ICR The Institute of Cancer Research

Higher Scientific Officer, Biology, Centre for Target Validation

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 Centre for Target Validation

The ICR has established a Centre for Target Validation that will accelerate the translation of ICR and collaborator research into drug discovery programmes. The Centre will deliver bespoke, hypothesis-driven data packages to support decision-making for launch of drug discovery projects. The Centre's dedicated resources, including biology, functional genomics, assay sciences, chemistry, and bioinformatics teams, will support joint project teams that combine the deep biological and therapeutic knowledge of ICR investigators with the validation and technical expertise of drug discovery scientists. Scientists in the Centre for Target Validation will work closely with colleagues in the ICR's Centre for Protein Degradation to exploit emerging technology and

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protein degradation tools for robust target validation experiments. The Centre for Target Validation will serve as a hub, connecting researchers to expertise and resources that will validate and streamline robust, targets into drug discovery programmes in the ICR's Centre for Cancer Drug Discovery or into collaborative programmes with external commercial therapy discovery partners.

About the position

We seek a Higher Scientific Officer within the Centre for Target Validation to carry out lab-based 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 assay development and biomarker discovery for targets that move to a drug discovery phase within the ICR's Centre for Cancer Drug Discovery.

This 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.

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 Target Validation, Division of Cancer Therapeutics
Pay grade / staff group:	Higher Scientific Officer: £39,805 - £49,023
Hours / duration:	Full time (35 hours per week), Monday to Friday. 2 year fixed-term contract (in first instance).
Reports to:	Prof Joanna Loizou, Group Leader / Deputy Head of Division.
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 cell biology experiments for target validation (including RNAi, CRISPR and molecular biology)
Contribute to experimental design and troubleshooting
Collaborate with colleagues within the Centre for Target Validation and in 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 Protein Degradation to employ degradation-based target validation techniques

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 Masters 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 cell biology techniques used for target validation (e.g. some of the following: RNAi, CRISPR, biomarker detection, viral transduction, compound dose responses)	Essential
Expertise in a range of biology readouts used for screening and biomarker detection (e.g. some of the following: plate-based assays, fluorescence, qPCR, western blotting)	Essential
Experience working with cell lines requiring different culture conditions	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 Prof Joanna Loizou (Joanna.loizou@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.