Job description and selection criteria

Job title	Research Assistant
Division	Medical Sciences
Department	Paediatrics
Location	Stathopoulou Group, Institute of Developmental & Regenerative Medicine IDRM, Old Road Campus, Oxford
Grade and salary	Grade 6: £32,332 - £38,205 per annum
Hours	Full time
Contract type	Fixed-term until 26 June 2025
Reporting to	Dr Nancy Stathopoulou
Vacancy reference	169525
Additional information	This role meets the criteria for a UK Skilled Worker visa

Research topic	Epigenetics of congenital heart disease
Principal Investigator / supervisor	Dr Nancy Stathopoulou
Project team	Stathopoulou Group
Project web site	https://www.idrm.ox.ac.uk/research/cardiology/cardiology-research-groups/stathopoulou-group
Funding partner	The funds supporting this research project are provided by IDRM Transition Fellowship, Department of Paediatrics
Recent publications	Stathopoulou et al. CHARGE syndrome-associated CHD7 acts at ISL1-regulated enhancers to modulate second heart field gene expression. Cardiovasc Res. (2023) 119(11):2089–2105. https://doi.org/10.1093/cvr/cvad059

The role

Applications are invited for a Research Assistant to join Dr. Nancy Stathopoulou's team, in the Institute of Developmental and Regenerative Medicine (IDRM) on the Old Road Campus.

The Stathopoulou lab is interested in the genetic and epigenetic basis of congenital heart disease. We use mouse models of congenital heart disease and embryonic stem cells to study the biological mechanisms that control normal cardiovascular development and understand how these processes are disrupted in disease.

Reporting to Dr Stathopoulou, the post holder is a member of a research group with responsibility for the provision of research support for studying the role of chromatin remodellers and novel putative enhancer elements during cardiac development. The post holder provides advice and guidance to research students where appropriate.

We are looking for a motivated and enthusiastic researcher to join our team and work alongside Dr Stathopoulou. The postholder will work mainly with mouse embryonic stem cells, *in vitro* differentiation methods, advanced molecular biology techniques and next generation sequencing approaches (such as RNA-seq, CUT&RUN-seq, ATAC-seq, etc). The post holder will also have the opportunity to gain experience in the use of mouse models of congenital heart disease and explore pathways affected in loss-of-function mutants using histology, various staining methods, confocal microscopy and other techniques.

Responsibilities

- Manage own research and administrative activities, within guidelines provided by senior colleagues
- Contribute to wider project planning, including ideas for new research projects
- Determine the most appropriate methodologies to test hypotheses, and identify suitable alternatives if technical problems arise
- Select, follow, and adapt experimental protocols
- Gather, analyse, and present scientific data from a variety of sources
- Contribute to scientific reports and journal articles and the presentation of data/papers at conferences
- Responsible for general laboratory management and administration, including stock control of laboratory consumables
- Use specialist scientific equipment in a laboratory environment
- Contribute to discussions and share research findings with colleagues in partner institutions, and research groups

Selection criteria

Essential

- Hold a BSc and/or MSc in a relevant field (e.g. biological sciences, molecular biology)
- Experience in working in a scientific laboratory, including experience with mouse embryonic stem cells, advanced molecular biology methods, CRISPR methods, imaging and use of microscopes
- Experience of following and adapting protocols and selecting appropriate experimental methodologies. The ability to trouble shoot and the insight to know when to ask for assistance.
- Ability and willingness to learn new skills.
- Ability to manage own research and administrative activities.
- Commitment to high quality research and ability to keep accurate records of data. Ability to work collaboratively and as part of a team but be able to function independently and take initiative when appropriate.
- Excellent communication skills, including the ability to write text that can be published, present data at conferences, and represent the research group at meetings

Desirable.

- Experience with next generation sequencing (NGS) techniques, such as RNA-seq, ChIP-seq, with downstream data analysis
- Experience in histology, tissue dissection, immunohistochemistry, microscopy
- Experience in lab management and managing funds
- Academic interest in cardiovascular research

Pre-employment screening

Standard checks

If you are offered the post, the offer will be subject to standard pre-employment checks. You will be asked to provide: proof of your right-to-work in the UK; proof of your identity; and (if we haven't done so already) we will contact the referees you have nominated. You will also be asked to complete a health declaration so that you can tell us about any health conditions or disabilities for which you may need us to make appropriate adjustments.

Please read the candidate notes on the University's pre-employment screening procedures at: https://www.jobs.ox.ac.uk/pre-employment-checks

Hazard-specific / Safety-critical duties

This job includes hazards or safety-critical activities. If you are offered the post, you will be asked to complete a health questionnaire which will be assessed by our Occupational Health Service, and the offer of employment will be subject a successful outcome of this assessment.

The hazards or safety-critical duties involved are as follows:

- Work with allergens, e.g. laboratory animals, pollen, dust, fish or insects etc.
- Work with any substance which has any of the following pictograms on their MSDS: 

Additional security pre-employment checks

This job includes duties that will require additional security pre-employment checks:

- A satisfactory basic Disclosure and Barring Service check due to the nature of this position, working with highly sensitive data
- University security screening (e.g. identity checks)

About the University of Oxford

Welcome to the University of Oxford. We aim to lead the world in research and education for the benefit of society both in the UK and globally. Oxford's researchers engage with academic, commercial and cultural partners across the world to stimulate high-quality research and enable innovation through a broad range of social, policy and economic impacts.

We believe our strengths lie both in empowering individuals and teams to address fundamental questions of global significance, while providing all our staff with a welcoming and inclusive workplace that enables everyone to develop and do their best work. Recognising that diversity is our strength, vital for innovation and creativity, we aspire to build a truly diverse community which values and respects every individual's unique contribution.

While we have long traditions of scholarship, we are also forward-looking, creative and cutting-edge. Oxford is one of Europe's most entrepreneurial universities and we rank first in the UK for university spin-outs, and in recent years we have spun out 15-20 new companies every year. We are also recognised as leaders in support for social enterprise.

Join us and you will find a unique, democratic and international community, a great range of staff benefits and access to a vibrant array of cultural activities in the beautiful city of Oxford.

For more information, please visit www.ox.ac.uk/about/organisation.

About the IDRM

The Institute of Developmental & Regenerative Medicine (IDRM), is a 6,000 m2, 3-floor, multidisciplinary medical research facility. The unique flagship institution is part of the University of Oxford Medical Sciences Division.

The Institute brings together world-leading researchers with cardiovascular, neurological and immunological expertise through a merger of developmental biology and regenerative medicine, dedicated to meeting an ambitious challenge. Two thirds of all deaths world-wide are due to non-communicable diseases, many of which are cardiovascular, neurological or immune system disorders that have a developmental origin, representing an urgent unmet clinical need. The mission of the IDRM is the development of new drugs and therapeutic strategies to tackle these chronic illnesses.

The purpose-built building is sited on the Old Road Medical Campus at the University of Oxford, with access to neighbouring partner research Institutes: Wellcome Centre of Human Genetics; Kennedy Institute of Rheumatology, Big Data and the Target Discovery Institute and occupants of the BioEscalator, as well as the wider University of Oxford in general.

The building at maximum capacity will house 240 scientists and support staff. Scientists from different departments are split across three different research themes, one per floor for cardiology, neurology and immunology. The building provides laboratory and write-up space for

each research theme, shared facilities, meeting and seminar rooms, and a variety of collaboration spaces.
The building is a technically advanced construction with complex mechanical and electrical infrastructure. This infrastructure supports containment level two laboratories, specialist laboratory areas, core advanced imaging and -omics facilities, ultra-low temperature facilities including liquid nitrogen, and glass wash services.

For more information please visit: https://www.idrm.ox.ac.uk/

Department of Paediatrics

The Department of Paediatrics is a world leader in child health research and hosts internationally renowned research programmes in drug development, gastroenterology, haematology, HIV, immunology, neuroimaging, neuromuscular diseases and vaccinology. Our work spans from early proof-of concept fundamental science, all the way up to its application in clinical settings.

We continue to shape the landscape of medical science through positively impacting the lives of millions of children from our global research programmes, academic resources, and commitment to success. Our broad research base positions the department in a pivotal role and subsequently a world leader in child health. With research facilitates in the UK and abroad, we work on a global scale, building a paediatric network in the medical science community. We are committed to inform and inspire external audiences worldwide through our public engagement and outreach activities.

In 2021, we successfully administered a grant value of £130,895,28 obtained through 168 projects. Our strong relationship with funding bodies have also been a contributor to the successes and milestones in children's health research. With strong support from the Wellcome Trust, NIH, Cancer Research UK, UKRI, MDUK, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Academy of Medical Sciences and the NIHR, we have employed 360+ staff, researchers, and students. These figures continue to grow as we expand our activities to overcome the multitude of challenges within children's research health.

For more information please visit: http://www.paediatrics.ox.ac.uk/

The Department of Paediatrics holds a silver Athena Swan award to recognise advancement of gender equality: representation, progression and success for all.

Medical Sciences Division

We are an internationally recognized centre of excellence for biomedical and clinical research and teaching, and the largest academic division in the University of Oxford.
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: http://www.medsci.ox.ac.uk/

How to apply

Applications are made through our e-recruitment system and you will find all the information you need about how to apply on our Jobs website https://www.jobs.ox.ac.uk/how-to-apply.

Your application will be judged solely on the basis of how you demonstrate that you meet the selection criteria stated in the job description.

As part of your application you will be asked to provide details of two referees and indicate whether we can contact them now.

You will be asked to upload a CV and a supporting statement. The supporting statement must explain how you meet each of the selection criteria for the post using examples of your skills and experience. This may include experience gained in employment, education, or during career breaks (such as time out to care for dependants)

Please upload all documents **as PDF files** with your name and the document type in the filename.

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

Information for priority candidates

A priority candidate is a University employee who is seeking redeployment because they have 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 department(s).

If you are a priority candidate, please ensure that you attach your redeployment letter to your application (or email it to the contact address on the advert if the application form used for the vacancy does not allow attachments).

If you need help

Application FAQs, including technical troubleshooting advice is available at: https://staff.web.ox.ac.uk/recruitment-support-faqs

Non-technical questions about this job should be addressed to the recruiting department directly at recruitment@paediatrics.ox.ac.uk or using the contact details in the online advertisement.

To return to the online application at any stage, please go to: www.recruit.ox.ac.uk.

Please note that you will receive an automated email from our e-recruitment system to confirm receipt of your application. **Please check your spam/junk mail** if you do not receive this email.

Important information for candidates

Data Privacy

Please note that any personal data submitted to the University as part of the job application process will be processed in accordance with the GDPR and related UK data protection legislation. For further information, please see the University's Privacy Notice for Job Applicants at: https://compliance.admin.ox.ac.uk/job-applicant-privacy-policy. The University's Policy on Data Protection is available at: https://compliance.admin.ox.ac.uk/data-protection-policy.

The University's policy on retirement

The University operates an Employer Justified Retirement Age (EJRA) for very senior research posts at **grade RSIV/D35 and clinical equivalents E62 and E82**, which with effect from 1 October 2023 will be 30 September before the 70th birthday. The justification for this is explained at: https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/the-ejra.

For **existing** employees on these grades, any employment beyond the retirement age is subject to approval through the procedures: https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/the-ejra.

There is no normal or fixed age at which staff in posts at other grades have to retire. Staff at these grades may elect to retire in accordance with the rules of the applicable pension scheme, as may be amended from time to time.

Equality of opportunity

Entry into employment with the University and progression within employment will be determined only by personal merit and the application of criteria which are related to the duties of each particular post and the relevant salary structure. In all cases, ability to perform the job will be the primary consideration. No applicant or member of staff shall be discriminated against because of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.

Benefits of working at the University

Employee benefits

University employees enjoy 38 days' paid holiday, generous pension schemes, travel discounts, and a variety of professional development opportunities. Our range of other employee benefits and discounts also includes free entry to the Botanic Gardens and University colleges, and discounts at University museums. See https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/staff-benefits

University Club and sports facilities

Membership of the University Club is free for all University staff. The University Club offers social, sporting, and hospitality facilities. Staff can also use the University Sports Centre on Iffley Road at discounted rates, including a fitness centre, powerlifting room, and swimming pool. See www.club.ox.ac.uk and https://www.sport.ox.ac.uk/.

Information for staff new to Oxford

If you are relocating to Oxfordshire from overseas or elsewhere in the UK, the University's Welcome Service website includes practical information about settling in the area, including advice on relocation, accommodation, and local schools. See https://welcome.ox.ac.uk/

There is also a visa loan scheme to cover the costs of UK visa applications for staff and their dependents. See https://staffimmigration.admin.ox.ac.uk/visa-loan-scheme

Family-friendly benefits

With one of the most generous family leave schemes in the Higher Education sector, and a range of flexible working options, Oxford aims to be a family-friendly employer. We also subscribe to the Work+Family Space, a service that provides practical advice and support for employees who have caring responsibilities. The service offers a free telephone advice line, and the ability to book emergency back-up care for children, adult dependents and elderly relatives. See https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/my-family-care Childcare

The University has excellent childcare services, including five University nurseries as well as University-supported places at many other private nurseries.

For full details, including how to apply and the costs, see https://childcare.admin.ox.ac.uk/

Disabled staff

We are committed to supporting members of staff with disabilities or long-term health conditions. For further details, including information about how to make contact, in confidence, with the University's Staff Disability Advisor, see https://edu.admin.ox.ac.uk/disability-support

Staff networks

The University has a number of staff networks including the Oxford Research Staff Society, BME staff network, LGBT+ staff network and a disabled staff network. You can find more information at https://edu.admin.ox.ac.uk/networks

The University of Oxford Newcomers' Club

The University of Oxford Newcomers' Club is an organisation run by volunteers that aims to assist the partners of new staff settle into Oxford, and provides them with an opportunity to meet people and make connections in the local area. See www.newcomers.ox.ac.uk.