efficiently, both independently and as part of a team (with limited supervision)	Essential
Ability to plan, organise and prioritise a busy workload	Essential
Proven ability to work to deadlines	Essential
Demonstrable communication skills, written (including scientific writing) and oral	Essential
Good computer literacy and proficient in using Microsoft Office 365 applications	Essential
Proven ability to independently design, optimise and implement experiments	Desirable

Experience

Experience in sample management, including receipt, archiving and maintaining accurate databases	Essential
Experience in tissue culture (passaging, transfection, stable line generation, etc.)	Essential
Experience in processing of human tissues	Desirable
Experience in molecular biology techniques	Desirable
Experience in next-generation sequencing technologies, including library preparation	Desirable
Experience with single cell sequencing technologies	Desirable

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General

Ability to take specific and delegated responsibilities	Essential
Proven ability to work effectively under pressure whilst maintaining accuracy	Essential
Self-motivated and enthusiastic, ability to make decisions and to take initiative	Essential
Ability to interact effectively with other team members and work as part of a dynamic team to drive projects forward	Essential
Flexibility to work as an individual or as a member of a team	Essential
Working knowledge of Good Clinical Practice and the Human Tissue Act in association with the handling of human tissue	Desirable

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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

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.