UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER

Job Summary

Job Title: Research Associate
Grade: 7
Salary: £40,704 to £43,099 per annum, pro-rata if part-time
Department: Leicester Cancer Research Centre
Hours/Contract: Full-time, fixed term contract till 31 August 2029
Job Family: Teaching and Research
Reference: 14138

Role Purpose

This post is funded by Cancer Research UK as part of a collaborative project between researchers at the University of Leicester, University of Cambridge and partners in Canada, who are funded by the Canadian Cancer Society.

The project focuses on obesity pharmacotherapies such as tirzepatide and gaining a detailed mechanistic understanding of how they may prevent breast cancer. This role will take a lead on the activities in Leicester, which will involve the use of *ex vivo* patient derived explants to interrogate mechanisms of action of these drugs in normal at-risk tissue. Specifically, the post holder will lead fresh tissue sample acquisition, optimisation of methodology, sample treatment and endpoint analysis using multiplex immunofluorescence. Another key component will be linking with collaborators in Cambridge where tissue samples will undergo transcriptomic analysis.

The post will provide an interface with the University Hospitals of Leicester (UHL) in terms of interactions with the Pathology Department, and collation of clinical data, working with the Leicester Cancer Research Centre Biobank, members of the Patient Derived Explant Facility and Experimental Cancer Medicine Centre.

To ensure compliance with regulatory bodies such as the human tissue authority.

To provide support and training for staff and students involved in handling human tissue.

Main Duties and Responsibilities

- The post holder will lead/oversee the acquisition and treatment of primary human tissue samples and processing for patient derived explants. Building relationships and liaison with Surgical and Pathology colleagues will be a key aspect to this.
- The post holder will lead the development and optimisation of cutting-edge methods for explant culture in order to measure cellular responses to cancer preventive therapies.
- The post holder will be expected to collate clinical data and lead biostatistical evaluation of explant responses using appropriate analytical approaches.
- Take a lead responsibility for ensuring compliance with regulatory standards including development of standard operating procedures (SPOs), GCLP standards, and work within HTA guidelines.
- Contribution to the supervision of BSc, MSc, PhD students and junior staff in the laboratory
- Engage in continuous professional development.

Athena Swan Silver Award
Race Equality Charter Bronze Award
disability confident LEADER
LGBT+ 2020 - 2021 AWARDEE ORGANISATION
Stonewall DIVERSITY CHAMPIONS

- Contribute information for research ethics submission, research grant applications, reports for funding bodies, academic papers for publication and conference presentations.
- Contribute to and support patient and public involvement and engagement activities related to the project.

Leadership and Citizenship:

- Take a lead role in ensuring the overall success of the research programme, and cancer prevention laboratories as a whole.

Internal and External Relationships

- Daily interactions with the principal investigator, co-investigators, members of the Leicester Experimental Cancer Medicine Centre and other researchers, technicians, and students in the University of Leicester and University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust.
- Regular interactions with the project co-leads and their teams at collaborating institutions and the project funders.
- Liaise with all centre members regarding the use of laboratory facilities and resources, personally dealing with varied requests and issues arising within the laboratory and referring more complex issues to senior colleagues.
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Planning and Organising

- The post holder will be required to effectively manage their own time to deliver on the priorities of the project.
- The post holder must be well organised and plan in advance to ensure that sample acquisition and multi-immunofluorescence staining is undertaken in a timely fashion, and to designated quality standards.
- Must be flexible, taking into account that some sample collections will be from operating theatres and that operations may overrun, be cancelled or postponed.

Qualifications, Knowledge and Experience

Essential

- PhD or PhD near to submission in cancer biology, biochemistry, histopathology or a related subject;*
- Experience of working with human tissue samples;*
- Experience of multiplex immunofluorescence techniques;*
- Solid background knowledge in the field of cancer prevention;*
- Experience of handling clinical material or primary patient tissues and the regulatory requirements to do so;*

- Experience in the use of human *ex vivo* models;*
- Evidence of research outputs.

Desirable

Demonstration of one or more of the following would be desirable:

- Evidence of coherent research activity (such as involvement in successful grant applications);*
- Publications, presentations or posters at conferences;*
- Solid background knowledge in the research field of ex-vivo models;*
- Basic knowledge of cancer cell and molecular biology;*
- Experience in digital pathology;*
- A track record of collaboration in cancer research or biotechnology experience.*

Skills, Abilities and Competencies

Essential

- Experience with standard computer software programmes;*
- Well developed understanding of health and safety regulations and procedures;*
- Sound statistical skills;*
- Ability to work as part of a collaborative project across multiple institutions
- Excellent written communication skills;*
- Excellent verbal communication skills;
- Ability to work independently and also as part of a team

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.