
Senior Animal Technician Candidate Information

August 2026

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.

Research Services at the ICR

We develop and manage the effective implementation of the ICR's strategic research initiatives, creating partnerships and bridges between research groups and the Professional Services teams at the ICR.

We support the development of the research strategy, work on various strategic projects, major equipment purchases and core research infrastructure.

We provide the secretariat for joint research committees and oversee the ICR's core research facilities and services.

Biological Services Unit (BSU)

We use animal studies alongside many other experimental approaches and they are crucial in building up a complete picture of cancer biology. Our research using animals has helped drive advances in cancer treatment that are benefiting people with cancer all over the world today.

Under UK law, animals can only be used for research if there is no appropriate alternative. All our research proposals are thoroughly assessed before approval to ensure that there is no alternative to the

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use of animals, and that the studies will provide valuable information that will ultimately help cancer patients.

The ICR is strongly committed to the highest standards of animal welfare in all research studies, and has led the development of best practice in this area. We also support the principles of the 3Rs – replacement, refinement and reduction of use of animals for research – and are working to develop alternative experimental techniques.

About this Position

We are seeking a dedicated and highly skilled Senior Animal Technician to join the Biological Services Unit (BSU) within Research Services at The Institute of Cancer Research (ICR). The BSU works closely with the Centre for In Vivo Modelling (CIVM) to support world-leading cancer research through the development and use of innovative in vivo models of human disease.

As a Senior Animal Technician, you will play a key role in the delivery of high-quality animal care, welfare, and technical services, ensuring the highest standards of husbandry, regulatory compliance, and scientific support. You will be responsible for the management and maintenance of transgenic and experimental mouse colonies, the performance of regulated procedures under the authority of Home Office licences, and the provision of technical support to researchers undertaking cutting-edge cancer research.

The successful candidate will possess substantial experience working within a laboratory animal facility or in vivo research laboratory, together with a strong understanding of laboratory animal husbandry, breeding colony management, animal welfare, and in vivo techniques. You will hold (or be eligible and willing to hold) a Home Office Personal Licence and demonstrate competence in a range of regulated procedures and animal care practices. In addition, you will contribute to the training and development of junior staff, researchers, and licence holders, promoting best practice and supporting the continued development of technical competence within the BSU.

This is an excellent opportunity for an experienced and motivated animal technician seeking to further their career in a collaborative and research-focused environment. The role requires a proactive and professional approach, strong organisational and communication skills, and a commitment to promoting the highest standards of animal welfare and a positive Culture of Care. Participation in an out-of-hours, weekend, and public holiday rota will be required to ensure the continuous care and welfare of animals within the facility.

At the ICR, we are committed to creating an inclusive and supportive working environment and welcome applications from candidates of all backgrounds. The successful candidate will make a significant contribution to our mission of defeating cancer through pioneering

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research and the development of sophisticated in vivo models that improve our understanding of the disease and accelerate the development of new treatments.

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 –

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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:	Biological Services Unit (BSU) / Research Services
Pay grade / staff group:	Scientific Professional 5 - BSU3
Hours / duration:	Full time (35 hours per week), Monday to Friday. With weekend and bank holiday cover via rota
Reports to: Accountable to:	Manager of Biological Services Unit (BSU) Head of BSU and Director of CIVM
Main purpose of the job:	The primary aim of this role is to provide high-quality <i>in vivo</i> technical support for cancer research at the ICR. Working closely with cancer researchers and colleagues across the BSU, the postholder will perform and support regulated procedures, contribute to the breeding and maintenance of mouse models, and uphold the highest standards of animal husbandry, health monitoring and animal welfare to enable world-leading research. The role also includes maintaining accurate records, ensuring compliance with Home Office legislation and Institute's policies, and supporting the effective operation of the BSU. Some out-of-hours working will be required.

Duties and responsibilities:

Main Responsibilities

Collaborative Research Support Work closely with ICR research staff to support the planning and delivery of high-quality <i>in vivo</i> research, contributing to robust, reproducible, and scientifically rigorous research outcomes.
Animal Care and Colony Management Responsible for the husbandry, breeding, welfare monitoring, and care of mouse colonies and experimental animals, ensuring compliance with relevant legislation, licences, and SOPs.
Animal Welfare and Regulatory Compliance Ensure high standards of animal welfare and a strong Culture of Care by monitoring animal health, identifying welfare concerns, and supporting compliance with Home Office and institutional requirements.
Technical and Scientific Support

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Perform regulated procedures and provide technical support to research programmes under the authority of relevant Home Office licences, following appropriate training and competency assessment.

Training and Staff Development

Manage, supervise, and train junior staff, delivering practical training and competency assessments in animal husbandry, welfare, and regulated procedures. Support the training and development of licence holders and researchers.

Facility Operations and Quality Standards

Maintain animal facilities, equipment, records, and working areas to required standards, contributing to the efficient operation of the Biological Services Unit.

Health, Safety and Risk Management

Promote a safe working environment by adhering to health and safety requirements, participating in risk management activities, and supporting continuous improvement initiatives within the BSU.

Main Duties

Maintain and care for mouse breeding colonies and experimental animals, ensuring the highest standards of animal welfare and husbandry.

Ensure the adequate provision of food and water in accordance with approved Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).

Conduct daily inspections of cages and animals, monitoring for husbandry, welfare, and scientific requirements, and promptly report any observations or concerns to Licence Holders, the Named Veterinary Surgeon (NVS), or NACWO as appropriate.

Perform routine husbandry procedures in accordance with Institute of Cancer Research (ICR) SOPs and departmental standards.

Uphold and promote the highest standards of animal care, welfare, and the Culture of Care within the Biological Services Unit (BSU).

Work closely with ICR researchers to ensure they are fully informed about the health and welfare of their animals, supporting the delivery of high-quality, reproducible research while ensuring compliance with all relevant legislation, Home Office licence conditions, and ICR policies and procedures.

Maintain all animal facilities, work areas, and equipment to the required standards of cleanliness, organisation, and compliance.

Assume the duties of the Named Animal Care and Welfare Officer (NACWO), where required, ensuring high standards of animal care and welfare in accordance with the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986, Home Office requirements, and ICR policies and procedures.

Carry out basic regulated procedures under the authority of the relevant Home Office Personal and Project Licences, including surgical procedures once appropriately trained, assessed, and deemed competent.

Participate in the out-of-hours, weekend, and public holiday rota to ensure continuity of animal care and welfare. Overtime payments will be made in accordance with Institute policies.

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Maintain accurate personal training records, documenting competencies, achievements, and ongoing professional development.
Provide training, coaching, and day-to-day supervision to junior members of staff, supporting their development, competency assessment, and progression.
Deliver practical training in animal husbandry, welfare, regulated procedures, and other relevant BSU activities to staff and researchers in accordance with approved training frameworks.
Participate in the training of licence holders and prospective licence holders, contributing to the development of competence and compliance with Home Office requirements.
Support the implementation and continuous improvement of training programmes, ensuring training records are maintained and competency standards are met.
Actively support the Institute's risk management framework by identifying, reporting, and helping to manage risks in accordance with Institute policies and procedures.
Contribute to maintaining compliance with all relevant legislation, regulatory requirements, and institutional standards relating to animal research and welfare
Work collaboratively with colleagues, researchers, and support staff to provide high-quality animal care and research support services.

Standards of Performance

Senior Animal Technicians are expected to work independently, demonstrating initiative, sound judgement, reliability, and professionalism in all aspects of their work.
The post holder will work closely with Animal Technicians, researchers, licence holders, veterinarians, and other stakeholders. The ability to work collaboratively as part of a team, whilst also supervising and supporting junior staff, is essential.
Senior Animal Technicians are expected to maintain the highest standards of animal care and welfare, promoting a strong Culture of Care and ensuring that all animals are treated humanely and respectfully.
The post holder must maintain high standards of husbandry, hygiene, biosecurity, and compliance within the Biological Services Unit at all times.
The post holder will be expected to demonstrate leadership in the implementation of best practice, staff training, competency assessment, and continuous improvement of animal care and facility operations.
Effective communication, organisational skills, attention to detail, and a commitment to maintaining accurate records are essential requirements of the role.

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General

All staff must familiarise themselves with and comply with Institute of Cancer Research (ICR) policies and procedures relevant to their role.

All personal and sensitive information must be handled with the utmost confidentiality and in accordance with applicable data protection legislation, including the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and Data Protection Act.

The post holder will be expected to work in accordance with the ICR's Values and to contribute positively to the achievement of the Institute's strategic objectives.

The post holder will promote and support a safe, healthy, inclusive, and respectful working environment in which bullying, harassment, discrimination, and inappropriate behaviour are not tolerated.

The post holder may be required to undertake other duties commensurate with the grade, skills, and responsibilities of the position.

This job description reflects the current requirements of the post. As duties and responsibilities develop and change, the job description may be reviewed and amended in consultation with the post holder to reflect those changes.

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Education and Knowledge

Level 3 (or above) qualification in Animal Technology, Associate or Full Membership of the Institute of Animal Technology (IAT), or equivalent relevant experience working with laboratory mice in a research laboratory or animal facility.	Essential
Holder of a Home Office Personal Licence (PIL), an equivalent licence or certification, or eligible and willing to obtain a Home Office PIL following appointment.	Essential
Detailed knowledge of the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 and associated Codes of Practice.	Desirable
Knowledge of animal studies and procedures used in biomedical research and/or transgenic mouse breeding colony management, with expertise in at least one area.	Essential
Knowledge of animal studies and procedures used in biomedical research.	Desirable
Knowledge of animal studies as applied to cancer research.	Desirable
Knowledge of animal models and techniques relevant to cancer research.	Desirable
Knowledge and practical experience of fulfilling the duties of a Named Animal Care and Welfare Officer (NACWO).	Desirable
Working knowledge of Individually Ventilated Cage (IVC) systems, flexible film isolators, and other animal health protection systems.	Desirable
Knowledge of Good Laboratory Practice (GLP), quality management systems, and regulatory compliance requirements.	Desirable
Knowledge of staff training, competency assessment, and the development of animal technology personnel and licence holders.	Desirable

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Person specification

Skills

Good organisational, planning, and interpersonal skills	Essential
Clear and effective communication skills, both verbal and written.	Essential
Competence in laboratory animal anaesthesia, routes of substance administration, and the collection of tissues and body fluids.	Desirable
Relevant transferable experience in <i>in vivo</i> techniques, colony management, sample collection, or regulated procedures.	Essential
Experience in the breeding, management, and maintenance of genetically altered mouse colonies.	Desirable
Computer literate with a good working knowledge of Microsoft Office applications.	Essential
Ability to supervise, train, and mentor junior staff and researchers.	Essential
Ability to work effectively as part of a multidisciplinary team.	Essential
Ability to work independently with minimal supervision and use sound judgement.	Essential
Self-motivated, enthusiastic, and able to demonstrate initiative and problem-solving skills.	Essential
Willingness to participate in out-of-hours, weekend, and public holiday rotas as required.	Essential
High degree of integrity and an understanding of the need for confidentiality, particularly in relation to commercially sensitive studies and research.	Essential
Commitment to Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and the continuous improvement of BSU processes and standards.	Essential

Experience

Substantial experience working within a laboratory animal facility, <i>in vivo</i> research laboratory, or equivalent technical environment.	Essential
Experience supporting laboratory animal husbandry, colony management, <i>in vivo</i> procedures, or related scientific technical activities.	Essential
Experience of supervising, training, and developing staff.	Essential

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Experience of delivering practical training and assessing competency in animal husbandry and regulated procedures.	Essential
Experience in managing transgenic or genetically altered mouse breeding colonies.	Essential
Experience of developing, reviewing, and implementing Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).	Desirable
Experience of liaising with Home Office Inspectors, Named Veterinary Surgeons (NVS), NACWOs, and other Named Persons.	Desirable
Experience of supporting Home Office licence holders and contributing to licence-holder training programmes.	Desirable

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Benefits

We offer an excellent 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.