



Sainsbury Wellcome Centre

# Job Description

## Research Assistant

**Department:** Sainsbury Wellcome Centre

**Grade:** 6B

**Salary:** £37,332 - £39,980 p.a. inclusive of London Allowance

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

**Reports to:** Group Leader

**Available until:** 1 year in the first instance



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### Context

The [Stephenson-Jones lab](#) aims to understand the mechanisms by which subcortical circuits transform information about the world into purposive action. We focus on the basal ganglia since these nuclei are a key nexus where the cortical representation of the world is processed to give rise to critical aspects of goal-directed behaviour, including motivation, choice, action, and evaluation.

Our experimental approach starts with designing well controlled, quantitative rodent behavioural tasks that can isolate individual components of purposeful behaviour. By combining these tasks with a wide range of technical approaches: two-photon calcium imaging, fiber photometry, in vitro and in vivo electrophysiology, optogenetics, and intersectional viral labelling strategies, our lab is providing new insights into circuit mechanisms that transform information into action

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### Main purpose of the job

We are looking for a Research Assistant interested in working in a systems neuroscience lab. Your role will be to help other senior members of the lab carry out their research programs as well as develop your own projects if desired. You will contribute to the design, implementation and running of experiments. You will train animals on a range of behavioural tasks designed to isolate aspects of learning and help perform optogenetic, anatomical and in vivo

electrophysiological experiments. In addition, the candidate will be expected to help with the administration of the lab including maintaining the animal colony. The ideal candidate will have strong organizational skills and a keen interest in neuroscience.

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### Duties and responsibilities

- To contribute to the overall activities of the research team and the department as appropriate.
- To assist other members of the group with experiments where needed.
- To set up and run experiments with the guidance of the principle investigator and research associates.
- To work with the principle investigator to design new behavioural tasks.
- To prepare and present findings of research activity to colleagues on a weekly basis and at scientific meetings.
- To contribute to the induction and direction of other research staff and students if so requested by the Principal Investigator.
- Maintain lab equipment connected to the research to ensure it functions at the correct levels.



- To maintain the animal colony and perform genotyping
- 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 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/ Test)
<b>Qualifications, experience and knowledge</b>	
A bachelor’s degree in Neuroscience, physics or a related field.	Application/Interview
<b>Skills and abilities</b>	
The ability to contribute to research projects within the laboratory.	Application/Interview
Experience with python and bonsai programming or equivalent coding languages	Application/Interview
Strong written and oral communication skills, with the ability to present complex information effectively.	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
Able to work effectively alone, but also contribute and work well as part of a team.	Application/Interview
Accountable, reliable and resourceful.	Application/Interview
Works ethically, legally and with integrity.	Application/Interview
<b>UCL Ways of Working</b>	
Personal Excellence: Delivering work to agreed standards	Application/Interview
Working Together: Knowing your key stakeholders and keeping them informed	Application/Interview
Achieving our Mission: Take responsibility for your work	Application/Interview
<b>Desirable Criteria</b>	
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.	Application

<b>Desirable criteria will only be scored if there is a tie break for shortlisting.</b>	
Independent research experience, with evidence of achievement within the appropriate subject area (e.g. presented posters, given research talks).	Application
Experience with reinforcement learning literature, theory and modelling	Application

# Apply

## To apply for this position visit:

[ucl.ac.uk/work-at-ucl/search-ucl-jobs](https://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: Marcus Stephenson-Jones  
[m.stephenson-jones@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:m.stephenson-jones@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.

### Hybrid working arrangements

The nature of this role is that it can be performed both remotely and on-site (Hybrid Worker). You are expected to spend between 20% to 40% of your working hours on site using an activity-led approach rather than a strict % baseline.

### 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>

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.