POSITION DESCRIPTION

Position Title: Research Assistant
Organisation Unit: Queensland Brain Institute
Position Number: 3039591
Type of Employment: Full time, fixed term for 6 months initially
Classification: HEW Level 4

THE UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND

The Federal Government’s 2012 Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA) exercise confirmed The University of Queensland as one of the nation’s top three universities, measured by the quality of its comprehensive range of specialised research fields. ERA reported that research at UQ is well above world standard in more specialised fields than at any other Australian university; this reflects UQ’s leading global role in many areas of discovery. UQ’s outstanding critical mass offers researchers significant interdisciplinary capability.

UQ integrates its research strengths with excellent teaching and learning and has won more national teaching awards than any other Australian university. International university rankings highlight UQ’s excellence: Academic Ranking of World Universities (Shanghai Jiao Tong), Times Higher Education, QS and National Taiwan University Ranking all rank UQ in the top 100. UQ is one of Australia’s Group of Eight, and a founding member of Universitas 21, an international consortium of leading research-intensive universities.

UQ’s 45,500-strong student community includes more than 10,000 postgraduate scholars and more than 11,000 international students from 162 countries. The University has more than 7,000 academic and professional staff and a $1.6 billion annual operating budget. Its major campuses are at St Lucia, Gatton and Herston, in addition to teaching and research sites around Queensland and Brisbane city. The University has six faculties and eight institutes. The institutes — funded by government and industry grants, philanthropy and commercialisation activities — have built scale and focus in research areas that UQ regards as strategically important.

The University of Queensland positively influences society by engaging in the pursuit of excellence through the creation, preservation, transfer and application of knowledge. The University’s successes are underpinned by our values. For more information on UQ’s mission, vision and values please go to http://www.uq.edu.au/about/mission-statement.

Organisational Environment

The Queensland Brain Institute (QBI) was established as a research institute of the University of Queensland in 2003. The Institute is now operating out of a new state-of-the-art facility and houses 33 Principal Investigators with strong international reputations. The QBI is one of the largest neuroscience institutes in the world dedicated to understanding the
mechanisms underlying brain function. Details of the current QBI interdisciplinary research programs can be found at http://www.qbi.uq.edu.au

Information for Prospective Staff

Information about life at UQ including staff benefits, relocation and UQ campuses is available at - http://www.uq.edu.au/current-staff/working-at-uq

DUTY STATEMENT

Primary Purpose of Position

The Bartlett Laboratory at QBI is interested in understanding the mechanisms controlling endogenous stem cell activation and neurogenesis. We have a particular interest in determining the mechanisms responsible for improving learning and memory following physical exercise. We are currently examining the role of exercise in stimulating biochemical, structural and physiological markers of neurogenesis with a view to improving cognitive function in patients with, or at risk of neurodegenerative diseases such as ageing dementia. Cognitive decline during aging not only places a significant emotional and financial burden on families, but poses a major economic burden to society, with Australia facing the prospect of having more than one million people living with dementia by 2050. At present, there are no known pharmacological treatments for dementia, and developing novel, effective, non-invasive and low-cost treatment strategies, such as exercise, will therefore be key in ameliorating and potentially reversing age-related cognitive decline.

The primary purpose of this Research Assistant position is to be actively involved in implementation of the human exercise and cognitive function randomised-controlled clinical trial by conductive data collection and exercise training sessions. The Research Assistant will be willing to expand their knowledge and skill base in research techniques but undertaking any necessary skills training and certification and uphold the highest standards in research. In addition, the Research Assistant will provide assistance to other laboratory team members as directed by the Head of the Laboratory and to perform routine administrative duties.

Duties

Duties and responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- Pre-exercise health screening, including assessments of cardiovascular health and exercise suitability
- Administration of physiological exercise testing, including peak aerobic capacity testing, stress electrocardiography, functional fitness and strength testing
- Administration of exercise training sessions, recording of data and monitoring participant safety during exercise training
- Blood collection, processing and storage
- Administration of basic cognitive function testing using both paper-based and touch-screen tools
- Anthropometry and body composition assessment
- Data collection, data entry and data management procedures
- Routine administrative procedures including ordering and unpacking consumables, overseeing of testing and training by other staff members, communication with study members
participants and scheduling, signing of laboratory notebooks and case report forms, and general tidiness and laboratory cleanliness.

Other
Ensure you are aware of and comply with legislation and University policy relevant to the duties undertaken, including:

- the University’s Code of Conduct
- requirements of the Queensland occupational health and safety (OH&S) legislation and related OH&S responsibilities and procedures developed by the University or Institute/School
- the adoption sustainable practices in all work activities and compliance with associated legislation and related University sustainability responsibilities and procedures
- requirements of the Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000, the National Code 2007 and associated legislation, and related responsibilities and procedures developed by the University

Organisational Relationships
The position reports to QBI Director.

SELECTION CRITERIA

Essential

- BExSS (Hons) or equivalent, with Exercise Physiology and/or Exercise Science accreditation with Exercise and Sports Science Australia
- Experience working with older adults and clinical populations in an exercise setting and developing and maintaining client rapport
- Experience in the use of open circuit spirometry and electrocardiography and performing and interpreting maximal exercise tests
- Experience with conducting and interpreting both paper-and touchscreen-based cognitive assessments in an older adult population
- Demonstrated experience with the use and administration of physical activity trackers
- Ability to work responsibly, accurately and independently after basic training in processes and techniques
- High level organisational skills, including multi-tasking, scheduling, time-management, and working to deadlines
- High level attention to detail and problem-solving skills
- Excellent communication and interpersonal skills (written/spoken)
- Demonstrated ability to respond effectively and efficiently to feedback
• Ability to work independently with limited supervision
• Current First Aid and CPR qualification

**Desirable**

• Phlebotomy (venipuncture and/or cannulation) experience or willingness to learn
• Experience in the development and implementation of exercise interventions
• Experience in the management of projects in exercise, physical activity
• Understanding and knowledge of a University research environment

The University of Queensland is committed to equity, diversity and inclusion.