

Job Description

Senior Research Technician

Department: Sainsbury Wellcome Centre

Grade: 7

Salary: £43,981 to £52,586 per annum inclusive of London Allowance

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

Reports to: Professor John O'Keefe



Context

We are looking for a motivated and organised Senior Research Technician to join the O'Keefe Lab.

Our current research is directed toward unravelling the role of the entorhinal cortex and hippocampus in spatial memory and navigation, and understanding the mechanisms underlying short-term memories in the amygdala. We employ a range of technologies including tetrode and high density neuropixels electrophysiological probes, two-photon imaging in conjunction with virtual reality environment, and novel maze tasks.

Main purpose of the job

You will contribute to the work of the O'Keefe laboratory, participating in all aspects of the team's work, supporting the O'Keefe group's research programme and directly contributing to research projects.

You will primarily work on projects looking at the role of the rodent hippocampal system in spatial language and navigation. As part of this project, you will run rodent behavioural experiments, collect and analyse behavioural data, and contribute to computational models. You will also have the opportunity to assist in collecting and analysing in vivo electrophysiological recordings.

This post is funded for one year in the first instance.

Duties and responsibilities

Core duties

- Perform behavioural experiments in rodents testing social transmission of spatial knowledge.
- Work closely and coordinate with team members to gather and collate data.
- Assist in surgeries and experiments to record from brain areas such as the rodent hippocampal complex during behavioural tasks using in vivo electrophysiology.
- Analyse behavioural and electrophysiological data from chronic freely moving experiments.
- Maintain and ensure the smooth running of a highly dynamic laboratory.
- Monitor and maintain levels of consumables within the laboratory and to ensure adequate stock control of reagents.
- Adhere to good laboratory practice at all times and observe all required health and safety procedures.
- Keep up to date with all ethical and legal requirements in relation to the use of animal models in research.
- Keep up to date with all required Data Protection and Security requirements.



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 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.
- Follow and actively promote the [UCL Ways of Working](#).
- This job description may be reviewed and be subject to amendment in consultation with the post holder.
- 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 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.

Other

- Provide assistance, supervision and teaching to new staff members, visitors and students to the research group in general laboratory practices.
- Participate in weekly group meetings.
- Adhere to good laboratory practice at all times and observe all required health and safety procedures.

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.

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	
Hold an undergraduate degree or equivalent qualification in Neuroscience, molecular biology engineering, physics or a related field. Or equivalent experience.	Application
Experience working in a research laboratory.	Application/Interview
Experience of handling, monitoring health and caring of rodents.	Application/Interview
Experience of running rodent behavioural assays.	Application/Interview
Experience in the field of neuroscience of animal cognition/ behaviour in normal rodents.	Application/Interview
Skills and abilities	
Excellent interpersonal skills with an ability to work co-operatively in a multidisciplinary setting and as a member of a team.	Application/Interview
Ability to use own initiative whilst recognising when advice and input is needed.	Application/Interview
Ability to prioritise, manage your own time, and multi-task and integrate demands of a range of different activities and deadlines in parallel.	Application/Interview
Advanced IT proficiency (Spreadsheet, Word Processing, Database, Email, Web based applications) with the ability to use databases and systems related to record keeping.	Application/Interview
Programming experience (C++, Python, Matlab)	Application/Interview
Excellent oral and written communication skills.	Application/Interview
Resourceful and able to act on your own initiative, with good problem-solving skills.	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
UCL Ways of Working	
<i>Personal Excellence</i> : Making best practice an absolute priority.	

<i>Working Together:</i> Giving and seeking timely, actionable and constructive feedback.	
<i>Achieving our Mission:</i> Anticipating issues and adjusting approaches when necessary.	
Desirable Criteria	
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.	Application
Prior experience in analysis of acoustic signals and communication	

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.

Please share your career break reasons that may not be visible in your supporting documentation.

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 9 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 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, 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>

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.](#)

