

Job description and selection criteria

Job title	Research Assistant in Neuroscience
Division	Medical Sciences
Department	Department of Pharmacology
Location	Mansfield Road, Oxford OX1 3QT
Grade and salary	Grade 6: £27,057-£32,277 per annum
Hours	Full time
Contract type	24 months, in the first instance
Reporting to	Prof Colin Akerman (Group Leader)
Vacancy reference	117795
Additional information	Preferred starting date: between 1 May and 1 August 2015



Committed to equality and valuing diversity

The University of Oxford holds a Bronze Athena Swan award. The Athena Swan programme supports good employment practices for women in Science, Engineering and Technology (SET).

Introduction

The University

The University of Oxford is a highly stimulating organisation, which enjoys an international reputation as a world-class centre of excellence in research and teaching. It employs over 10,000 staff and has a student population of over 21,000. Most staff are directly appointed and managed by one of the University's 130 departments or other units within a highly devolved operational structure - this includes 5,900 'academic-related' staff (postgraduate research, computing, senior library, and administrative staff) and 2,820 'support' staff (including clerical, library, technical, and manual staff). There are also over 1,600 academic staff (professors, readers, lecturers), whose appointments are in the main overseen by a combination of broader divisional and local faculty board/departmental structures. Academics are generally all also employed by one of the 38 constituent colleges of the University as well as by the central University itself. Oxford is one of Europe's most innovative and entrepreneurial universities: income from external research contracts exceeds £367m p.a., and more than 70 spin-off companies have been created.

For more information please visit www.ox.ac.uk

Medical Sciences Division

The Medical Sciences Division is an internationally recognised centre of excellence for biomedical and clinical research and teaching, and the largest academic division in the University of Oxford. It includes 15 clinical departments and 5 non-clinical departments. World-leading programmes, housed in state-of-the-art facilities, cover the full range of scientific endeavour from the molecule to the population. With our NHS partners we also foster the highest possible standards in patient care.

For more information please visit www.medsci.ox.ac.uk

Department of Pharmacology

The Department of Pharmacology is based in the University's science area in the centre of Oxford. The Department houses around 180 researchers, postgraduate students and support staff, and has excellent facilities. The members of the Department, associated staff and visiting scientists are all engaged in the investigation of basic questions concerning the interaction of chemical substances with biological systems. Research in the Department is focused on neuroscience, cell signalling, cardiovascular pharmacology and ion channel pharmacology. In many of these areas the Department plays a leading role in the international pharmacological community. The research of the Department has consistently been given a very high ranking in the Government's assessments of research in Universities and was rated first in the UK, within Biological Sciences, in terms of quality (ie greatest volume of 4* work) and volume (the power ranking) in the recent Research Excellence Framework (REF) exercise.

For more information please visit: www.pharm.ox.ac.uk

Overview of the role

We are seeking a research assistant to join an exciting team of scientists that are studying aspects of synapse development and function in the mammalian brain. The team is using a combination of *in vitro* and *in vivo* methods to examine these processes in the context of neurological diseases. To achieve this goal, we are using human neurons derived from induced pluripotent stem cells (iPSCs) and also transgenic mice.

The successful applicant will be an enthusiastic, motivated and highly organised scientist possessing excellent laboratory skills and an eagerness to learn our techniques with the ability to produce work to a high standard. Good communication skills and the ability to work as part of a team, as well as independently, are essential.

For information about the research group, visit: <http://www.pharm.ox.ac.uk/research/colin-akerman>

Responsibilities/duties

Main duties and responsibilities

- Culturing human induced pluripotent stem cells (iPSCs).
- In vitro differentiation and characterisation of cortical neurons.
- Maintenance and characterisation of transgenic mouse lines, mouse husbandry and genotyping.
- Immunohistochemical studies, molecular biology and fluorescence microscopy.

Communication

- Communicate with Prof Colin Akerman and Dr Sarah Newey and other members of the research team as required, ensuring that they are kept up to date with progress.
- Participate in, and contribute directly to, scientific discussions with other members of the research group and with collaborators on the project.

Education and training

- Attend appropriate seminars and training opportunities at the University and at scientific meetings.
- Assist in the education and training of other staff as necessary.
- Assist in preparing material for publication and presentations.

Skills

- Support will be available from existing staff but the ability to work independently is essential.
- You must be able to work in a structured and organised manner.
- You must have excellent laboratory skills in some, or all, of the following areas: tissue culture, transgenic mouse work, histological methods and/or standard molecular biology techniques.

General responsibilities

- To be responsible with others for the daily housekeeping of the laboratory area.
- To provide support to other members of the research team, as required.
- To be accountable for personal professional conduct within the post.
- To undertake such other duties as may be required from time to time that are commensurate with the grade and responsibilities of the post.
- To act at all times in the interests of the group to ensure Good Laboratory Practice (GLP) of the highest standards to maintain accuracy and efficiency.

This job description is not intended to be exhaustive and the post holder will be expected to adopt a flexible approach to working.

Selection criteria

Essential

- A degree in a related subject (eg biological sciences, biochemistry, neuroscience).
- Previous laboratory experience in cell culture methods and/or managing transgenic mouse colonies.
- Excellent communication skills, particularly in communicating results clearly and logically.
- Strong organisational skills.
- A keen interest in learning and developing new techniques.
- An ability to work independently and as part of a team.

Desirable

- Previous experience working with human induced pluripotent stem cells (iPSCs).
- Previous experience working with cultured neurons.
- Experience with histological methods and standard molecular biology techniques.

Please ensure your supporting statement demonstrates how you meet the selection criteria listed above.

Working at the University of Oxford

For further information about working at Oxford, please see:

http://www.ox.ac.uk/about_the_university/jobs/research/

Work-life balance and family-friendly policies at the University of Oxford

The University aims to support all employees with parental or caring responsibilities to ensure that they are able to balance work and family life.

This website (<http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/eop/parentsandcarersinformation/>) provides a hub of information for all parents and carers, with links to university policies, procedures and guidance, as well as details of the facilities and benefits offered to mothers, fathers and guardians of children. In addition, the website highlights university policies, as well as external sources of guidance. You are advised to read the university policies in full; and to see respective guidance on the Personnel Services website for full details. Views expressed on external websites are not necessarily endorsed by the University of Oxford.

How to apply

If you consider that you meet the selection criteria, click on the **Apply Now** button on the 'Job Details' page and follow the on-screen instructions to register as a user. You will then be required to complete a number of screens with your application details, relating to your skills and experience. When prompted, please provide details of two referees and indicate whether we can contact them at this stage. You will also be required to upload a CV and supporting statement. The supporting statement should describe what you have been doing over at least the last 5-10 years. This may have been employment, education, or you may have taken time away from these activities in order to raise a family, care for a dependant, or travel for example. Your application will be judged solely on the basis of how you demonstrate that that

you meet the selection criteria outlined above and we are happy to consider evidence of transferable skills or experience which you may have gained outside the context of paid employment or education.

Please save all uploaded documents to show your name and the document type.

All applications must be received by **midday** on the closing date stated in the online advertisement.

Should you experience any difficulties using the online application system, please email recruitment.support@admin.ox.ac.uk

To return to the online application at any stage, please click on the following link www.recruit.ox.ac.uk

Please note that you will be notified of the progress of your application by automatic e-mails from our e-recruitment system. **Please check your spam/junk mail** regularly to ensure that you receive all e-mails.

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Information for Priority Candidates

*A priority candidate is a University employee who is seeking redeployment owing to the fact that he or she has been advised that they are at risk of redundancy, or on grounds of ill-health/disability. Priority candidates are issued with a redeployment letter by their employing departments and this letter **must** be attached to any application they submit.*

The priority application date for this post is **12 noon on Wednesday 22nd April 2015.**

Full details of the priority application process are available at:

<http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/end/red/redproc/prioritycandidate>

Should you experience any difficulties using the online application system, please email recruitment.support@admin.ox.ac.uk

To return to the online application at any stage, please click on the following link www.recruit.ox.ac.uk
Please note that you will be notified of the progress of your application by automatic e-mails from our e-recruitment system. **Please check your spam/junk mail** regularly to ensure that you receive all e-mails.
