

NUFFIELD DIVISION OF CLINICAL LABORATORY SCIENCES

Job title	Research Assistant in Gene Therapy
Division	Medical Sciences Division
Department	Nuffield Division of Clinical Laboratory Sciences, Radcliffe Department of Medicine
Location	John Radcliffe Hospital, Headington, Oxford
Grade and salary	Grade 6.01 to 6.04: £27,629 - £30,175 per annum
Hours	Full time
Contract type	Fixed-term post funded until 31 March 2019
Reporting to	Associate Professor Deborah Gill & Associate Professor Stephen Hyde (Co-Directors of Gene Medicine Research Group)
Vacancy reference	128965
Technical Information	Gene Expression assays; Lentivirus production; Quantitative RT-PCR;
Additional information	On weeks when Lentivirus Virus production runs are in progress, you will be required to work outside normal working hours; namely Friday night midnight to 01.30am Saturday morning and Sunday morning 09.00am to 11.00am.

Research topic	Development of optimized lentiviral vector for lung gene therapy
Principal Investigator / supervisor	Associate Professor Deborah Gill & Associate Professor Stephen Hyde
Project team	Gene Medicine Research Group
Project web site	http://www.genemedresearch.ox.ac.uk/
Funding partner	The funds supporting this research project are provided by the Cystic Fibrosis Trust
Recent publications	<p>1. Alton EW, <i>et al</i> (2017) Preparation for a first-in-man lentivirus trial in patients with cystic fibrosis. <i>Thorax</i>. 2017 Feb;72(2):137-147. doi: 10.1136/thoraxjnl-2016-208406. Epub 2016 Nov 16. PMID: 27852956</p> <p>2. Alton EW, <i>et al</i>. (2015) Repeated nebulisation of non-viral CFTR gene therapy in patients with cystic fibrosis; a randomised double-blind, placebo-controlled, phase 2b trial. <i>Lancet Respir Med</i>. 2015 Sep;3(9): 684-91 PMID 26149841.</p> <p>3. Griesenbach U, <i>et al</i>. (2012) Assessment of F/HN-pseudotyped lentivirus as a clinically relevant vector for lung gene therapy. <i>Am J Respir Crit Care Med</i> 2012 Nov 1; 186(9): 846-56 PMID 22955314</p>



Overview of the role

Background: People with the genetic disease Cystic Fibrosis (CF) typically suffer from repeated bacterial infections of the conducting airways leading to lung failure. The UK CF Gene Therapy Consortium (UKCFGTC <http://www.cfgenetherapy.org.uk>) is focused on developing a clinical gene therapy for Cystic Fibrosis (CF) lung disease. We have published the results from a recent Phase 2b clinical trial of a non-viral (plasmid/liposome) gene therapy in the lungs of patients with CF, the first clinical study to demonstrate that CF gene therapy can benefit lung function,

Our Aim: We have developed a new, highly efficient lentiviral vector, which efficiently targets the airways, and aim to deliver the CFTR gene to CF individuals to treat the disease. We have been awarded a Cystic Fibrosis Trust (CF Trust) grant to aid preparation for a first-in-human clinical trial to investigate the feasibility of this viral gene therapy approach.

The Position: Applicants are invited for a Research Assistant position at the Oxford University Radcliffe Department of Medicine (NDCLS division) to participate in this collaborative project. The position is funded until 31st March 2019 in the first instance.

Key Tasks: The successful applicant will assist in the transfer of our current lentiviral production processes to a Contract Manufacturing Organization for the production of cGMP lentiviral vector for the clinical trial. This will include the development of new assays and evaluation of efficacy of the manufactured vector. The position will also involve the pre-clinical assessment of gene expression and toxicology in support of the clinical trial application. This is a unique opportunity for a research assistant to contribute to the clinical evaluation of a new gene therapy product.

Responsibilities

- To perform the research experiments comprising this project including vector design construction and testing in cell culture and animal models;
- To adapt and develop experimental protocols as required;
- To plan, execute and record all experiments;
- To prepare data for reports, scientific presentation and abstracts/papers;
- To maintain current knowledge of scientific developments in the relevant areas;
- To attend relevant trainings and workshops as advised by supervisors;
- To undertake general laboratory management duties that may be required;

Hazard-specific / Safety-critical duties

This job includes the following hazards or safety-critical activities which will require successful pre-employment health screening through our Occupational Health Service before the successful candidate will be allowed to start work:

- Work with allergens, e.g. laboratory animals, pollen, dust, fish or insects etc.
- Work with any substance which has any of the following pictograms on their MSDS:



Additional security pre-employment checks

This job includes the following duties which will require additional security pre-employment checks:

- Working on research projects which involve *in vivo* experiments and Home Office Licence
- Access to or knowledge of pathogens and toxins
- A satisfactory Disclosure Scotland check due to above duties
- University security screening (eg identity checks)

Selection criteria

Essential:

- Bachelors or Masters degree in a relevant science subject;
- Relevant practical working experience in a laboratory;
- Expertise in molecular biology techniques, including quantitative RT-PCR;
- Experience in recombinant virus and/or mammalian cell culture;
- Excellent communication and presentation skills

Desirable:

- Knowledge or experience of assay development (eg quantification of DNA, RNA and/or protein)
- Knowledge or experience of manufacture of bio-therapeutics and/or working with GMP;
- Knowledge or experience of gene therapy vector technology/production;
- Use of statistics for assay validation;
- Experience of *in vivo* experiments and ownership of Home Office Licence

About the University of Oxford

Welcome to the University of Oxford. We aim to lead the world in research and education for the benefit of society both in the UK and globally. Oxford's researchers engage with academic, commercial and cultural partners across the world to stimulate high-quality research and enable innovation through a broad range of social, policy and economic impacts.

We believe our strengths lie both in empowering individuals and teams to address fundamental questions of global significance, and in providing all of our staff with a welcoming and inclusive workplace that supports everyone to develop and do their best work. Recognising that diversity is a great strength, and vital for innovation and creativity, we aspire to build a truly diverse community which values and respects every individual's unique contribution.

While we have long traditions of scholarship, we are also forward-looking, creative and cutting-edge. Oxford is one of Europe's most entrepreneurial universities. Income from external research contracts in 2014/15 exceeded £522.9m and ranked first in the UK for university spin-outs, with more than 130 spin-off companies created to date. We are also recognised as leaders in support for social enterprise.

Join us and you will find a unique, democratic and international community, a great range of staff benefits and access to a vibrant array of cultural activities in the beautiful city of Oxford.

For more information please visit www.ox.ac.uk/about/organisation

Nuffield Division of Clinical Laboratory Sciences (NDCLS)

Led by Professor Alison Banham, the Nuffield Division of Clinical Laboratory Sciences brings together all of the clinical laboratory-based disciplines within the Oxford Medical School (Microbiology, Genetics, Cellular Pathology, Haematology and Clinical Biochemistry). The original Nuffield Departments date from Lord Nuffield's original benefaction to the Oxford Medical School in 1938.

As well as the teaching of Undergraduate and Clinical Medical Student courses, NDCLS has an active research programme, holding more than £5.3m per annum (£25m in total) of research grants from Research Councils and charities.

For more information please visit www.ndcls.ox.ac.uk

Radcliffe Department of Medicine

The Radcliffe Department of Medicine (RDM) within the Medical Sciences Division is one of the largest departments in the University of Oxford. Headed by Professor Hugh Watkins, RDM is a multi-disciplinary department with research interests that span the translational spectrum, from basic biological research through to clinical application. The Department was formed in 2012 and includes:

- The Division of Cardiovascular Medicine (CVM)
- The Investigative Medicine Division (IMD)
- The Nuffield Division of Clinical Laboratory Sciences (NDCLS)
- The Oxford Centre for Diabetes, Endocrinology and Metabolism (OCDEM)
- The majority of research groups from the MRC Weatherall Institute of Molecular Medicine (WIMM)

The Department has internationally renowned programmes in a broad range of sciences related to medicine, from cardiovascular, diabetes, endocrinology, and stroke research, to molecular medicine, immunology, haematology and pathology, including programmes in stem cell & regenerative medicine.

The Department employs in the region of 700 staff, has around 125 postgraduate research students and an annual turnover of around £59m.

RDM supports a culture that is inclusive and supportive of all members, including those with caring responsibilities and those who work flexibly for other reasons. We are proud to be a [family friendly department](#), and are committed to creating a working environment that offers opportunities for working parents/carers to achieve their professional goals and develop their careers without having a detrimental effect on family life. To support this, we have a range of family friendly policies and practices including maternity, paternity and adoption leave, shared parental leave, unpaid parental leave, flexible/part-time working and scheduling departmental meetings and seminars within core hours (9.30 a.m. -2.30 p.m.). Many of our staff work flexibly, with arrangements managed informally or formally.

The Department currently holds a Silver Athena SWAN award in recognition of its efforts to introduce organisational and cultural practices that promote gender equality in SET and create a better working environment for both men and women.

For more information on the Department please visit: www.rdm.ox.ac.uk

Medical Sciences Division

The Medical Sciences Division is an internationally recognized centre of excellence for biomedical and clinical research and teaching. We are the largest academic division in the University of Oxford.

World-leading programmes, housed in state-of-the-art facilities, cover the full range of scientific endeavour from the molecule to the population. With our NHS partners we also foster the highest possible standards in patient care.

For more information please visit: <http://www.medsci.ox.ac.uk>

How to apply

Before submitting an application, you may find it helpful to read the 'Tips on applying for a job at the University of Oxford' document, at www.ox.ac.uk/about/jobs/supportandtechnical/.

If you would like to apply, click on the **Apply Now** button on the 'Job Details' page and follow the on-screen instructions to register as a new user or log-in if you have applied previously. Please provide details of two referees and indicate whether we can contact them now.

You will also be asked to upload a CV and a supporting statement. The supporting statement should explain how you meet the selection criteria for the post using examples of your skills and experience. This may include experience gained in employment, education, or during career breaks (such as time out to care for dependants).

Your application will be judged solely on the basis of how you demonstrate that you meet the selection criteria stated in the job description.

Please upload all documents **as PDF files** with your name and the document type in the filename

All applications must be received by **midday** on the closing date stated in the online advertisement.

Information for priority candidates

A priority candidate is a University employee who is seeking redeployment because they have been advised that they are at risk of redundancy, or on grounds of ill-health/disability. Priority candidates are issued with a redeployment letter by their employing departments.

If you are a priority candidate, please ensure that you attach your redeployment letter to your application (or email it to the contact address on the advert if the application form used for the vacancy does not allow attachments)

Should you experience any difficulties using the online application system, please email recruitment.support@admin.ox.ac.uk. Further help and support is available from [www.ox.ac.uk/about the university/jobs/support/](http://www.ox.ac.uk/about_the_university/jobs/support/).

To return to the online application at any stage, please go to: www.recruit.ox.ac.uk.

Please note that you will be notified of the progress of your application by automatic emails from our e-recruitment system. **Please check your spam/junk mail** regularly to ensure that you receive all emails.

Important information for candidates

Pre-employment screening

Please note that the appointment of the successful candidate will be subject to standard pre-employment screening, as applicable to the post. This will include right-to-work, proof of identity and references. We advise all applicants to read the candidate notes on the University's pre-employment screening procedures, found at:

www.ox.ac.uk/about/jobs/preemploymentscreening/.

The University's policy on retirement

The University operates an employer justified retirement age for all academic and academic-related posts (grade 6 and above), for which the retirement date is the 30 September immediately preceding the 68th birthday. The justification for this is explained at:

www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/end/retirement/revisedejra/revaim/.

For **existing** employees any employment beyond the retirement age is subject to approval through the procedures: www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/end/retirement/revisedejra/revproc/

There is no normal or fixed age at which **support staff** in posts at **grades 1–5** have to retire. Support staff may retire once they reach the minimum pension age stipulated in the Rules of the pension scheme to which they belong.

Equality of Opportunity

Entry into employment with the University and progression within employment will be determined only by personal merit and the application of criteria which are related to the duties of each particular post and the relevant salary structure. In all cases, ability to perform the job will be the primary consideration. No applicant or member of staff shall be discriminated against because of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.

Benefits of working at the University

Training and Development

A range of training and development opportunities are available at the University. Further details can be found at www.ox.ac.uk/staff/working_at_oxford/training_development/index.html.

For research staff only: Support for Research Staff

There is a particularly wide range of support for career development for research staff. Please visit: www.ox.ac.uk/research/support-researchers to find out more.

Pensions

The University offers generous occupational pension schemes for eligible staff members. Further details can be found at www.admin.ox.ac.uk/finance/epp/pensions/pensionspolicy/.

Information for international staff *(or those relocating from another part of the UK)*

A wealth of information is available on the University's International Staff website for staff who are relocating to Oxford from abroad, at www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/staffinfo/international/.

The University of Oxford Newcomers' Club

The Newcomers' Club is aimed at helping partners of newly-arrived visiting scholars, graduate students and academic members of the University to settle in and to meet people in Oxford.

Transport schemes

The University offers a range of travel schemes and public transport travel discounts to staff. Full details are available at www.admin.ox.ac.uk/estates/ourservices/travel/.

University Club and University Sports Facilities

The University Club provides social, sporting and hospitality facilities. It incorporates a Club bar, a cafe and sporting facilities, including a gym. See www.club.ox.ac.uk for all further details.

University staff can use the University Sports Centre at discounted rates, and have the chance to join sports clubs. Please visit www.sport.ox.ac.uk/oxford-university-sports-facilities.

Childcare and Childcare Vouchers

The University offers quality childcare provision services at affordable prices to its employees. For full details about the services offered, please visit www.admin.ox.ac.uk/childcare/. **NB: Due to the high demand for the University's nursery places there is a long waiting list.**

The University also offers nursery fee payment schemes to eligible staff as an opportunity to save tax and national insurance on childcare costs. Please visit www.admin.ox.ac.uk/childcare.

Disabled staff

The University is committed to supporting members of staff with a disability or long-term health condition and has a dedicated Staff Disability Advisor. Please visit www.admin.ox.ac.uk/eop/disab/staff for further details.

BUPA - Eduhealth

Bupa Eduhealth Essentials private medical insurance offers special rates for University of Oxford staff and their families www.eduhealth.co.uk/mini-site/.

All other benefits

For other benefits, such as free entry to colleges, the Botanic Gardens and staff discounts offered by third party companies, please see www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/staffinfo/benefits/.