POSITION DESCRIPTION

POSITION TITLE: **Junior Research Assistant**

POSITION LOCATION: **Olivia Newton-John Cancer Research Institute**

EMPLOYMENT TYPE: **Full time, fixed term**

POSITION CONTEXT:

The Olivia Newton-John Cancer Research Institute (ONJCRI) is an independent medical research located in Heidelberg. Our mission is to discover and develop breakthrough therapies to help people live better with cancer and defeat it. Our research laboratories sit alongside patient treatment facilities to optimise collaboration between researchers and clinicians. The integration of laboratory and clinic ensures the rapid translation of scientific discoveries into clinical trials for the development of new cancer treatments. We investigate and develop treatments for cancers of the breast, bowel, lung, melanoma, prostate, liver, gastrointestinal and brain. The ONJCRI is a global leader in the development of immunotherapies, targeted therapeutics and personalised cancer medicine and sponsors early phase clinical trials.

The ONJCRI is the successor to the global Ludwig Cancer Research organisation with a proud track record of a quarter century of collaborative clinical research programs with Austin Health. Much of ONJCRI's strong foundation is built on the Ludwig Cancer Research legacy. Moreover, through the ONJCRI's exciting partnership with La Trobe University as its School of Cancer Medicine, we play a pivotal role in training Australia's future generations of medical researchers.

This position is within the ***Tumour Progression and Heterogeneity Laboratory***. The laboratory aims to understand the biological properties of the most aggressive clones of breast cancer, in order to prevent their dissemination and design new combination therapies for the treatment of advanced disease.

Cancer is a highly heterogeneous disease. Understanding the properties of the subpopulations of cancer cells driving tumour progression and drug resistance is a pre-requisite for the eradication of residual disease. The work undertaken in the *Tumour progression and heterogeneity* laboratory aims at taking into consideration the heterogeneity of the disease to study the molecular characteristics of clones that metastasize in various organs, and to investigate their resistance to standard of care.

PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES:

- To support and complement emerging research opportunities, investigating the cellular and molecular features of cancer cells associated with tumour metastases and drug resistance.
- To audit, document and analyse data
- To oversee the administrative aspects of the laboratory

REPORTING LINES:

This position reports to *Dr Delphine Merino* as Laboratory Head. There are no direct reports to this position although the position may be involved with supervision of junior staff and students from time to time.

KEY RELATIONSHIPS:

The following key relationships that are an essential component of the position include:

Internal:

Scientists and staff within the Tumour Progression and Heterogeneity Laboratory

Animal Facility staff at Austin BRF and LTU-facility

External:

National and international collaborators

Austin Health Department of Anatomical Pathology

Staff of the Victorian Biobank

ACCOUNTABILITIES:

Conduct a range of standard experiments in a research laboratory setting:

- In vitro and in vivo work with cancer cell line and patient biopsies
- Basic Cell and Molecular Biology techniques (including PCR, cloning and RNA prep)
- Microtomy, immunohistochemistry and imaging
- Preparation and distribution of results
- Update and maintain databases

Laboratory maintenance:

- Purchasing
- Maintain supplies and validate operational status of equipment
- Maintain animal usage records
- Genotyping and documentation of transgenic mouse colonies

Others:

- Attend Journal Club and Group Meetings
- Abide by ONJCRI and Austin Health corporate policies and practices as varied from time to time
- Participate in ONJCRI performance appraisal program as required

AUTHORITY:

Delegated authority is in accordance with ONJCRI policies and procedures.

QUALIFICATIONS:

Bachelor of Science with Honours, or relevant experience if minimum qualification is Bachelor Degree.

EXPERIENCE & CAPABILITIES:

- Experience with basic cell biology and cell culture techniques
- Experience in handling mice, mouse monitoring and maintaining mouse colonies
- Experience with basic molecular biology technique, including protein analysis by Western blot, RNA prep and qPCR analysis
- Experience with Microsoft Excel, Prism and Access programs
- A meticulous approach to experimental work including the ability to maintain accurate and up to date record of experiments in a laboratory notebook
- Excellent organisational and computer skills involving the accurate entry of data and performing basic calculations
- Ability to analyse data and to produce reports of an interpretive nature
- Demonstrated research productivity at a high level
- Willingness to learn new techniques and the capacity for flexibility and willingness to change direction based on research needs
- Effective interpersonal and communication skills together with the capacity to participate in laboratory meetings and provide feedback
- Ability to work with thoroughness, accuracy and attention to detail with demonstrated innovative problem solving skills in order to complete projects according to deadlines
- Ability to assist in maintenance of the laboratory (organising lab supplies and associated documentation).

ADVANTAGEOUS

- Experience with lentiviral infections and viability assays
- Experience with multicolour immunohistochemistry and/or immunofluorescence
- Experience with flow cytometry

CHALLENGES:

- Accurate and meticulous collection of specimens and validation of data for reports and presentation
- Working with small animals and with potentially infectious clinical specimens
- Some out of hours work may be required
- Contribute to efficient and safe operation of laboratories
- Maintain an awareness of the short and long terms goals of projects