Job Description

Research Technician

**Department:** Sainsbury Wellcome Centre  
**Grade:** 7  
**Salary:** £39,508 - £47,355 per annum inclusive of London Allowance.  
**Hours:** 36.5 hours per week (full time, 1.00 FTE)  
**Reports to:** C. Ann Duan  
**Available until:** 1 year in the first instance

**Context**

We are recruiting two research technicians for the lab of Dr Chunyu Ann Duan. Our research group aims to understand how neural population dynamics generate flexible, and cognitive behaviours. In particular, we use freely-moving and head-fixed rodent paradigms to study the neural mechanisms underlying decision-making in a social context and under risk and uncertainty. Towards this goal, we combine theory-motivated behavioural designs, quantitative extraction of animals’ internal states, large-scale, cellular-resolution monitoring and manipulation of identified neural circuits during decision tasks, and computational modelling.

**Main purpose of the job**

You will contribute and support the research programme of Dr Chunyu Ann Duan’s group at SWC, directly contributing to research projects studying the neural circuit mechanisms of how animals make decisions under risky, uncertainty, and social influence.

This will include performing aseptic, stereotaxic surgeries, handling and care of mice, training freely-moving and/or head-fixed mice in behavioural tasks, performing opto- or chemogenetic manipulation of specific brain circuits, imaging and electrophysiological recordings of live preparations, carrying out histological work, helping to collect and analyse data with other team members as well as other general laboratory tasks.

Candidates should have prior experience of working within a research laboratory and of handling rodents, and preferably, knowledge in surgical methods. Basic programming skills in Python or MATLAB environments are desirable, as well as the ability to build, maintain and repair experimental setups.

Excellent organisation and communication skills and the ability to work independently, proactively and reliably are essential. Candidates will be expected to work in a collaborative and multidisciplinary research environment, and to communicate regularly with other lab members and SWC staff.

This post is funded for 1 year in the first instance with the possibility of extension subject to funding.

**Duties and responsibilities**

**Core duties**

- Handling and monitoring mice.  
- Train mice in behavioural tasks.  
- Perform aseptic, stereotaxic brain surgeries.  
- Perform in vivo experiments including optogenetic manipulations and electrophysiological recordings of neural circuits in behaving animals.  
- Maintain and repair experimental setups.  
- Work closely with the group leader and other team members to set up, gather and organise data within databases.  
- Perform analysis of collected data.
Lab duties

- Monitor and maintain laboratory stocks of consumables and reagents.
- Maintain laboratory cleanliness and organisation of the laboratory space.
- Contribute to the maintenance of equipment, lab supplies and databases to ensure that all work is carried out in accordance with statutory and UCL regulations as appropriate.
- Maintain meticulous records of experimental results and methodologies.
- Maintain the safety manual to ensure new members of staff, visitors and students receive the appropriate induction.

Other

- To support or be a primary worker on the given project and ensure it is carried out efficiently and in a proper scientific manner.
- Provide assistance, supervision and teaching to new staff members, visitors and students to the research group in surgical techniques and general laboratory work practices.
- To participate in weekly group meetings.
- Adhere to good laboratory practice at all times and observe all required health and safety procedures.
- Observe all ethical and legal requirements in relation to the use of animal models in research.
- Observe all data protection and security requirements.

General

- Carry out any other duties within the scope, spirit and purpose of the job as requested by the line manager.
- Actively follow and promote all UCL policies including those on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.
- Maintain an awareness and observation of Fire and Health & Safety Regulations.
- There may, on occasion, be a requirement to work extended hours, or a shifted work week (for example, working Thursday–Sunday with Monday-Wed off).
- Actively participate in UCL networks, meetings and committees relevant to the role, as required.
- All staff are expected to act professionally, cooperatively and flexibly in line with the post.
- UCL’s Sustainability policies and objectives, attend management meetings and undertake such training and development as may be required for the post.
- The post holder, like all academic, research and teaching staff, is expected to demonstrate their ongoing commitment to excellence in line with the Academic Career Framework.
- Meet UCL’s expectations set out in UCL’s Core Behaviours Framework.
- 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.
## Person Specification

Applicants should copy and paste the following essential criteria (which are assessed on the application form) into the “Statement in support of your application” and describe underneath each criterion how they meet it, giving examples.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Essential Criteria</th>
<th>Assessment method (Application/ Interview/Practical Test)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Qualifications, experience and knowledge</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hold an undergraduate degree or equivalent qualification in Neuroscience, Biomedical Science, Engineering, Physics or a cognate area. Or equivalent experience.</td>
<td>Application/ Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience of working in a research laboratory.</td>
<td>Application/ Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience of handling, monitoring health and caring of rodents.</td>
<td>Application/ Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience of training rodents in behavioural tasks.</td>
<td>Application/ Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge of surgeries in rodents.</td>
<td>Application/ Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge in neurophysiological techniques.</td>
<td>Application/ Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Skills and abilities</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to work independently within a research laboratory.</td>
<td>Application/ Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to use own initiative whilst recognising when advice and input is needed.</td>
<td>Application/ Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meticulous and accurate in all aspects of work, able and willing to work flexibly to meet the needs of the Centre.</td>
<td>Application/ Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>UCL Ways of Working</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Excellence: Making best practice an absolute priority</td>
<td>Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working Together: Promoting personal and professional development</td>
<td>Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achieving our Mission: Creating and supporting simple and consistent work processes</td>
<td>Interview</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Applicants should copy and paste the following desirable criteria into the “Statement in support of your application” under the Desirable criteria section and describe underneath each criterion how they meet it, giving examples.

Desirable criteria will only be scored if there is a tie break for shortlisting.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Desirable Criteria</th>
<th>Assessment method</th>
<th>Application</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Proficiency in coding and using software for data or statistical analysis.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Application</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience of teaching or supervising trainees in techniques within a lab setting.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Application</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience with programming in Python or MATLAB</td>
<td></td>
<td>Application</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment to and knowledge of advancing equality, diversity and inclusion</td>
<td></td>
<td>Application</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
To apply for this position visit: [ucl.ac.uk/work-at-ucl/search-ucl-jobs](ucl.ac.uk/work-at-ucl/search-ucl-jobs)

Please complete the online application form and use the supporting statement section to outline your interest in joining SWC and how you meet the essential and desirable criteria for the role.

If you have any queries regarding the application process, please email: [swc.hr@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:swc.hr@ucl.ac.uk)

For informal enquiries about the role please contact: [c.duan@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:c.duan@ucl.ac.uk)

All candidates will be notified of the outcome of their application.

**Probation**

Appointments are subject to receipt of satisfactory references and a probationary period of 9 months.

**Working arrangements**

The nature of this role is that most of the work needs to be performed on-site. You are expected to spend between >80% of your working hours on site.

**Annual leave**

Annual leave is 27 working days for a full-time member of staff + 6 UCL closure days in addition to 8 Bank Holidays.

**Pension**

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

**Hours of Work**

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.

**Other benefits**

UCL is a dynamic, global university based in one of the most exciting capital cities in the world. Not only does working at UCL offer the opportunity to work with some of the greatest intellects in the world, it also offers competitive terms, conditions and benefits to its staff.

As part of the UCL community you can access free lunch hour lectures, exhibitions and museums and collections. On campus UCL has the Bloomsbury theatre hosting a range of performances and a series of bars, cafes, and other facilities, which UCL staff can use.

In addition to 41 days annual leave (inclusive of public holidays and closure days) and generous pension schemes, UCL provides a number of other staff benefits which are linked from the page below:

- [https://www.ucl.ac.uk/human-resources/pay-benefits/staff-benefits](https://www.ucl.ac.uk/human-resources/pay-benefits/staff-benefits)

UCL benefits and policies apply equally, whatever the sexual orientation and/or gender identity of employees. Benefits and policies relating to employees partners, includes both different sex and same sex partners.
About Sainsbury Wellcome Centre

The Sainsbury Wellcome Centre (SWC) brings 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 comprises 12 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.

SWC 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. SWC is most closely linked with the Faculties of Brain Science and Life Sciences, and is aligned administratively with Life Sciences. The Faculty of Life Sciences leadership team works closely with the SWC leadership to support and enable their mission and facilitate research excellence.

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

Professional Services at the Sainsbury Wellcome Centre

SWC has a specialist and experienced professional services team. It is structured to efficiently support research activity and deliver effective management and operational leadership of the SWC. 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 who run a wide range of training programmes for all staff types and grades.

Work Environment

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.

Accreditations

The Sainsbury Wellcome Centre and Gatsby Computational Neuroscience Unit recently received an Athena Swan Bronze Award. Find out more about our commitment to promoting gender equality.

SWC recently received full accreditation from the Association for Assessment and Accreditation of Laboratory Animal Care (AAALAC) International. Find out more about our commitment to supporting a culture of care.