ICR The Institute of Cancer Research

Higher Scientific Officer (Target Validation), Target Evaluation & Molecular Therapeutics

Candidate Information

December 2024

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 are consistently in the top performing universities in the league table of university research quality compiled from the Research Excellence Framework (REF 2014 & 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 the position

We seek a Higher Scientific Officer within the Target Evaluation & Molecular Therapeutics (TEMT) team to carry out lab-based molecular cell biology research focused on potential therapeutic targets in cancer. Projects will involve the use of genetic techniques (RNAi/CRISPR), targeted protein degradation, tool compounds and molecular biology to generate key decision-making data in target validation and enable target prioritisation for drug discovery. The postholder will also contribute to

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functional assay development and biomarker discovery for targets within the drug discovery pipeline.

This position is offered on a 2 year fixed-term contract in the first instance. Starting salary is in the range of £37,050 - £45,732 per annum depending on experience.

About the Division of Cancer Therapeutics, housing the Centre for Cancer Drug Discovery

The Division of Cancer Therapeutics has an unrivalled track record at discovering novel cancer treatments for the personalised treatment of cancer. Within the Division, the Centre for Cancer Drug Discovery (CCDD) 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, together with our collaborators, have discovered 21 preclinical development candidates, 13 of which have been progressed to clinical evaluation, many 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 CCDD'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. We publish our work extensively and have a large network of collaborations with academia, biotechnology companies, and the pharmaceutical industry. Our teams are dedicated to the discovery of small molecule drug candidates, and to the development of high quality chemical probes to enable new cancer biology research. 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 2020 on the ICR Sutton campus.

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.

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Job description

Department / division:	Centre for Cancer Drug Discovery, Division of Cancer Therapeutics
Pay grade / staff group:	Higher Scientific Officer: £37,050 - £45,732
Hours / duration:	Full time (35 hours per week), Monday to Friday. 2 year fixed-term contract (in first instance).
Reports to:	Dr Justin Joachim, Staff Scientist, Target Evaluation & Molecular Therapeutics
Main purpose of the job:	To carry out lab-based biology research for cancer target validation

Duties and responsibilities:

Therapeutic Target Validation

Carry out lab-based molecular cell biology experiments for target validation (including RNAi, CRISPR and molecular biology)
Contribute to experimental design and troubleshooting
Collaborate with colleagues within the Target Evaluation & Molecular Therapeutics team and across other teams
Maintain an up-to-date knowledge of innovations in target validation practices and propose new techniques for implementation where appropriate
Collaborate with colleagues within the Centre for Target Validation to employ best working practices for target validation

Presentation and communication

Maintain accurate records of experimental work in an electronic laboratory notebook
Prepare data for high quality publications/patent applications
Present research results to varied audiences (lab meetings, departmental meetings)

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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

At least a Master's level qualification in Cell Biology or an aligned subject	Essential
PhD in Cell Biology or an aligned subject	Desirable
Knowledge of cancer biology	Essential
Knowledge of experimental approaches to therapeutic target validation in cancer	Essential

Skills

Skills in molecular cell biology techniques used for target validation (e.g. some of the following: RNAi, CRISPR, biomarker detection, viral transduction, compound dose responses, molecular cloning, isogenic cell line generation)	Essential
Expertise in a range of biology readouts used for screening and biomarker detection (e.g. some of the following: plate-based viability assays, high-content imaging, qPCR, Western blotting)	Essential
Experience working with cell lines requiring different culture conditions	Essential
Experience with high-throughput cell-based screening (e.g. pooled CRISPR screening, small molecule screens, arrayed RNAi screens)	Desirable
Skills in functional assessment of target perturbation (e.g. investigation of signal transduction pathways, DNA damage response, other cellular pathways)	Desirable
Strong written and oral communication skills	Desirable
Strong interpersonal skills with proven ability to collaborate with scientists from other disciplines	Desirable
Excellent record keeping skills	Essential
Proactive approach with excellent time management skills	Desirable
High motivation and a strong desire to achieve scientific excellence, prioritising quality and reproducibility of results	Essential

Experience

Experience working in lab-based cell biology (can include PhD)	Essential
Experience working in multidisciplinary teams	Desirable
Track record of contributions to cancer biology research (can include publications, patents and other outputs)	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

You may contact Dr Justin Joachim (justin.joachim@icr.ac.uk) for 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.