

Job Title: Lead Research Scientist (Knowledge Transfer Partnership)

Grade: KTP

Salary: £38,000 to £40,000 per annum + £6,000 training package

Department: Diabetes Research Centre

Hours/Contract: Full time, fixed term contract for 36 months

Job Family: Teaching and Research

Reference: 13589

Start date: 01 November 2026 (TBC)

A unique opportunity to shape the future of functional beverages

Project Description

This 36-month project will establish an evidence-led platform for functional innovation, elevating AG Barr's Boost drink range into an industry-leading health brand with credible scientific backing. The project will embed advanced analytical expertise in micronutrient and protein functionality, predictive modelling and human-based testing, the project will support the development of powdered formulations that deliver measurable health benefits to consumers.

The work will facilitate targeted formulations, that prioritise physiological benefit alongside consumer appeal, accelerate speed to market, and provide robust scientific evidence to support defensible functional claims. In parallel, the project will contribute to AG Barr's sustainability ambitions by enabling formulations with reduced carbon footprint, minimised packaging and improved product efficiency.

Role Purpose

You will be working at the cutting edge of functional food product development, leading human research testing, method development and evidence-based processes, to accelerate innovation in powdered functional beverage formulations, with an initial focus on Boost Sports and Performance drinks.

You will be responsible for embedding long-term advanced scientific capability within AG Barr, initially supporting the design of powdered products with demonstrable functional benefits, improved bioavailability, validated performance outcomes and strong sensory appeal, while supporting the company's wider sustainability and growth ambitions. The expectation is that this role will grow to expand multiple brands and products within AG Barr, offering a unique opportunity for growth and development.

If you are driven by impact, excited by translational research, and motivated by seeing your science shape real products used by consumers, this role offers an unparalleled career launchpad.

What makes this role unique

- You will lead a nationally recognised Innovate UK-funded programme
- You will work on live commercial challenges, not theoretical exercises



- You will lead a research programme, examining physiological and behavioural responses in human participants.
- You will build new capabilities that remain inside the business long after the project ends
- You will receive structured training, mentoring and leadership development
- You will graduate the role with a rare blend of technical, commercial and strategic experience

Many KTP Associates go on to senior roles in industry, innovation leadership, or academia. This role is designed to accelerate your career.

About the company you will be working with

AG Barr Plc is a proud UK-based drinks company behind some of the nation's most loved brands—including the iconic IRN-BRU. We combine over 150 years of heritage with a bold, forward-thinking vision to refresh our consumers and create real value. Driven by core values of passion, integrity, respect, and accountability, we foster a collaborative, inclusive, and energetic culture where people are encouraged to bring their true selves to work and do their best stuff.

While we are proud of our history, we are also rapidly evolving. Our portfolio has never been more diverse or exciting, stretching across established multi-category brands like Rubicon, Boost, and Funkin Cocktails. Demonstrating our ambition to lead in premium and health-conscious spaces, our family has recently grown to include the botanically brewed Fentimans, premium fruit juice specialists Frobishers, and functional wellness trailblazers The Turmeric Co. This incredible mix gives our teams the unique opportunity to work across a massive breadth of flavours, formats, and functional ingredients.

You will be based at our vibrant Middlebrook site in Bolton, a key commercial and innovation hub for the company's operations. Middlebrook is home to our specialist Product and Packaging R&D teams, offering a welcoming, community-focused workplace where teamwork and continuous improvement thrive. The site features well-invested technical laboratories and dedicated sensory booths, providing the practical tools needed to test, refine, and validate the next generation of great British drinks. It is an environment where collaboration is actively encouraged, achievements are celebrated, and everyone feels deeply connected to AG Barr's wider purpose and market ambitions.

As an employee of the University of Leicester, you will also be able to access training resources and [staff benefits](#).

About the University of Leicester

Our origins, over 100 years ago, speak to that very purpose – our founding father Dr Astley Clarke declared: "Now, every material asset a person possesses may flee; education alone is an asset of which an individual cannot be robbed."

We are unique as the only university in Europe founded by its community as a living memorial to those who made sacrifices in the First World War. A university built on the hope for a better future reflected in our motto: Ut vitam habeant – So that they may have life.

In over a century we have flourished to become a leading research-intensive university providing an inspiring education and student experience, and delivering world-changing research that improves people's lives.



As a comprehensive university, we offer a broad breadth of courses incorporating a spectrum of subjects in a suite of undergraduate, postgraduate and research programmes.

Our reputation speaks for itself – we are world renowned for our discoveries, for advancing the frontiers of knowledge and for tackling contemporary issues. Our league table standing places us among the leading UK universities.

We are value driven – we believe in inclusivity and in breaking down barriers to achievement. Your success is our success. Across different fields of endeavour, we encourage and support our students to be inspiring and to be impactful.

We are based in one of the most diverse cities in the UK and Europe and this has shaped our identity and mission: Diverse in our makeup and united in ambition – we pursue excellence in knowledge and learning to transform our community, our world and beyond.

For more than 60 years space research has been pioneered in Leicester. We've made ground-breaking discoveries, created instruments which are operating in space and have been involved in many space missions over the decades. Earth Observation Science (EOS) research at Leicester has been undertaken for several decades. We use data from sophisticated instruments to tackle today's greatest environmental challenges, such as climate change and air pollution. Our research is underpinned by state-of-the-art models, ground and aircraft observations and lab experiments and we frequently collaborate with research institutions and leading space agencies across all continents.

You will be a member of the Lifestyle Theme of the NIHR Leicester BRC (as part of the wider Leicester Lifestyle and Health Research Group), working under the supervision of Dr David Clayton and Prof Leigh Breen, at the Diabetes Research Centre.

The Diabetes Research Centre and the NIHR Leicester BRC host bespoke clinical research facilities with capacity for detailed clinical, anthropometric, physiological and cardiometabolic testing, as well as a state-of-the-art exercise testing and training laboratory, in-person and remote clinical consultation areas, and analytical biochemistry laboratories.

About Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTPs)

For nearly 50 years, KTPs have been helping businesses innovate for growth. They do this by connecting enterprises that have an innovation idea with the expertise to help deliver it.

A KTP could be the perfect launchpad for you, helping enhance your career by managing a challenging project central to an enterprise's strategic development and long-term growth.

You will 'own' your own project, linked to both a university and an enterprise whose experienced teams will provide you with full support. Applying academic knowledge to a real-world challenge, this is a chance to deliver impact and shape your career, opening doors within both academia and industry.

Knowledge Transfer Partnership (KTP) Benefits

As a KTP Associate, you will receive:

- A £2,000 annual personal training and development budget
- Supervision from world-leading academics and industry experts
- Full access to University of Leicester and KTP resources



- A unique opportunity to “own” a strategic innovation project central to AG Barr’s long-term growth

Main Duties and Responsibilities

Research and Innovation

- Design and deliver a structured programme of research focused on nutrient bioavailability, and functional performance outcomes in powdered beverage formulations.
- Apply advanced nutritional physiology and formulation science to develop products with demonstrable, evidence-based benefits.
- Generate and analyse human-based data, including biochemical measurements, to validate functional claims
- Develop models to understand ingredient interactions, stability, efficacy and sensory performance.
- Translate complex scientific insights into consumer-ready formulations that meet regulatory, sensory and commercial requirements.

Impact and Knowledge Exchange

- Embed new scientific capability within AG Barr through the creation of a technical playbook, internal testing frameworks and repeatable methodologies.
- Support knowledge transfer through paired working, training activities and the production of clear guidance documents.
- Communicate scientifically robust findings to non-technical stakeholders, including product development, marketing and senior leadership teams.
- Contribute to shifting internal culture toward evidence-led product development and long-term functional innovation.

Internal and External Relationships

- Be based at AG Barr Plc’s Bolton premises, working day-to-day with company teams.
- Work under joint supervision from an AG Barr Company Supervisor and a University of Leicester Academic Supervisor.
- Act as the key interface between the company and academic partners, ensuring effective information exchange and alignment of objectives.
Engage with multidisciplinary teams including scientists, product developers, marketers and senior managers.

Planning and Organising

- Deliver the project in line with the KTP high-level workplan, developing detailed action plans including milestones, resources, risk assessments and timelines.
- Coordinate access to specialist laboratories, equipment, consumables and human participants.
- Manage multiple studies with interdependencies, ensuring ethical approval requirements and scientific governance are met.
- Report formally on progress every four months to the Project Board, adapting plans as the project evolves.





Qualifications, Knowledge and Experience

We are looking for a curious, ambitious and impact-driven scientist who thrives on challenge.

Essential

- PhD or equivalent expertise in a relevant discipline (for example, but not limited to, exercise physiology, human biology, nutritional sciences, food science, sports nutrition, biological sciences)*
- Experience in conducting/coordinating human experimental research programmes*
- Experience in design and analysis of studies using quantitative data*
- Proficient in Microsoft Office or equivalent software, including word processing, spreadsheets, and presentations*
- Experience of independent and collaborative team working*

Desirable

- Experience in conducting biochemical analysis (such as LCMS, HPLC, ELISA techniques)*
- Experience in conducting consumer research*
- Experience in conducting systematic reviews and meta-analyses*
- Contemporary understanding of functional foods/drinks, nutrient bioavailability, hydration, sensory science, and/or appetite regulation*
- Experience of involvement in externally-funded programmes of research.
- Experience of conducting research with commercial partners.
- Experience in preparing/submitting regulatory approvals required to conduct clinical research within University or NHS settings.
- Awareness of commercial and regulatory drivers within the food and beverage sector.

****Criteria to be used in shortlisting candidates for interview***

Skills, Abilities and Competencies

Essential

- Ability to manage and coordinate research projects*
- Ability to work at a high level of accuracy and at high analytical sensitivity*
- Ability to interpret analytical data*
- Excellent interpersonal skills and ability to work as part of a team*
- Excellent written and oral communication skills*
- Excellent IT skills
- Excellent organisational skills
- Ability to prioritise workload in order to meet deadlines*
- Highly motivated*
- Willingness to undertake necessary training and personal development*
- Willingness to undertake necessary travel*

Desirable





- Well-developed understanding of Health and Safety regulations and procedures, particularly around clinical research.
- Demonstrable success in producing research outputs of the very highest standard.
- Proven capability in analytical, technical and/or scientific problem-solving.
- Business acumen and customer liaison skills
- Budget management skills
- Willingness to foster new collaborations.

***Criteria to be used in shortlisting candidates for interview**

Reason for Fixed Term Contract

The reason for the fixed term contract is stated in section 1.9 in the summary of contractual terms in your contract of employment.

Criminal Declaration

If you become an employee, you must inform your manager immediately, in writing, if you are the subject of any current or future police investigations/legal proceedings, which could result in a criminal offence, conviction, caution, bind-over or charges, or warnings.

Supporting University Activities

As a University of Leicester citizen, you are encouraged to support key university activities such as clearing, graduation ceremonies, student registration and recruitment open days. We encourage all staff as citizens to work flexibly across the University if required. If supporting these activities is likely to affect your workload, please speak to your line manager in the first instance

University Values

Inclusive - We are diverse in our makeup and united in ambition. Our diversity is our strength and makes our community stronger.

Inspiring - We are passionate about inspiring individuals to succeed and realise their ambitions. We challenge our community to think differently, to get involved, and to constantly embrace new ideas.

Impactful - As Citizens of Change we will generate new ideas which deliver impact and empower our community

Freedom of Speech

The University is committed to upholding freedom of speech and academic freedom within the law throughout our recruitment processes. We ensure that all candidates are considered based on merit and suitability for the role, without regard to their lawful viewpoints or the expression of challenging or controversial ideas. Our recruitment policies and practices are designed to protect applicants from discrimination or adverse treatment on the basis of their opinions, and to foster an environment where open debate and diverse perspectives are valued as essential to our academic mission.





Equity and Diversity

We believe that equity, diversity and inclusion is integral to a successful modern workplace. By developing and implementing policies and systems that challenge stereotypes across all aspects of our work, we have a culture that recognises and values the diverse contributions of our staff which benefits everyone. Our strong values of inclusivity and equality support our efforts to attract a diverse range of high quality staff and students, and identify our University as a progressive and innovative workplace that mainstreams equality, diversity and inclusion.

