Head of Neurobiological Research Facility
Information for Candidates

Sainsbury Wellcome Centre for Neural Circuits and Behaviour at UCL

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Vacancy Reference: 1759191
Job Title: Director of Neurobiological Research Facility (NRF)
Department: Sainsbury Wellcome Centre
Salary: £56,266 - £61,181 per annum inclusive of London Allowance.
Grade: 9
Hours: 36.5 per week (full-time, 1.00 FTE)
Reports to: Centre Manager
Responsible for: Biological/Neurobiological Research Facility Team(s)

About the Sainsbury Wellcome Centre

The Sainsbury Wellcome Centre (SWC) commenced research operations in Spring 2016 bringing together world-leading scientists to investigate how brain circuits process information to generate perception, form memories and guide behaviour. Developed through the vision and partnership of the Gatsby Charitable Foundation and Wellcome, and with substantial investment from these partners, the mission of the SWC is to generate experimentally testable theories of brain function.

The Centre will comprise around 14 highly interdisciplinary experimental research groups accommodated in a new, purpose-designed building, offering an outstanding and unparalleled research environment. SWC scientists use a broad spectrum of the latest advances in molecular and cellular biology, imaging, electrophysiology and behavioural techniques and enjoy state-of-the-art research laboratories, cutting-edge scientific equipment, technologically-advanced prototyping and fabrication laboratories and custom in-house high-performance computing facilities. The full complement of scientists in the Centre is expected to reach around 150 together with circa 50 dedicated support staff.

Further details about the Sainsbury Wellcome Centre can be found at www.ucl.ac.uk/swc.

The Sainsbury Wellcome Centre is part of the UCL School of Life and Medical Sciences (SLMS). SLMS brings together four UCL Faculties to create one of the largest and most prestigious aggregations of academics in biomedical, life and population health sciences worldwide. The School has a global reputation for teaching, informed by cutting-edge research. A full profile of the School can be found at: http://www.ucl.ac.uk/slms/about-us. The School is structured into four Faculties: Brain Sciences; Life Sciences; Medical Sciences; and Population Health Sciences. SWC is most closely linked with the Faculties of Brain Science and Life Sciences.

Further details about UCL can be found at www.ucl.ac.uk.

Professional Services at the Sainsbury Wellcome Centre

The Sainsbury Wellcome Centre has a specialist and experienced professional services team led by the Centre Manager. It is structured to efficiently support research activity and deliver effective management and operational leadership of the SWC.

The SWC prides itself on offering a high quality administrative, technical and operational support function, and fully supports the professional development and progression of its staff, actively encouraging colleagues to learn new skills and broaden their experience. The SWC is supported in this aim by UCL’s Organisational
Development team ([http://www.ucl.ac.uk/hr/od/](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/hr/od/)), who run a wide range of training programmes for all staff types and grades.

The SWC offers staff an award-winning work environment in the heart of Fitzrovia with an on-site brasserie, access to lockers and changing facilities, secure bicycle storage, and access to pleasant outdoor spaces. The Centre also offers the full range of UCL staff benefits, including a generous annual leave entitlement, occupational pension schemes, excellent family-friendly policies such as occupational shared parental pay, a work-life balance policy, and a range of financial benefits such as a season ticket loan scheme and staff discounts. Further information can be found online: [http://www.ucl.ac.uk/hr/benefits/employee_benefits.php](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/hr/benefits/employee_benefits.php).

The Role of the Head of Neurobiological Research Facility

Science focussed, the Head of Neurobiological Research Facility (NRF) will provide strategic leadership and direction for all *in vivo* research conducted within the animal facilities at SWC. Leading a team of over 30 staff (at full capacity) the post holder will have full responsibility for ensuring the provision of effective, efficient, comprehensive and integrated laboratory animal resources for the SWC, particularly ensuring that the laboratory animal husbandry, transgenic, procedural and surgical services and support meet the scientific needs and are proactive to trends and changes in both the science and in laboratory animal technology.

You will be an experienced *in vivo* scientist and/or an experienced leader and manager. You will have experience of delivering strategic/scientific projects. You will have a track record of supporting motivated and high performing teams, which may be relatively small, focused on complex objectives requiring high interpersonal skills. You will be experienced in working with and developing talented people and leading people through change. You will have an in-depth working knowledge of animal research usage, preferably in the field of neurosciences.

This post is funded until 31 July 2021 in the first instance; the Centre is externally funded with funding awarded in five-year tranches subject to periodic funder review. Subject to successful grant renewal, staff posts will be extended in line with successive funding periods.

**Main Duties and Responsibilities**

**Provision of first class science support and services**

- Deliver high science outcomes with the best standards of animal welfare by leading, and directing the implementation of, the strategy for the Neurobiological Research Facilities (NRF) at SWC.

- Ensure researchers have access to all facilities, procedures and *in vivo* techniques at SWC.

- Maintain contemporary knowledge of neuroscience to assess trends and changes with respect to *in vivo* research, and to facilitate introduction of new techniques to SWC.

- Ensure compliance and achieve statistically significant results using the minimum number of animals possible by proactive and effective liaison with researchers to plan and implement breeding and experimental programmes to meet the science needs.

- Lead, develop and implement 3Rs initiatives within the context of neuroscience and behavioural research.
Legislation

- Oversee and administer all mechanisms at the centre to achieve compliance with the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986, and to promote a culture of care amongst all centre staff by working with the Director and co-ordinating strategic thinking of senior leadership and managers.

- Demonstrate a full and up-to-date working knowledge of the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 and all aspects of Home Office requirements, managing the facility fully in line with relevant codes of practice for housing and care ensuring it meets and exceeds minimum legal standards required by the Establishment Licence.

- Act as PEL holder’s delegate (and authorised signatory) on all day-to-day activities to fulfil Establishment Licence holder’s responsibilities under the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986.

- Provide communication channels and mechanisms for Project and Personal Licence holders to discuss all matters relating to animal research within the SWC, so that they fully understand their responsibilities to the Establishment Licence Holder and under the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986, whilst achieving science objectives.

- Undertake a main representational role to maintain and develop robust relationships with all staff at the Home Office, Animals in Science Regulation Unit.

- Lead, direct and assist all the centre’s Named Persons in executing their functions as defined by Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 but particularly relating to overall compliance, animal welfare, training and competency.

- Be familiar with all other relevant legislation relating to in vivo work, such as The Animal Welfare Act 2006, The Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966 and the Welfare of Animals (Transport) Order 2006.

- Maintain in-depth and fully up-to-date knowledge of Health and Safety legislation as relevant to the NRF and apply this to the development of policies and standard operating procedures.

Leadership and management procedures

- Create and secure commitment to a clear vision for the team’s operations.

- Initiate and manage change in pursuit of the Centre’s strategic objectives, including in other core activities and services.

- Determine overall structure for the effective management of the NRF and its relationship within all SWC activities and with UCL.

- Build highly performing teams to ensure high quality levels of service are achieved across the Facilities. The role holder will be responsible for the management of core services including genotyping, histology, virology etc.

- Determine and create collaborations to develop work areas.
• Develop staff to ensure they can meet challenging and changing work requirements by developing an ethos of continuous learning and improvement within the NRF, supporting staff educational and developmental opportunities within an effective development framework.

• Establish performance expectations.

• Ensure implementation of all statutory responsibilities.

• Work with the SWC Administration team including the use and application of UCL systems relating to finance and Home Office processes. The post holder will be expected to work closely with SWC HR as well as attend/chair meetings relating to staff discipline or sickness. They will complete probation reviews, annual staff appraisals, mentoring, coaching and ad hoc meetings as required.

• Have high level involvement in projects including the development of the Animal Unit, facilities expansion/rationalisation, new builds and refurbishments.

• Arrange the necessary unit support groups by assessing the relevant skill sets available within SWC. The post holder will mentor these groups as well as act as Chair where necessary. This will require attendance at SWC meetings to discuss development, costs and time scales. The post holder will ensure projects are completed within time scales agreed with the Director.

• Chair or attend (as required) any of the Centre's standing committees e.g., Biological Services Strategy Committee, Animal Welfare Strategy Committee, etc.

• Oversee the content of the SWC BRF web pages in conjunction with the SWC Communications Manager.

• Provide liaison between other Groups, Committees and Forums within the Centre and UCL as a whole.

**Facility management**

• Advise and support managers, directly contact others and review contracts specifically in relation to unit environmental control, upkeep of fabric in line with Home Office (HO) guidelines, compliance and UCL policy.

• They will oversee and manage an essential interface with UCL’s Central Biological Services, ensuring an excellent working relationship with UCL’s Director of Biological Services and working collegially with managers of other UCL Biological Research Facilities and the researchers using the facilities.

• Where necessary attend Estates meetings, review/amend drawings and tenders when units are refurbished/upgraded or expanded or reduced.

**Finances**

• Have responsibility and accountability for managing the operating budget (circa £1m) of the NRF.

• Work with the SWC Finance Manager and Centre Manager to review spend relating to SWC facilities and will report directly to the Director.
• Ensure the facility is managed within available budgets and realign resources over a broad range of operating areas to meet key priorities.

• Lead initiatives for new and more efficient use of resources in order to secure value for money. This includes purchasing within the BRF and all areas of procurement and compliance with relevant import and export regulations.

• Consider, initiate and monitor mechanisms for recharging animal costs and services back to the relevant researchers, both within SWC and externally.

Records and data analysis

• Play a direct role in the management of data recording within the NRF and use of animals at SWC.

• Undertake broad analyses of complex animal use and data to produce reports on a wide range of issues for example, procedures and breeding trends (which may have ramifications on licences).

• Analyse, monitor and control financial spending, account balances of staff ratio to workloads, overtime per staff etc. Produce reports for the Director and senior leadership on any issues affecting strategy or requiring actions. The aim will be to understand and identify problems or inequalities across the department.

The above description is not exhaustive and the post-holder will be required to undertake any other duties as may reasonably be requested within the scope, spirit and purpose of the post. Job descriptions are reviewed on a regular basis including at the annual appraisal. As duties and responsibilities change, the job description may be amended in consultation with the post-holder.

The post-holder will be expected to actively follow all UCL policies and procedures including Equal Opportunities, maintain an awareness of Fire and Health & Safety Regulations, attend management meetings and undertake such training and development as may be required for the post.

All staff are required to act professionally, co-operatively and flexibly in line with the requirements of the post.
Selection Criteria

The selection criteria outline the skills, knowledge and experience required in order to perform this role. Applicants will be selected based on how well they demonstrate that they meet the essential, and if appropriate, desirable criteria for this particular role.

Qualifications

- Educated to degree or post-graduate degree level or with equivalent professional experience.

Knowledge and Experience

- Strong scientific background with previous participation/experience in use of *in vivo* models.
- Considerable knowledge and experience of *in vivo* experimental procedures and peri- and post-operative care of animals.
- An understanding of the importance of the role of the NRF in provision of support for research and training researchers.
- Thorough understanding of the requirements for the provision of a successful, cost-effective, user-focussed laboratory animal resources.
- Conversant with methods for the genetic alteration, maintenance, use and breeding of laboratory rodents.
- Conversant with ASPA regulations and other regulatory requirements in a research environment.

Skills and Abilities

- Ability to critically analyse and interpret scientific data.
- High levels of motivation and the ability to operate as a ‘self-starter’.
- Strong organisational skills with the ability to prioritise in the face of competing demands and proven success in delivering to deadlines.
- Effective oral and written communication skills and experience of drafting and presenting clear and concise reports on complex issues at a senior level.
- Interpersonal skills that would enable the post holder to influence at all levels and to work effectively as part of a team.
- Ability to motivate people and teams.
- Strong analytical skills and a proven record of problem solving.
- A high level of computer literacy, experience of using databases and the ability to use Microsoft Office suite of applications.

Other Requirements

- An understanding and appreciation of the mission and research environment of the SWC, and a commitment to the establishment of the SWC as a world-leading research centre.
- Willingness and enthusiasm to learn and integrate into SWC culture and environment.
- Able and willing to work flexibly to meet the needs of the Centre.
Contact Us

If you have any queries relating to the vacancy or how to apply please contact the SWC HR team, swc.hr@ucl.ac.uk, +44 (0)20 3108 8011.

Applying for the Role

To begin the online application process, please access the advertisement by searching for it on the UCL vacancy search page (http://www.ucl.ac.uk/hr/jobs/) using the vacancy reference number, and click on the “Apply Now” button at the bottom of the vacancy advertisement.

Please complete the online application form, and use the supporting statement section to outline how you meet the selection criteria. Applications will be shortlisted based on the strength of the examples used to demonstrate that the applicant meets the selection criteria.

Please note that there is a limit of 2,500 words to explain how you meet the essential criteria, and a limit of 2,500 words to explain how you meet the desirable criteria.

All candidates will be notified of the outcome of their application.
Pre-employment Checks
Confirmation of appointment will be subject to receipt of satisfactory references, verification of proof of right to work in the UK and to satisfactory pre-employment health and security screening.

Salary
Starting salary will be on the Grade 9 scale according to relevant skills, knowledge, experience and achievement. Staff incrementally progress along the salary scale; the effective date of incremental progression is 01 August each year. You must have completed the period of service stipulated in your contract of employment (typically your probationary period) to be eligible to increment. Incremental progression does not include the discretionary contribution points on the salary scale. Cost of living pay awards are negotiated nationally and are normally effective from 1 August each year.

Pension
Post-holders will be eligible to join the Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS), subject to the Scheme's rules and eligibility conditions.

Conditions of Service
Conditions of Service for Research, Teaching and Professional Services Staff can be found at: https://www.ucl.ac.uk/human-resources/conditions-service-research-teaching-and-professional-services-staff.

Probation
Appointments are subject to a probationary period of 9 months.

Hours of Work and Overtime
UCL’s full time working week is 36.5 hours per week. SWC is willing to consider flexible-working arrangements, subject to discussion and agreement with your line manager.

Pre-agreed overtime will be offered as equivalent time off in lieu.

Annual Leave
Staff are entitled to 27 days annual leave per year (pro rata for part-time staff). In addition, staff are entitled to 8 days public and statutory holidays, and around 6 UCL closure days with pay per year.

Location
The Sainsbury Wellcome Centre is located in the heart of London around five minutes’ walk from the main UCL campus. The mainline railway stations at Euston, King’s Cross, St Pancras, Marylebone and Paddington are within easy reach as are the London Underground stations located at Warren Street and Goodge Street.

Equal Opportunities
SWC is committed to the promotion of equality, diversity and inclusion for its staff, students and visitors and is fully supportive of UCL’s policy; the full equality policy statement is available online: https://www.ucl.ac.uk/human-resources/sites/human-resources/files/equal_opportunity_policy_statement.pdf.

SWC is currently working towards an Athena SWAN award.