Scientific Computing Architect
Candidate Information

March 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 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.

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We have more than 1000 staff and postgraduate students across three sites – in Chelsea and Sutton.

Digital Services

The Digital Services Directorate ensures that everyone at the ICR has access to the technology they need to do their jobs effectively including providing specialist IT support to the ICR's research community.

The Job Role

The Scientific Computing Architect designs and builds high-performance computing systems, large-scale storage, and related infrastructure to effectively solve complex scientific and engineering problems.

Our mission is to make the discoveries that defeat cancer.

Scientific Computing Architect
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

Scientific Computing Architect
Candidate Information

Job description

Department / division:	Digital Services
Pay grade / staff group:	Professional Services 2
Hours / duration:	Full time (35 hours per week), Monday to Friday.
Reports to:	Scientific Computing Infrastructure Manager
Main purpose of the job:	The Scientific Computing Architect designs and builds high-performance computing systems, large-scale storage, and related infrastructure to effectively solve complex scientific and engineering problems.

Objectives

Design and implement high-performance computing, large scale-storage, and related architectures to meet the demanding computational needs of scientific and research projects.

Optimize resource utilization, ensuring efficient and scalable computing power for complex simulations, data analysis, and other scientific workloads.

Foster innovation and collaboration within the scientific community by providing access to high-performance computing resources and large-scale storage.

Scientific Computing Architect
Candidate Information

Duties and Responsibilities

Analyse scientific workflow requirements and translate them into technical specifications for the scientific computing environment.
Select and configure hardware and software components considering factors like performance, scalability, cost-effectiveness, and compatibility.
Design and optimize system architecture, including network topology, storage solutions, and software environment.
Maintain and work on the agreed roadmaps for all digital services initiatives: This involves outlining the steps, timelines, and resources needed to implement new technologies and processes.
Automate infrastructure provisioning and configuration for efficiency.
Collaborate with scientists and researchers to understand their computational needs and recommend appropriate solutions.
Monitor and troubleshoot system issues, maintaining optimal performance and uptime.
Stay up to date on emerging scientific computing technologies and trends, continuously improving the efficiency and capabilities of the scientific computing environment.

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.

Scientific Computing Architect
Candidate Information

Person specification

Education and Knowledge

A Degree in a relevant field or equivalent experience in a similar role.	Essential

SFIA Skills

The tables below list the essential SFIA skills, at the relevant level, needed for the position.

Category	Skill	Required Level
Strategy and architecture	Solution architecture	5
	Specialist advice	5
	Continuity management	4
	Sustainability	4
Change and transformation	Business situation analysis	4
Development and implementation	Data engineering	5
	Database design	5
	High-performance computing	5
	Systems design	5
	Machine learning	4
	User experience analysis	4
	Network design	3
	Testing	3
	Programming/software development	2
Delivery and operation	Capacity management	5
	Storage management	5
	System software	5
	Asset management	4
	Availability management	4
	Change control	4
	Configuration management	4
	Facilities management	4

Scientific Computing Architect
Candidate Information

	Incident management	4
	IT infrastructure	4
	Problem management	4
	Release and deployment	4
	Service catalogue management	3

SFIA Supplementary documents

The table below lists the supplementary documents provided. These explain the SFIA framework for those unfamiliar with it, and provide a detailed breakdown of each skill listed above and its importance for the role and how it will be used.

Document	Function
SFIA 8 Summary Chart	Provides a summary chart of the SFIA professional skills and a summary of the generic attributes.
SFIA 8 The framework reference	Provides the full description of the SFIA levels of responsibility, the generic attributes that define the SFIA levels, the behavioural factors, knowledge statements and all the SFIA professional skills.
SFIA 8 skills and responsibilities spreadsheet	Provides the content of the SFIA levels of responsibility, the generic attributes and the professional skills.

These documents can be downloaded here:

SFIA 8 Summary Chart

SFIA 8 Skills and Responsibilities Spreadsheet

SFIA 8 Framework Reference

Scientific Computing Architect
Candidate Information

Experience

Designing and implementing scientific computing systems: This includes experience with hardware, software, and networking aspects of high-performance computing and large-scale storage systems.	Essential
Expertise in infrastructure-as-code (IaC) tools: Experience with tools like Terraform, Ansible, or CloudFormation is crucial for automating infrastructure provisioning and management.	Essential
Understanding of scientific workflow management systems: Experience working with tools and frameworks that automate and manage the execution of complex scientific workflows, including data provenance and reproducibility aspects.	Essential
Strong understanding of performance optimization techniques: Ability to identify performance bottlenecks in scientific code and apply optimization techniques to improve efficiency, scalability, and resource utilization.	Essential
Collaboration with scientific researchers and engineers: Experience communicating effectively with scientists and engineers to understand their computational needs and translate them into technical requirements for the architecture. Bonus points for experience collaborating on scientific publications or projects.	Essential

Scientific Computing Architect
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. All staff receive an additional three days at Christmas.

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 Recruitment for further information by emailing recruitment@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.