Position Summary

The Kirby Institute is a leading global research institute dedicated to the prevention and treatment of infectious diseases. Established in 1986 in response to the then emerging HIV epidemic, the Kirby Institute now contributes to knowledge on a broad range of diseases, including viral hepatitis and sexually transmissible infections. Focussing on the coordination of national surveillance programs, population health and epidemiological research, clinical and behavioural research and clinical trials, the Kirby Institute’s research projects are conducted in partnership with communities most affected by epidemics.

The Immunovirology & Pathogenesis Program (IVPP) is predominantly a laboratory-based group. IVPP conducts a range of Investigator driven projects focused on viral immuno-pathogenesis including HIV and SARS-CoV-2, with particular interests in developing novel immuno-therapeutics for COVID-19. IVPP’s work is underpinned by state-of-the-art functional and phenotypic cellular assays and a variety of molecular assays and genetic manipulations. As a multi-disciplinary institute, the group is actively involved in the collaborative expansion of basic science to a number of clinical studies regarding the treatment and prevention of viral infections.

The Research Assistant will assist in research related to the SARS-CoV-2 research response. Specifically, this role will aid in understanding the characteristics of newly emerging SARS-CoV-2 variants and how they may impact the immune responses to SARS-CoV-2 infection and/or vaccination (ie. Do they represent a risk of reinfection or can break through vaccine responses).

The Research Assistant reports to the Associate Professor and has no direct reports.

Accountabilities

Specific accountabilities for this role include:

- Conduct professional pathogenesis research relevant to live SARS-CoV-2 infection under PC3 containment, including but not limited to techniques viral expansion, titering and antibody neutralisation.
• Perform immunological and drug screening assays according to written protocols which are important to measuring the potency of neutralising antibodies in various clinical cohorts.

• Ensure that laboratory assays are performed and recorded in a professional manner, and of a suitable standard that they may be reproduced or repeated with appropriate supervision if troubleshooting, where required.

• Participate in laboratory programs for quality control (QC) and assurance (QA), for the analysis of laboratory specimens and the maintenance of essential equipment.

• Contribute to the preparation of conference presentations and high standard publications for international and national peer-reviewed journals, including proofreading, editing, formatting and submission of research publications.

• Contribute to training programs for other junior staff and students when proficient in methods relevant to the position and maintenance of IVPP

• Align with and actively demonstrate the UNSW Values in Action: Our Behaviours and the UNSW Code of Conduct.

• Cooperate with all health and safety policies and procedures of the university and take all reasonable care to ensure that your actions or omissions do not impact on the health and safety of yourself or others.

Skills and Experience

• University degree in a relevant field of research such as immunology or virology or an equivalent level of knowledge gained through a combination of education, training or experience.

• Demonstrated relevant experience to the position in the biomedical research environment. Previous PC3 containment experience will be highly regarded.

• Demonstrated experience in cellular and/or molecular research techniques.

• Experience in assisting with the preparation and publication of reports and scientific publications.

• Excellent interpersonal and communication skills and the ability to liaise effectively with all levels of staff, students and external stakeholders.

• Strong organisational skills with a proven capacity to work independently and initiate and prioritise own workload and meet deadlines.

• High level computer skills with proficiency with Microsoft Office (Word, Excel, Outlook and PowerPoint) and a good knowledge of bibliographic management software.

• An understanding of and commitment to UNSW’s aims, objectives and values in action, together with relevant policies and guidelines.

• Knowledge of health and safety responsibilities and commitment to attending relevant health and safety training.

About this document
This Position Description outlines the objectives, desired outcomes, key responsibilities, accountabilities, required skills, experience and desired behaviours required to successfully perform the role.

This template is not intended to limit the scope or accountabilities of the position. Characteristics of the position may be altered in accordance with the changing requirements of the role.