



POSITION DESCRIPTION

POSITION TITLE: Research Assistant

POSITION LOCATION: Olivia Newton-John Cancer Research Institute

EMPLOYMENT TYPE: Full time and fixed term

POSITION CONTEXT:

The Olivia Newton-John Cancer Research Institute (ONJCRI) is an independent medical research institute 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 tract 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.

The position is within the Oncogenic Transcription laboratory of the Gastrointestinal Cancers Program, which is involved in basic research investigating the molecular basis for the development of gastrointestinal cancers, and the mechanisms of action of chemotherapeutic and targeted agents.

PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES:

The Research Assistant will be responsible for the genotyping of several transgenic and knockout mouse colonies, performing drug injections and intervention studies in mice, and analysis of mouse tissues using DNA, RNA and protein based techniques, including qPCR, western blotting and immunohistochemistry. The Research Assistant will also be responsible for the culture and analysis of established cell lines and organoids, ordering of reagents and for routine laboratory maintenance.

REPORTING LINES:

This position reports to the Head of the Oncogenic Transcription Laboratory and Senior Research Staff within the laboratory. The Research Assistant may be involved with supervision of junior staff and students.

KEY RELATIONSHIPS:

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

Internal:

Scientists and staff within the Oncogenic Transcription Laboratory
Other groups within the ONJCRI
Administration staff of the ONJCRI

External:

Major collaborators in Melbourne and overseas
Relevant hospital departments and groups
Other collaborators as warranted by the program

ACCOUNTABILITIES:

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

- Genotyping and maintenance of multiple transgenic and knockout mouse colonies
- Experimentation on mice including drug injections, oral gavage and dietary intervention studies, and collection and analysis of tissue samples from these mice.
- Cell culture, maintenance and documentation of cell lines
- Maintain highly accurate records and validation of data
- Analysing experimental data and preparing reports of an interpretive nature

Laboratory Maintenance

- Maintain supplies and validate operational status of equipment
- Purchasing
- Maintain animal usage records

AUTHORITY:

Delegated authority is in accordance with ONJCRI policies and procedures.

CHALLENGES:

- Accurate and meticulous collection of specimens and validation of data for reports and presentation
- Troubleshooting of PCR reactions
- Handling, injecting and collection of blood from live mice
- Mouse dissection and tissue collection
- 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

QUALIFICATIONS:

The Research Assistant will have a science degree (preferably with honours) or equivalent qualifications or experience in pharmaceutical or biological sciences such as molecular biology, biochemistry, physiology, pharmacology etc.

EXPERIENCE & CAPABILITIES:

- At least 1 to 2 years laboratory experience as part of a research team with demonstrated ability to work both independently and co-operatively in a small team environment with minimal supervision.
- Experience in handling mice, maintaining mouse colonies, genotyping and database maintenance
- A meticulous approach to experimental work including the ability to accurately process clinical specimens, store and retrieve for analysis
- Excellent organisational and computer skills involving the accurate entry of data, performing basic calculations and

THE FOLLOWING ATTRIBUTES WOULD BE STRONGLY REGARDED:

- Experience in planning and conducting drug and dietary intervention studies in mice including the collection and analysis of samples from these animals.
- Experience with preparation of tissues for histology and immunohistochemistry
- Experience with cell culture and techniques such as PCR and western blotting
- Ability to analyse data and to produce reports of an interpretive nature
- Demonstrated research productivity at a high level
- Ability to work with thoroughness, accuracy and attention to detail with demonstrated innovative problem solving skills in order to complete projects according to deadlines.
- 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 maintain the laboratory together with experience in maintaining lab supplies via ordering, receiving and associated documentation