School of Life Sciences
Sussex Drug Discovery Centre
Project Leader

Salary range: starting at £48,327 and rising to £55,998 per annum
Full time, fixed term for 2 years

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.

We wish to appoint an experienced Project Leader to take overall responsibility for all internal biology and medicinal chemistry activities and external collaborations. The position is based within a multidisciplinary team working on a 2-year project funded by the Wellcome Trust and which started in autumn, 2016. The project aims to identify novel compounds that target specific subtypes of the GABAA receptor with the ultimate goal of developing new drugs for the treatment of Huntington’s disease.

The project is led by Prof John Atack (molecular pharmacology), Prof Martin Gosling (electrophysiology) and Prof Simon Ward (medicinal chemistry and drug design) and an overview of research within the SDDC can be found at http://www.sussex.ac.uk/sddc/

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 and engineering 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 http://www.sussex.ac.uk/humanresources/personnel/familyfriendlypolicies

Potential candidates wishing to find out further details regarding the position or the project are encouraged to contact Professors John Atack (J.Atack@Sussex.ac.uk), Martin Gosling (M.Gosling@Sussex.ac.uk) or Simon Ward (simon.ward@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 three academic referees.

Closing date for applications: 3 April 2017

Expected start date: 1st June 2017

For full details and how to apply see www.sussex.ac.uk/jobs

The University of Sussex is committed to equality of opportunity
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 £12m, and one of the largest in terms of student and staff population. The School has a teaching and research faculty of nearly 70, 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.

The University has committed to building a new teaching and research building, which will bring life scientists from all disciplines together. Planning for this building is well under way and will provide both academic and social spaces to improve the culture and interaction in the School. The building is scheduled for delivery in 2020-21.

The School admits around 400 undergraduates each year on to a range of BSc and MSci degrees, with around 75 students on postgraduate 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. The first intake on the MPharm was in October 2016.

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.

The University of Sussex is a medium sized research intensive University based on a single campus in Falmer, just outside Brighton in East Sussex. The University has ambitious plans to develop its teaching and research; for example, to move from a taught student population of c.13,000 to one of c.18,000 by 2018.
3. Senior Leadership and management

The Vice-Chancellor (Professor Adam Tickell) is the senior academic officer and, as Chief Executive, is responsible to the University Council for management of the University. He is supported by an executive group which includes the three Pro-Vice-Chancellors, the Registrar and Secretary, the Director of Finance and the Director of Human Resources. The Heads of the Schools of Studies at Sussex report to the Pro-Vice-Chancellors.

The Registrar and Secretary heads the Professional Services of the University. In addition, under the University Statutes, the Registrar and Secretary is Secretary to the University Council. The Director of Finance reports to the Vice-Chancellor. The Director of ITS reports to the Registrar and Secretary, and the Librarian reports to one of the Pro-Vice-Chancellors.

UNIVERSITY OF SUSSEX

4. Job Description

Job Title: Senior Research Fellow in Drug Discovery
Grade: Grade 9
School: School of Life Sciences (Sussex Drug Discovery Centre)
Location: Chichester II
Responsible to: Prof John Atack
Direct reports: GABA\textsubscript{A} project team (10 posts)
Key contacts: Members of research group, members of faculty within the School and University, academics in the field in other institutions.

Role description: Senior Research Fellow is a senior career-grade research position. Post-holders are expected to undertake the role of Principal Investigator on major research projects, demonstrate a significant reputation for independent research, and provide academic leadership to those working in their own research areas. They are also expected to support the management activity of the School, and contribute to the delivery of research strategy.

PRINCIPAL ACCOUNTABILITIES

1. To engage in high-quality, individual and/or collaborative research activity resulting in high-quality publications; to be submitted to the REF at acceptable levels of volume and academic excellence (for Principal Investigators); to lead research projects or research initiatives within the School where appropriate; to secure, and to contribute to obtaining research funding and knowledge exchange income as appropriate.

2. To contribute to School teaching activities.
KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

1. **Research, Scholarship & Enterprise**

1.1 Contribute to the development of School research strategy and themes.

1.2 To identify and develop research objectives and proposals for own or joint research at acceptable levels.

1.3 Carry out independent research and act as the Project Leader on a major research projects. This may involve leading and line-managing the staff including their recruitment, probation, mentoring, performance review and staff development; managing the budget, and taking responsibility for the delivery of the programme.

1.4 Define research objectives and questions, review and synthesise the outcomes of research studies, and develop ideas for application of research outcomes.

1.5 Develop proposals for major research projects which will make a significant impact, and lead to an increase in knowledge or understanding, or the development of new explanations, insights, concepts or processes.

1.6 Produce high-quality research outputs that have significant impact in the field, for publication in monographs or recognised high-quality journals, or performance/exhibition, as appropriate, and make a significant contribution to the School’s REF submission at acceptable levels of volume and academic excellence.

1.7 Make presentations at conferences, or exhibit work in other appropriate events of a similar standing and identify ways to disseminate research outputs informally via the internet, the media and other forms of public engagement.

1.8 Develop and maintain an independent research reputation by, for example, serving on peer review committees, acting as a referee for journal articles and research grant applications.

1.9 Contribute to the internal co-ordination of the REF assessment exercise where appropriate.

1.10 Provide academic leadership to those working within relevant research areas.

1.11 Play a leading role in identifying sources of funding and secure or contribute to the process of securing bids.

1.12 Play a lead role in identifying and securing opportunities for enterprise activity, knowledge exchange income and/or consultancy where permissible.

1.13 Actively build internal and external contacts, and play a key role in internal networks and relevant external networks in order to, for example, identify sources of funding, secure student placements, and build relationships for future activities.

1.14 Develop successful links with external contacts such as other educational and research bodies, businesses, the public sector, professional bodies and other providers of funding and research initiatives to foster collaboration and generate income.
1.15 Play a role in contributing to a relevant national professional body or recognised events.

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

1.17 Conduct risk assessments, and take responsibility for the health and safety of others, if required.

2. Teaching & Student Support

2.1 Undertake teaching duties, as required.

2.2 Contribute to the development of teaching and learning strategies within the School, including delivery of teaching if required.

2.3 Supervise postgraduate research students, for example as part of a postgraduate supervisory team.

2.4 Assist in the development of student research skills.

3. Contribution to School & University

3.1 Attend and contribute to relevant School and project meetings.

3.2 Contribute to the overall management of the School in areas such as budget management and business planning, if required.

3.3 Play a key role in School or University working groups or committees, as required.

3.4 Be involved in departmental level strategic planning, and contribute to University strategic planning processes if required.

3.5 Advise and provide support to Mentor less experienced colleagues, and conduct Performance and Development Reviews, as required, supporting them in developing their research techniques, and advising on personal development.

3.6 Undertake additional duties, as required by the Principal Investigator and/or Head of School.

4. Role-specific duties

4.1. Lead the biology, medicinal chemistry and overall drug discovery activities by coordinating the characterisation and synthesis of target molecules to industry standards of data quality and integrity.

4.2. Ensure efficient, effective collaboration across all team members at Sussex.

4.3. Ensure all scientific data generated by the group is recorded and indexed to industry standards, including responsibility for upload to databases as required.

4.4. Communicate significant results and operations to the Research Directors and the team as appropriate.
4.5. Drive the iterative drug design process, building on previous knowledge and responding to new data with intellectual contributions to generate new Intellectual Property.


4.7. Present and report results as required to the Research Steering Group and any other Wellcome Trust committee.

4.8. To play a significant role in shaping the biology and medicinal chemistry group, including mentoring staff and students.

4.9. To establish effective interdisciplinary collaborations with scientists both at the University of Sussex and at external organisations.

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

 Regular published output of original research, with a significant proportion at international level (refereed journal papers, monographs, book chapters, text books).

 Responsible for leading and managing a major research group.

 Sustained success in obtaining competitively awarded research and knowledge exchange grants and contracts, with evidence of leadership in securing such awards as Principal Investigator.

 A successful track record of completed postgraduate research supervision.

 Significant involvement in knowledge creation and transfer in conjunction with partner organisations in industry, commerce, government or NGOs. This could be in the form of externally funded research, knowledge exchange and/or consultancy.

 Evidence of external profile, such as membership of professional body, editorial board or similar.

 Recognised contribution to successful achievement of the drug discovery project milestones.

 Clear understanding of the project status by all members of the Research Steering Group.

 Clear understanding of the science goals and project goals by all members of the project team at the University of Sussex.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

ESSENTIAL CRITERIA

1. Normally educated to doctoral level or other equivalent qualification or appropriate level of experience, as appropriate to the discipline (see role-specific criteria below).
2. Ability to lead and manage a major research programme.
3. Track record of success, as evidenced by association with projects that have progressed further into development or significant and high-quality publications in reputable journals.
4. Successful track record of research collaboration across disciplines, and the translation of research results into practice. Some evidence of collaboration across research sites or with CROs would be an advantage.
5. Significant experience of managing research staff.
6. An emerging international reputation in the field of study (which can be either biological or medicinal chemistry).
7. Excellent presentation skills, with the proven ability to communicate effectively, both orally and in writing, with students, colleagues and external audiences.
8. Leadership and people management skills.
9. Ability to exercise a high degree of innovation and creative problem-solving.
10. Excellent organisational and administrative skills.
11. Ability to prioritise and meet deadlines.
12. A willingness to participate in support activities beyond normal duties.
13. Excellent IT skills.

**ESSENTIAL ROLE-SPECIFIC CRITERIA**

1. Recognised expertise in the biological sciences, medicinal chemistry or related disciplines.
2. Familiarity with various stages of the drug discovery process.
4. Experience leading drug discovery projects.
5. Experience liaising with contract research organisations.
6. Strong communication skills, enabling the post-holder to work across scientific and institutional boundaries in an open collaborative way.

**DESIRABLE CRITERIA**

1. Experience of progressing compounds into clinical studies and associated translational activities.
2. Experience working on ion channel modulator projects.