1 Advertisement

Post Title: Research Assistant  
School/department: School of Life Sciences / Genome Damage and Stability Centre  
Hours: full time or part time hours considered up to a maximum of 1.0 FTE. Requests for flexible working options will be considered (subject to business need).  
Contract: 6 months, fixed term  
Reference: 2039  
Salary: starting at £29,515 to £33,199 per annum  
Placed on: 5 August 2019  
Closing date: 18 August 2019. Applications must be received by midnight of the closing date.  
Expected Interview date: TBC  
Expected start date: 1 September 2019

The School of Life Sciences is at the forefront of research in the biological sciences in the UK, coming in the top 10 in the REF 2014.

Based in the School of Life Sciences, the Genome Damage and Stability Centre (http://www.sussex.ac.uk/gdsc/index), is an internationally renowned Institute carrying out research on the response of cells to DNA damage, genome instability and its relationship to disease. We provide a stimulating and supportive environment and our expertise covers a range of experimental systems.

A fixed-term Research Assistant position is available in the laboratory of Dr. Antony Oliver and Prof. Laurence Pearl, working as part of a drug-discovery programme that seeks to discover small-molecule inhibitors of DNA repair enzymes, as potential therapeutic targets for the treatment of cancer.

Recent work arising from the Oliver/Pearl research grouping, and an overview of research carried out in the Genome Damage and Stability Centre, can be found at: http://www.sussex.ac.uk/gdsc/researchgroups.

The School is committed to equality and valuing diversity, and currently holds an Athena SWAN Silver Award. Applications are particularly welcomed from women and black and minority ethnic candidates, who are under-represented in academic posts in Science, Technology, Engineering, Medicine and Mathematics (STEMM) at Sussex. The School of Life Sciences welcomes applications to academic posts from candidates who wish to work part-time or as job-sharers.

The University offers various schemes to provide real benefits to parents, these can be found at Family Friendly Policies.

July 2019
Potential candidates are strongly encouraged to make informal contact with Dr. Oliver (antony.oliver@sussex.ac.uk) before applying.

Applications should be accompanied by a full CV, a statement of research interests and aspirations (not more than 4 pages), and the names of two academic referees.

For full details and how to apply see our vacancies page

The University of Sussex values the diversity of its staff and students and we welcome applicants from all backgrounds

2. The School/Division

The School of Life Sciences is the largest School in the University in terms of research activity with an annual research income of over £13m, and one of the largest in terms of student and staff population. The School has a teaching and research faculty of nearly 80, over 150 research fellows and technicians, and a small professional services team. Life Sciences have played a major role in the research and teaching of the University of Sussex since 1961. The original School of Biological Sciences (BIOLS), founded by John Maynard Smith FRS, trained some of the world’s leading biologists and biomedical scientists, and was a beacon of innovation and creativity in its integrated approach to research and teaching.

The current School of Life Sciences was formed in 2009 when Professor Laurence Pearl FRS was appointed as founding Head of the new School. Under his leadership the School adopted a unified structure with no formal departments. Instead there are six research Subject Groups – Neuroscience; Evolution, Behaviour and Environment; Genome Damage and Stability; Biochemistry and Biomedicine; Chemistry and the Sussex Drug Discovery Centre. Each research subject group is chaired by a prominent scientist, who is responsible for research leadership in their subject. The School currently has six Fellows of the Royal Society (FRS) and seven Fellows of the Academy of Medical Sciences (FMedSci) on its Faculty.

Professor Sarah Guthrie was appointed Head of School in September 2017, and the School will continue to develop under her leadership.

The School admits nearly 600 undergraduates each year on to a range of BSc and MSci degrees, with around 75 students on post-graduate taught degrees in Genetic Manipulation and Cell Biology, Cancer Cell Biology and Neuroscience. Taught programmes are firmly based on our research excellence, and offer students substantial opportunities for personal research experience along with conventional lecture, seminar and tutorial teaching. We offer 3-year BSc and 4-year integrated Masters degrees (MSci) in Biochemistry, Biomedical Science, Biology, Ecology, Genetics, Neurosciences, and Zoology, and Royal Society of Chemistry accredited BSc and MChem degrees in Chemistry and Chemistry and Drug Design. We also offer a Foundation Year in Biological Sciences which is ideally suited for students whose A-level (or equivalent) qualifications don’t meet the requirements for direct entry on to our BSc/Masters degrees.
We have a large and vigorous post graduate research community with over 170 PhD students undertaking cutting-edge research across all our areas of interest. As well as standard PhD programmes in all the Subject Groups, we also offer a highly interdisciplinary 4-year Neurosciences PhD incorporating a first year with laboratory rotations, run in partnership with the Schools of Psychology and Engineering and Informatics, and the Brighton and Sussex Medical School.

In the REF2014 more than 96% of the School’s research was rated as ‘world leading’, ‘internationally excellent’, or ‘internationally recognised’. Our Biological Sciences research in particular was ranked 10th in the UK overall, and 8th on quality of our research outputs – putting us comfortably above the majority of Russell Group institutions.

3. Please add the Job Description and Person Specification

**CORE JOB DESCRIPTION**

**Job Title:** Research Assistant  
**Grade:** Research Assistant, Grade 6  
**School:** School of Life Sciences  
**Location:** Genome Damage and Stability Centre  
**Responsible to:** Prof. Laurence Pearl, Dr. Antony Oliver  
**Direct reports:** n/a  
**Key contacts:** Members of research group, members of faculty within the School and University.

**Role description:** Research Assistant is a pre-Doctoral career-grade research position. Post-holders will be expected to contribute to the work of the research team, and also to develop their research skills with support from more experienced members of staff.

**PRINCIPAL ACCOUNTABILITIES**

To observe and assist with individual and/or collaborative research activity and contribute to the production of research outputs for publications.
KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Research, Scholarship & Enterprise

1.1 With support from the Principal Investigator, develop research objectives and contribute to the planning of the research project

1.2 Conduct research activity under supervision of the Principal Investigator, and in collaboration with others.

1.3 Assist with the analysis and interpretation of research findings and contribute to discussions on conclusions and outcomes.

1.4 Contribute to the writing of reports and other dissemination activities under the supervision of experienced researchers.

1.5 Contribute to the preparation of research ethics and data management strategies, under guidance from the Principal Investigator to ensure compliance with ethical approval and data protection legislation.

1.6 Present information on research progress and outcomes to relevant bodies under the supervision of the Principal Investigator.

1.7 Plan own day-to-day research activity within the framework of the agreed programme.

1.8 Learn about the publication process and contribute to research outputs for publication in monographs or recognised high-quality journals, or performance/exhibition, as appropriate.

1.9 Continually update knowledge and understanding in field or specialism, and engage in professional development.

2. Teaching & Student Support

2.1 Assist in the supervision of student projects and provide guidance to those assisting in the research.

3. Contribution to School & University

3.1 Attend and contribute to relevant School and project meetings.
3.2 Undertake additional duties, as required by the Principal Investigator and/or Head of School.

4. Role-specific duties

4.1 Undertake recombinant expression and purification of protein constructs.

4.2 Perform cloning / sub-cloning / mutagenesis of protein expression constructs, as required.

4.2 Setup crystallisation trials; optimise identified crystallisation conditions.

4.3 Perform harvesting and cryo-protection of protein crystals.

4.4 Undertake and optimise fragment soaking experiments, with a view to collect X-ray diffraction data (home or synchrotron source).

4.5 Present data to, and liaise with industrial partners, as part of regular group meetings.

This Job Description sets out current duties of the post that may vary from time to time without changing the general character of the post or level of responsibility entailed.

INDICATIVE PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

- Under the supervision of the Principal Investigator, conduct experiments/research to assist with project aims, with emphasis on training.

- Undertake research by preparing, setting up, conducting and recording the outcomes.

- Manage and analyse data, and prepare written reports and summaries.

- Maintain and store project files and equipment as per health and safety and data regulations.

- As part of career development, contribute to the preparation of journal articles based on the research with support from the Principal Investigator.
PERSON SPECIFICATION

ESSENTIAL CRITERIA

1. Normally educated to degree level, or other equivalent qualification, or relevant level of experience, as appropriate to the discipline (see role-specific criteria below).

2. Good presentation skills, with the ability to communicate effectively, both orally and in writing, with colleagues and external audiences.

3. Ability to work independently (under supervision by the Principal Investigator), and as part of a team.

4. Ability to exercise a degree of innovation and creative problem-solving.

5. Excellent organisational and administrative skills.

6. Ability to prioritise and meet deadlines.

7. Excellent IT skills.

8. Ability to follow guidance of team leaders.

ESSENTIAL ROLE-SPECIFIC CRITERIA

1. Experience in modern molecular biology and biochemistry techniques.

2. Knowledge of recombinant protein expression and purification methods.

3. Knowledge of structural determination by X-ray crystallography.

4. High level of computing skills, relevant to molecular and structural biology.

5. Ability to learn and acquire new techniques.

6. Ability to work both independently and as part of a team.


8. Attention to detail and rigour in data generation and evaluation.

DESIRABLE CRITERIA

1. Experience of conducting experiments in a research-intensive environment.