Position Description

Research Officer

ORGANISATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

UNSW is currently implementing a ten year strategy to 2025 and our ambition for the next decade is nothing less than to establish UNSW as Australia’s global university. We aspire to this in the belief that a great university, which is a global leader in discovery, innovation, impact, education and thought leadership, can make an enormous difference to the lives of people in Australia and around the world.

Following extensive consultation in 2015, we identified three strategic priority areas. Firstly, a drive for academic excellence in research and education. Universities are often classified as ‘research intensive’ or ‘teaching intensive’. UNSW is proud to be an exemplar of both. We are amongst a limited group of universities worldwide capable of delivering research excellence alongside the highest quality education on a large scale. Secondly, a passion for social engagement, which improves lives through advancing equality, diversity, open debate and economic progress. Thirdly, a commitment to achieving global impact through sharing our capability in research and education in the highest quality partnerships with institutions in both developed and emerging societies. We regard the interplay of academic excellence, social engagement and global impact as the hallmarks of a great forward-looking 21st century university.

To achieve this ambition we are attracting the very best academic and professional staff to play leadership roles in our organisation.

UNSW BEHAVIOURS

UNSW recognises the role of employees in driving a high performance culture. The behavioural expectations for UNSW are below.
OVERVIEW OF RELEVANT AREA AND POSITION SUMMARY

UNSW Medicine is a national leader in learning, teaching and research, with close affiliations to a number of Australia’s finest hospitals, research institutes and health care organisations. With a strong presence at UNSW Kensington campus, the faculty have staff and students in teaching hospitals in Sydney as well as regional and rural areas of NSW including Albury/Wodonga, Wagga Wagga, Coffs Harbour and Port Macquarie.

The School of Medical Sciences (SoMS) is the largest School within UNSW Medicine, and one of the largest at UNSW. The School is based largely within the Wallace Wurth (Medicine) Building on the Kensington campus, but also includes the UNSW Lifestyle Clinic on High Street, Randwick.

The vibrant and highly interdisciplinary Stem Cell & Cancer Group is studying cancer stem cells in pancreatic cancer, one of the most devastating human cancers. Current treatment strategies preferentially target more differentiated cancer cells, but have failed to achieve durable responses at least in part due to confounding effects attributed to distinct subpopulations of highly chemoresistant cancer stem cells. The Stem Cell & Cancer Group is developing new strategies to efficiently eliminate these highly tumorigenic cells and thereby prevent disease progression and relapse. The team has identified novel targets that are currently at different stages of preclinical development and implementation into multimodal therapies, respectively. The work includes in-depth analysis of (liquid) tumour biopsies to understand how the therapy impacts the tumour's biology in vivo. An array of innovative lab technologies has been established and the successful candidate will undergo comprehensive training by senior scientists and technicians as required.

The Research Officer will provide state-of-the-art technical support to jointly foster our team efforts, shall be actively involved in or lead individual research projects. As such the Research Officer will significantly contribute to the overall scientific endeavour of the Group, closely collaborate with other scientists in the group, and will take responsibility for distinct areas of our research programme. The Research Officer will work as part of the Group’s research team, being mutually supportive and covering duties as necessary during colleagues’ absences and at times of additional pressure, as directed.

The role of the Research Officer reports to the Head of the Stem Cell & Cancer Group, and has no direct reports.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Specific responsibilities for this role include:

- Undertake high level laboratory research using state-of-the-art in vitro and in vivo models of pancreatic cancer
- Maintain key techniques for the research teams, and develop and troubleshoot novel cutting-edge techniques, particularly in the area of drug response analysis and precision medicine.
- Execute experiments independently with minimal supervision and be responsible for the collection of high-quality data.
- Undertake analysis of data and provide regular progress reports to the Head of the Stem Cell & Cancer Group.
- Attend and actively participate and contribute to the Group’s academic activities, e.g. laboratory and journal club meetings, other research group meetings and weekly seminars.
- Provide supervision and guidance to trainees in relevant tasks associated with the research program
- Conduct general administrative tasks associated with the research program as required
- Supervise all health and safety policies and procedures of the university that are relevant for the group and take all reasonable care to ensure that lab members’ actions or omissions do not impact on the health and safety of yourself or others.

**SELECTION CRITERIA**

- Bachelor of Science (Honours) or higher degree with at least two years of full-time research experience in the area of life science or a related discipline.
- A detailed and in-depth understanding of tumour and/or cancer (stem) cell biology.
- Experience in primary cancer cell cultures, as well as in confocal microscopy, flow cytometry and cell sorting.
- Experience in animal work, preferentially murine and xenograft cancer models.
- Excellent interpersonal and communication skills with ability to work effectively as part of a team as well as independently.
- Demonstrated ability to provide a high-level active contribution to the development of a research project.
- Knowledge of health and safety responsibilities and commitment to attending relevant health and safety training.

*It is not the intention of the position description to limit the scope or accountabilities of the position but to highlight the most important aspects of the position. The aspects mentioned above may be altered in accordance with the changing requirements of the role.*