

Research Fellow

Antibody-based therapeutics

Supported by argenx 

Centre for Cancer Immunology, University of Southampton

£30,942-£38,017 p.a.

A research fellow position is available in the laboratory of Professors Sally Ward and Raimund Ober who have recently relocated their research group from the USA to Southampton. Their interdisciplinary research program is dedicated to the use of protein engineering to develop novel antibody-based therapeutics.

The identification in the Ward/Ober laboratory of the Fc receptor, FcRn, as a regulator of IgG levels and transport has resulted in significant interest in targeting FcRn in biopharma. Extensive analyses of FcRn behaviour, including subcellular trafficking studies, have led to collaborations with biopharma to develop several therapeutics that are based on modulating the interactions of IgG with FcRn. For example, one such therapeutic (Efgartigimod) that inhibits FcRn activity has been developed in collaboration with argenx, and has recently been successfully used in phase 3 trials to treat antibody-mediated autoimmune disease (www.argenx.com).

The appointee will be expected to carry out research projects that relate to analyses of FcRn biology in the context of targeting FcRn to treat autoimmunity. The projects will require experience in the assessment of immunological responses, including the use of flow cytometry using primary cells isolated from mice, and/or experience in fluorescence microscopy. A background in expressing and analysing recombinant proteins/antibodies and molecular biology techniques is desirable but not essential.

The research projects will involve teamwork between laboratory members carrying out molecular and cellular analyses. The appointee will therefore be expected to enjoy working as a team member who plays a central role in the research productivity of the group. The position will involve close collaborations with scientists at argenx.

Scientific knowledge in the areas described above equivalent to Ph.D. level are required. The post-holder will possess relevant academic qualifications and work experience, including good IT skills. Non-UK citizens are also encouraged to apply.

The position is initially for a time period of two years with a possible extension to three years and will be held in the Centre for Cancer Immunology (CCI) at Southampton General Hospital. The position will be supported by argenx (www.argenx.com), a biopharma company that is committed to the use of innovative approaches in immunology to develop therapies for autoimmunity and cancer. The CCI is a newly constructed research building that builds on a 40 year history of pioneering immunology and cancer research. The activities in this centre span from discovery science to applied research and preclinical modelling and, crucially, onto first-in-human clinical trials and beyond. The centre houses world-class research facilities, including state-of-the-art scientific laboratories and a clinical trials unit.

Informal enquiries should be directed to Professor E. Sally Ward (e.s.ward@soton.ac.uk).