Department of Medicine, Austin Health
Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences

Postdoctoral Research Fellow – Collaborative Autism Study

POSITION NO  0031886

CLASSIFICATION  Research Fellow Grade 1 Level A

WORK FOCUS CATEGORY  Research Focused

SALARY  $69,148 - $93,830 p.a.

SUPERANNUATION  Employer contribution of 9.5%

WORKING HOURS  Full-time (1 FTE)

BASIS OF EMPLOYMENT  Fixed Term position available for 12 months
Fixed term contract type: Externally funded

OTHER BENEFITS  http://about.unimelb.edu.au/careers/working/benefits

HOW TO APPLY  Online applications are preferred. Go to http://about.unimelb.edu.au/careers, under ‘Job Search and Job Alerts’, select the relevant option (‘Current Staff’ or ‘Prospective Staff’), then find the position by title or number.

CONTACT FOR ENQUIRIES ONLY  Prof Ingrid Scheffer or Bronwyn Grinton
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Email scheffer@unimelb.edu.au or grinton@unimelb.edu.au

Please do not send your application to this contact

For information about working for the University of Melbourne, visit our websites: about.unimelb.edu.au/careers
Position Summary

Located at the Melbourne Brain Centre, Austin Health, in Heidelberg, the Collaborative Autism Study undertakes clinical and genetic research into autism spectrum disorders. The Research Fellow will have responsibility for driving and managing the clinical research aspects of the study. This entails research project development and management in collaboration with the study leaders and broader team, data collection and analysis and preparation of publications. The Fellow be involved with the recruitment of volunteers to the study, involving clinical phenotyping of participants, cognitive testing, in-depth interviews about individual and family medical and developmental history and constructing family pedigrees. Other duties include coordination of appointments and investigations, liaison with other involved professional bodies, and applications for medical information. The Fellow will be responsible for the coordination of the project including research group meeting agendas and minutes, writing of grants, ethics applications, research reports, and preparation of materials for presentation.

This position is primarily located at the Melbourne Brain Centre in Heidelberg however up to one day a week at The Geelong Hospital is required to conduct face-to-face interviews.

A period of appropriate training will be provided for this position. Once trained the successful applicant is expected to be responsible for running of their own projects with minimal supervision, requiring a high degree of responsibility, self-motivation and organisation. This position is part of a larger, highly cohesive autism research team, and the successful applicant will be expected to be able to function well as a team member.

1. **Key Responsibilities**

1.1 **Research and Research Training**

- Develop a comprehensive understanding of autism spectrum disorders, key clinical features and related genetic basis.
- Plan and carry out research on the nominated project and work towards completion of the aims of the project and provide general co-ordination of sub-projects:
- Collate and analyse clinical data to investigate specific hypotheses
- Participate in the preparation of manuscripts and funding applications
- Prepare, and with experience present, scientific data for oral or poster communication
- Conduct detailed clinical assessments to determine the presence of autistic traits in family members of individuals with ASD
- Recruitment and consenting of volunteers and family members by telephone
- Coordination of appointments and interviews with participants and conduct face-to-face and telephone interviews with volunteers and family members about their/ their child’s medical/developmental history and family trees
- Perform blood sampling (training will be provided), coordinate pathology specimen collection and transport

1.2 **Teaching and Learning**

- Contribute to teaching, training, scientific mentoring and supervision of students;
- Supervise junior research staff in the appointee’s area of expertise;
1.3 ENGAGEMENT

- Attend and contribute actively to lab meetings through participation in discussions or related research publications and the presentation of research data for discussion;
- Present experimental results at local, national and international forums;
- Attend and actively participate in departmental seminars, meetings and/or committee memberships.

1.4 SERVICE AND LEADERSHIP

- Assist with administrative duties including maintenance equipment and ordering of supplies;
- Assist in the preparation and submission of competitive grant applications relating to the appointee’s research program;
- Perform other tasks as requested by the supervisor or the Head of the Department;
- Undertake Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S) and Environmental Health and Safety (EH&S) responsibilities as outlined in Section 4.

2. Selection Criteria

2.1 ESSENTIAL

- A PhD in the field of psychology, occupational therapy or speech therapy with an emphasis on neurobehavioural disorders and an interest and expertise in autism or genetics
- Demonstrated expertise in conducting diagnostic or cognitive testing.
- Excellent interpersonal skills with the ability to build rapport with adults and children, across a diverse range of community and cultural groups
- Demonstrated ability to use tact and discretion in communicating around issues of health
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills with demonstrated capacity to undertake high quality written analysis, such as literature reviews
- Successful track record in research publications.
- Strong evidence of ability and desire to build an academic research career trajectory and lead an academic project.
- Excellent ability to work co-operatively in a multi-disciplinary team environment
- Demonstrated ability to collect and collate information accurately and reliably
- A high level of self-motivation and initiative, an ability to provide creative solutions to problems and an ability to be flexible in responding to changing work priorities.
- Demonstrated excellent organisational skills to meet deadlines
2.2 DESIRABLE
- Qualification or experience in autism spectrum disorders
- Previous experience in a medical or science field
- Demonstrated success in securing competitive research grant and/or fellowship support;
- Background in blood sampling

2.3 SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS
- Capacity to undertake blood collection tasks, after appropriate training and willingness to have routine vaccination as relevant to this task
- Valid Driver’s Licence required

3. Equal Opportunity, Diversity and Inclusion
The University is an equal opportunity employer and is committed to providing a workplace free from all forms of unlawful discrimination, harassment, bullying, vilification and victimisation. The University makes decisions on employment, promotion and reward on the basis of merit.

The University is committed to all aspects of equal opportunity, diversity and inclusion in the workplace and to providing all staff, students, contractors, honorary appointees, volunteers and visitors with a safe, respectful and rewarding environment free from all forms of unlawful discrimination, harassment, vilification and victimisation. This commitment is set out in the University’s People Strategy 2015-2020 and policies that address diversity and inclusion, equal employment opportunity, discrimination, sexual harassment, bullying and appropriate workplace behaviour. All staff are required to comply with all University policies.

The University values diversity because we recognise that the differences in our people’s age, race, ethnicity, culture, gender, nationality, sexual orientation, physical ability and background bring richness to our work environment. Consequently, the People Strategy sets out the strategic aim to drive diversity and inclusion across the University to create an environment where the compounding benefits of a diverse workforce are recognised as vital in our continuous desire to strive for excellence and reach the targets of Growing Esteem.

4. Occupational Health and Safety (OHS)
All staff are required to take reasonable care for their own health and safety and that of other personnel who may be affected by their conduct.

OHS responsibilities applicable to positions are published at:

http://safety.unimelb.edu.au/topics/responsibilities/

These include general staff responsibilities and those additional responsibilities that apply for Managers and Supervisors and other Personnel.
5. **Other Information**

5.1 **MEDICINE, AUSTIN HEALTH**


The Department of Medicine and Radiology is a large and diverse department in the Melbourne Medical School that undertakes research, postgraduate and undergraduate teaching within the University of Melbourne teaching hospitals. The Department of Medicine, Austin Health is a large research focused node of the Department, committed to high standards of teaching, research and clinical care. The Department has major programs in basic and applied research, has clinical responsibilities at Austin Hospital, Heidelberg Repatriation Hospital and contributes significantly to the undergraduate teaching program for medical students. The research base is broad with significant funding from NH&MRC and other competitive grant schemes. There are approximately 90 academic, technical and administrative staff, and over 90 students who are enrolled to pursue higher degrees from BSc (Hons), MSc, PhD and DMedSc.

5.2 **MELBOURNE MEDICAL SCHOOL**

http://www.medicine.unimelb.edu.au/

The Melbourne Medical School (MMS) was established in 1862 and has a substantial international reputation for its leadership in teaching and training, health research, policy and practice. The MMS is committed to working with the communities we serve to improve health and advance health care. We will do this through our teaching, learning, research, clinical care and advocacy.

The MMS is composed of nine clinical departments (Clinical Pathology, General Practice, Medical Education, Medicine and Radiology, Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Paediatrics, Psychiatry, Rural Health and Surgery) which are embedded within clinical health services throughout metropolitan Melbourne and rural Victoria.

The MMS delivers a suite of health related graduate programs including the Doctor of Medicine (MD), the first professional entry Masters level medical program in Australia. The Melbourne MD delivers a fresh approach to medical training and creates a new benchmark in 21st century medical education.

The MMS is committed to improving the wellbeing of the community through the discovery and application of new knowledge. The research effort of the school is highly collaborative and spans basic to translational research and involves over 800 graduate researchers and 1000 academic staff.

The MMS also actively participates in the public debate and advocacy around key health issues and policy based on our values of commitment, integrity, compassion, respect and service.

5.3 **FACULTY OF MEDICINE, DENTISTRY AND HEALTH SCIENCES**

www.mdhs.unimelb.edu.au

The Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry & Health Sciences has an enviable research record and is the University of Melbourne's largest faculty in terms of management of financial resources, employment of academic and professional staff, teaching of undergraduate and postgraduate (including research higher degree) students and the conduct of basic and
applied research. The Faculty’s annual revenue is $628m with approximately 55% of this income related to research activities.

The Faculty has a student teaching load in excess of 8,500 equivalent full-time students including more than 1,300 research higher degree students. The Faculty has approximately 2,195 staff comprising 642 professional staff and 1,553 research and teaching staff.

The Faculty has appointed Australia’s first Associate Dean (Indigenous Development) to lead the development and implementation of the Faculty’s Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), which will be aligned with the broader University-wide plan. To enable the Faculty to improve its Indigenous expertise knowledge base, the Faculty’s RAP will address Indigenous employment, Indigenous student recruitment and retention, Indigenous cultural recognition and building partnerships with the Indigenous community as key areas of development.

5.4 THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE

Established in 1853, the University of Melbourne is a leading international university with a tradition of excellence in teaching and research. The main campus in Parkville is recognised as the hub of Australia’s premier knowledge precinct comprising eight hospitals, many leading research institutes and a wide-range of knowledge-based industries. With outstanding performance in international rankings, the University is at the forefront of higher education in the Asia-Pacific region and the world.

The University employs people of outstanding calibre and offers a unique environment where staff are valued and rewarded.

Further information about working at The University of Melbourne is available at http://about.unimelb.edu.au/careers.

5.5 GROWING ESTEEM, THE MELBOURNE CURRICULUM AND RESEARCH AT MELBOURNE: ENSURING EXCELLENCE AND IMPACT TO 2025

Growing Esteem describes Melbourne’s strategy to achieve its aspiration to be a public-spirited and internationally-engaged institution, highly regarded for making distinctive contributions to society in research and research training, learning and teaching, and engagement. http://about.unimelb.edu.au/strategy-and-leadership

The University is at the forefront of Australia’s changing higher education system and offers a distinctive model of education known collectively as the Melbourne Curriculum. The new educational model, designed for an outstanding experience for all students, is based on six broad undergraduate programs followed by a graduate professional degree, research higher degree or entry directly into employment. The emphasis on academic breadth as well as disciplinary depth in the new degrees ensures that graduates will have the capacity to succeed in a world where knowledge boundaries are shifting and reforming to create new frontiers and challenges. In moving to the new model, the University is also aligning itself with the best of emerging European and Asian practice and well-established North American traditions.

The University’s global aspirations seek to make significant contributions to major social, economic and environmental challenges. Accordingly, the University’s research strategy Research at Melbourne: Ensuring Excellence and Impact to 2025 aspires to a significant advancement in the excellence and impact of its research outputs.

http://research.unimelb.edu.au/our-research/research-at-melbourne
The strategy recognises that as a public-spirited, research-intensive institution of the future, the University must strive to make a tangible impact in Australia and the world, working across disciplinary and sectoral boundaries and building deeper and more substantive engagement with industry, collaborators and partners. While cultivating the fundamental enabling disciplines through investigator-driven research, the University has adopted three grand challenges aspiring to solve some of the most difficult problems facing our world in the next century. These Grand Challenges include:

- **Understanding our place and purpose** – The place and purpose grand challenge centres on understanding all aspects of our national identity, with a focus on Australia’s ‘place’ in the Asia-Pacific region and the world, and on our ‘purpose’ or mission to improve all dimensions of the human condition through our research.

- **Fostering health and wellbeing** – The health and wellbeing grand challenge focuses on building the scale and breadth of our capabilities in population and global health; on harnessing our contribution to the ‘convergence revolution’ of biomedical and health research, bringing together the life sciences, engineering and the physical sciences; and on addressing the physical, mental and social aspects of wellbeing by looking beyond the traditional boundaries of biomedicine.

- **Supporting sustainability and resilience** – The sustainability and resilience grand challenge addresses the critical issues of climate change, water and food security, sustainable energy and designing resilient cities and regions. In addition to the technical aspects, this grand challenge considers the physical and social functioning of cities, connecting physical phenomena with lessons from our past, and the implications of the technical solutions for economies, living patterns and behaviours.

Essential to tackling these challenges, an outstanding faculty, high performing students, wide collaboration including internationally and deep partnerships with external parties form central components of Research at Melbourne: Ensuring Excellence and Impact to 2025.

### 5.6 GOVERNANCE

The Vice Chancellor is the Chief Executive Officer of the University and responsible to Council for the good management of the University.

Comprehensive information about the University of Melbourne and its governance structure is available at [http://www.unimelb.edu.au/governance](http://www.unimelb.edu.au/governance)