



Sainsbury Wellcome Centre

Job Description

Research Technician

Department: Sainsbury Wellcome Centre

Grade: 6

Salary: £ 36,433 - £41,833 per annum including London Allowance

Hours: 36.5 hours per week (full time 1.00 FTE)

Reports to: Senior Research Technician

Available until: One year in the first instance



Context

The [Akrami Lab](#) is generally interested in the neurobiology of cognition. Our approach integrates cross-species experiments (in rats, mice and humans) and computational modelling, to understand complex cognitive processes related to working memory and statistical learning. Our lab is a diverse group, both in scientific training, ranging from fields such as engineering, psychology, and biology, and in cultural backgrounds, with members coming from countries all over the world, as befits a modern systems neuroscience lab located in a world-class neuroscience department in a metropolitan city. To this end, we are collaborating with several labs at the SWC, including the Erlich and Saxe lab.

The [Erlich](#) and [Saxe](#) Labs are generally interested in the theories of cognition and learning. We study mice, rat, human and synthetic agents to investigate how real and artificial neural network generate behavior. What sets us apart from many other labs studying behavioral and computational neuroscience is that we use a highly automated facility to train hundreds of rodents per day. This facility uses modern tools from the information technology industry: databases, web dashboards, pub/sub messaging frameworks, deployment tools, version control, issue tracking and project management software.

Main purpose of the job

We are looking for a motivated and organised Research Technician to train rats and mice in our high throughput facility.

The main purpose of the role will be the care, handling and training of animals. You will work closely with the members of the Akrami, Erlich and Saxe labs in monitoring the behaviour of animals in the experiments, including attending group meetings of the Akrami lab (and/or others). You may also be the responsible person (PIL holder) for animals

The role is physical, in that it involves transferring animal cages from holding rooms to moveable racks and transporting those racks to the behavioural training rooms.

You will have excellent organisation and communication skills and the ability to work independently and to use your initiative. You will work in a collaborative and multidisciplinary research environment, communicate regularly with all other lab members and SWC staff, and work in especially close collaboration with members of the Neurobiological Research Facility.

There will also be the opportunity to contribute experimentally to the work in the lab: including helping to perform stereotaxic surgeries, assisting in the collection of electrophysiological data or



optogenetic perturbations, intracranial infusions, pharmacological manipulation.

You will coordinate with the other team members associated with the training facility to ensure that training can take place 7 days a week, for the year.

This post involves non-standard working hours, which will be discussed in detail with the line manager. The role follows a shifted working week will requiring 9 hours per day from Saturday to Tuesday each week (with Wednesday, to Friday serving as regular days off). The expectation is that the post-holder will work approximately 26 weekends out of the year.

Duties and responsibilities

- Monitoring the health of the animals (rats and mice) in the lab.
- Handling the animals (taking them from their home cage and placing them in training boxes)
- Monitor, calibrate and repair behavioural set up to ensure it functions at the correct levels.
- Logging duties in accordance with protocols and procedures
- Performing simple animal procedures, such as giving an injection of medicine
- Assisting the researchers in the lab to carry out scientific research.
- To contribute to the overall activities of the research team and the department as appropriate.
- Maintain lab equipment, lab supplies and databases to ensure that all work is carried out in accordance with statutory and UCL regulations as appropriate.
- Maintain a meticulous record, write up results, and document work, maintaining a permanent record of the methodologies, techniques and duties performed.
- To contribute to the induction and direction of other research staff and students, if requested by the Principal Investigators or Line Manager.
- Maintain the lab cleanliness and organisation of the laboratory space.
- Always adhere to good laboratory practice 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 required 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.
- Actively participate in UCL networks, meetings and committees relevant to the role, as required.
- All staff are expected to act professionally, co-operatively 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.

| Essential Criteria | Assessment method (Application/ Interview/Practical Test) |
|---|--|
| Qualifications, experience and knowledge | |
| Experience with mouse handling and caring | Application/ Interview |
| Experience with rat handling and caring | Application/ Interview |
| Proficient with MS Office as well as use of email and web-based applications | Application/ Interview |
| Skills and abilities | |
| Professionalism (punctuality, effective communication, conscientious) | Application/ Interview |
| Able to prioritise, manage your own time, and multi-task and integrate the demands of a range of different activities and deadlines in parallel | Application/ Interview |
| Ability to use own initiative whilst recognising when advice and input is needed | Application/ Interview |
| Able to work effectively alone, but also contribute and work well as part of a team | Application/ Interview |
| Meticulous and accurate in all aspects of work, able and willing to work flexibly to meet the needs of the Centre | Application/ Interview |
| Interested in research and a commitment to supporting high quality research | Application/ Interview |
| Accountable, reliable and resourceful | Application/ Interview |
| Works ethically, legally, and with integrity | Application/ Interview |
| UCL Ways of Working | |
| Personal Excellence: Taking proactive steps where you see an opportunity to fulfil a need | Interview |
| Working Together: Understanding other people’s perspectives | Interview |
| Achieving our Mission: Planning effectively, recognising and flagging problems | Interview |

| | |
|---|--------------------|
| Desirable Criteria | |
| <p>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.</p> <p>Desirable criteria will only be scored if there is a tie break for shortlisting.</p> | Application |
| Personal Licence (PIL) holder | Application |
| A bachelor's degree in Neuroscience, Biology, or a related field | Application |
| Understanding of animal cognition or experience in the field of neuroscience | Application |
| Experience with animal research | Application |
| Technical expertise in calibration, maintenance and repair of animal behavioural setups | Application |

Apply

To apply for this position visit:

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

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 6 months.

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 Superannuation Arrangements of the University of London (SAUL), 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](#)

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, secure bicycle storage, and access to pleasant outdoor spaces.

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, including excellent family-friendly policies such as occupational shared parental pay, a work-life balance policy, career break policy and a range of financial benefits such as a season ticket loan scheme and staff discounts.

Further information can be found online:

✓ <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/human-resources/pay-benefits/staff-benefits>

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.](#)

