



Higher Scientific Officer - Drug Discovery Biology Centre for Protein Degradation Candidate Information

March 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.

Centre for Protein Degradation, Division of Cancer Therapeutics

The ICR has established the Centre for Protein Degradation (CPD) to accelerate targeted protein degradation-based drug discovery – an innovative approach utilising drug-induced degradation of harmful proteins *via* the cell's endogenous protein disposal system. Our aim is to discover novel molecular glue degraders and PROTACs for the treatment of the most challenging cancers. Based at the ICR's Centre for Cancer Drug Discovery (CCDD), the CPD benefits from state-of-the-art drug discovery platforms including biology, medicinal chemistry, biophysics, structural biology, proteomics, computational modelling, and clinical expertise within the CCDD, the ICR and the Royal Marsden Hospital. We

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also have established collaborations with biotechnology companies and the pharmaceutical industry.

The **Induced Proximity Therapeutics** team within the **Centre for Protein Degradation** focuses on biology aspects of targeted protein degradation drug discovery and supports the CPD in the following areas of research:

- 1) Drug screening, profiling and molecular mechanisms of action
- 2) Discovery of novel E3 ligase ligands
- 3) Target identification and validation.

This role will support target validation, development of *in vitro* and cell-based assays and pharmacological characterisation of molecular glue and PROTAC degraders but may also contribute to our other activities.

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Centre for Cancer Drug Discovery at the ICR

Scientists in the Centre for Cancer Drug Discovery implement innovative drug discovery technologies, discover novel drug modalities 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 drug discovery Biology teams are dedicated to translational and drug discovery research, applying molecular pharmacology and cancer biology approaches to explore the therapeutic potential of new targets, and implementing functional and mechanistic assays to support progression of new therapeutics.

About the Higher Scientific Officer position

The postholder will be working at the Centre for Protein Degradation to deliver biology aspects of our exploratory and drug discovery projects. Working closely with our internal medicinal chemistry, proteomics, structural biology, DMPK and oncology scientists and with our academic and industry partners, they will leverage their biology and drug discovery expertise to validate novel cancer targets and develop and implement high-throughput assays for pharmacological profiling of novel molecular glues and PROTAC degraders. This position is suitable for a strong team player with a solid background in cancer cell biology, genetic manipulation and drug screening assay development who is passionate about developing innovative technologies and cancer drug discovery.

The position is offered on a **2-year fixed-term** contract in the first instance. Starting salary is in the range of **£39,805 – £49,023 per annum** depending on experience.

Annual leave entitlement is **28 days per annum**. This will increase by a further day after 2 years' and 5 years' service. There is an additional entitlement to **8 bank/public holidays** and **3 ICR-set privilege days**.

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:	Centre for Protein Degradation, Division of Cancer Therapeutics
Location:	Sutton, onsite
Pay grade / staff group:	Higher Scientific Officer: £39,805 – £49,023 per annum
Hours / duration:	Full time (35 hours per week), Monday to Friday. Fixed term contract for 2 years in the first instance.
Reports to:	Dr Agnieszka Konopacka, Group Leader, Induced Proximity Therapeutics, Centre for Protein Degradation, Centre for Cancer Drug Discovery.
Main purpose of the job:	Develop and run <i>in vitro</i> and cell-based assays for discovery and mechanistic characterisation of novel small molecule degraders (molecular glues and PROTACs). Conduct cancer target validation studies.

Key Roles and Responsibilities

Develop <i>in vitro</i> and cell-based assays for screening and pharmacological profiling of PROTACs and molecular glue degraders (e.g., binding, ternary complex, degradation and ubiquitination assays)
Perform routine compound screening and mechanistic profiling
Perform cancer target validation studies using genetic and pharmacological manipulation techniques
Prepare samples for proteomics, analyse and interpret data (in collaboration with the data science and proteomics groups)
Work effectively as part of a multidisciplinary team including oncology scientists, cell, molecular and structural biologists, medicinal chemists, analytical and DMPK scientists, as well as external academic and industry partners.

Other Roles and Responsibilities

Maintain accurate electronic experimental records
Design experiments, analyse and interpret data
Work and communicate effectively with other members of the project team, unit and external collaborators
Keep up to date with relevant scientific literature and technology

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Prepare and present results at internal or external meetings
Prepare data for patent applications and publications

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 reflects 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

First degree in biological science, biochemistry or pharmacology	Essential
PhD in biological/biochemical sciences	Desirable
Knowledge of <i>in vitro</i> and cell biology techniques and screening assay development	Essential
Knowledge of cancer cell biology and cancer models	Essential
Knowledge of molecular biology	Essential
Knowledge of pharmacological drug profiling	Desirable
Knowledge of targeted protein degradation and ubiquitination biology	Desirable

Personal Characteristics and Skills

Intellectual curiosity and strong motivation to learn novel technologies and achieve professional excellence	Essential
Great collaboration and communication skills	Essential
Great lab technical skills, ability to adapt and develop novel technologies	Essential
Willingness to stay up to date with relevant scientific literature and technology	Essential
Ability to plan, organise and prioritise work across multiple projects	Essential
Good computer and data analysis skills (e.g., Dotmatics, Spotfire, GraphPad Prism etc.)	Essential
Excellent data documentation skills, attention to detail	Essential

Experience

Working in biology/biochemistry lab	Essential
Cancer target validation or cancer biology	Essential
Cell biology, molecular biology and genetic manipulation techniques (e.g., molecular cloning, vector design, lentivirus transduction, shRNA, CRISPR KO/ KI)	Essential
Developing cell-based assays (e.g., HiBiT, NanoBRET, fluorescence microscopy, Western Blot, Jess, flow cytometry, CETSA)	Essential
Phenotypic assays (e.g., viability and proliferation, apoptosis, luminescence and fluorescence microscopy, flow cytometry)	Essential

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<i>In vitro</i> and cell-based pharmacological compound profiling (e.g., protein degradation, ternary complex formation, compound binding, kinetics, ubiquitination assays, FRET, AlphaLisa, Lumit etc.)	Desirable
Experience in high-throughput compound handling (e.g., Echo liquid handler)	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

For further information please contact **Dr Agnieszka Konopacka** Agnieszka.Konopacka@icr.ac.uk.

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