

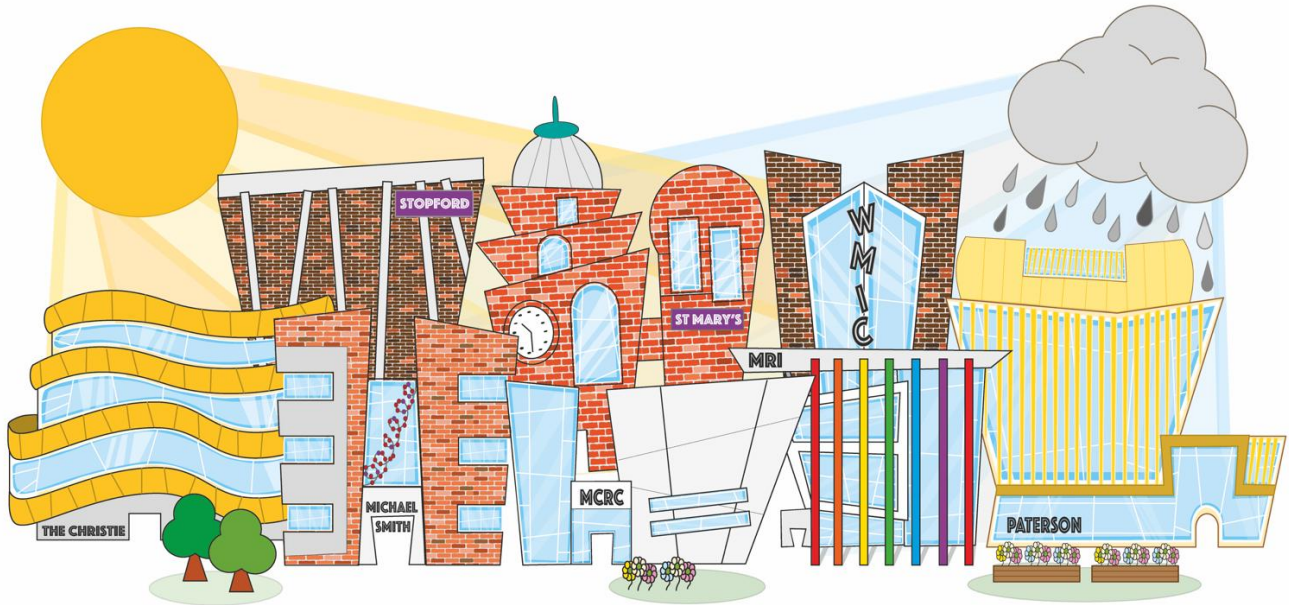


Research Associate in Cancer Cell & Molecular Biology

DIVISION OF CANCER SCIENCES

School of Medical Sciences

Faculty of Biology, Medicine & Health



DCS logos created by S.Littler

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THE UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER
PARTICULARS OF APPOINTMENT
FACULTY OF BIOLOGY, MEDICINE AND HEALTH
SCHOOL OF MEDICAL SCIENCES
DIVISION OF CANCER SCIENCES
Research Associate in Cancer Cell & Molecular Biology
Vacancy ref: BMH-031582

Terms of Appointment

Salary	£37,694 – £41,064 per annum, depending on relevant experience
Hours	1 FTE
Duration	Fixed-term for ~36 months; position available immediately
Probation	The successful candidate will have 3-month probation period
Location	Oglesby Cancer Research Building, Christie Hospital Campus, Manchester
Responsible to	Dr Camilla Coulson-Gilmer

Contact information

Dr Camilla Coulson-Gilmer

Thornley Lecturer

Division for Cancer Sciences

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Dr Joanne McGrail

Research Project Manager

Division for Cancer Sciences

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Research Associate in Cancer Cell & Molecular Biology

DNA Replication Stress (DRS) lab

You will join Dr Coulson-Gilmer's group, the **DNA Replication Stress (DRS) lab**, which specialises in cell biology and cancer pharmacology, with a focus on high-grade serous ovarian cancer (HGSOC), exploring the underlying biology and how this can be exploited to develop new targeted therapies. Our research themes are all connected to DNA replication stress and include: (i) DNA replication stress; (ii) PAR dynamics; (iii) Replication-dependent histone supply and (iv) CCNE1 biology (**Figure 1**). The project will align with these themes and we aim to recruit a candidate that brings new skills to the team, e.g. Nanopore sequencing, cell barcoding, proteomics.

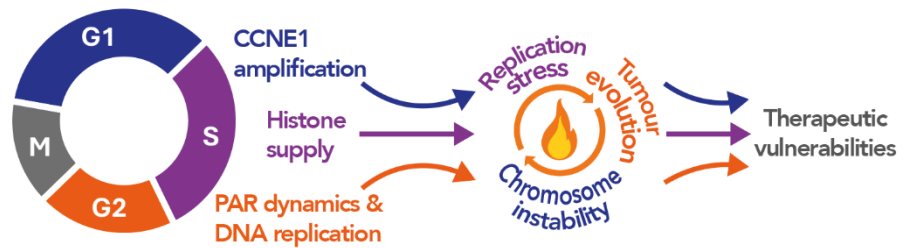


Figure 1. Research themes in the DRS lab.

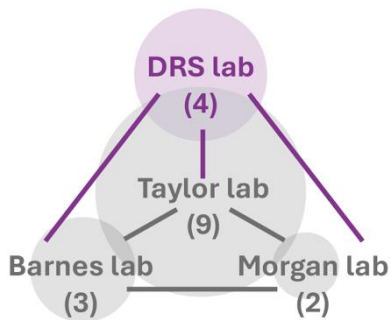


Figure 2. Key local collaborators and indicative lab sizes following 2026 appointments (totalling 13 staff, 5 PhD students).

The newly established lab, currently funded by a Thornley Lectureship and North West Cancer Research Studentship, consists of a small team of one PhD student, with a second PhD student joining in October (MRC-DTP PhD studentship). However, we benefit from a highly collaborative local ecosystem (**Figure 2**), including bioinformatician Dr Beth Barnes, and Medical Oncologist Dr Rob Morgan, each of whom are currently establishing their own research teams. We all work closely with the Prof Taylor's well-established lab ([Mitosis and Cancer Pharmacology group](#)), and the four groups have joint lab meetings, journal clubs and co-supervise several PhD students. Together this provides multidisciplinary expertise across clinical oncology and molecular, cellular and computational biology, creating a supportive and dynamic setting for post-doctoral development.

A living biobank

The lab's research is underpinned by a unique, clinically annotated [living biobank](#) of patient-derived ovarian cancer models (OCMs; purified tumour cell cultures), established and maintained by Prof Taylor's group using biospecimens donated by patients being treated at The Christie hospital (**Figure 3**).

The biobank, currently consisting of >170 OCMs from >110 patients, represents the largest and most diverse collection of its kind. OCMs display the expected hallmarks of ovarian cancer but, in contrast to traditional primary cell cultures, they have extensive proliferative potential. Therefore, OCMs are amenable to *ex vivo* drug-sensitivity profiling, which can be integrated with molecular features and clinical data, enabling us to determine which patient sub-populations are likely to respond to any given therapy. Several OCMs have also been engrafted into mice, opening up the opportunity to perform drug testing *in vivo*. The living biobank has underpinned multiple publications from the Taylor lab team (**1-3, 5-9**).

Multi-omic annotation of the biobank is ongoing, thus far we have performed RNA sequencing (RNAseq), whole-genome sequencing (WGS), and single-cell shallow-WGS-based karyotyping on large cohorts of OCMs. Strikingly, the latter revealed conspicuous karyotype heterogeneity, consistent with extensive

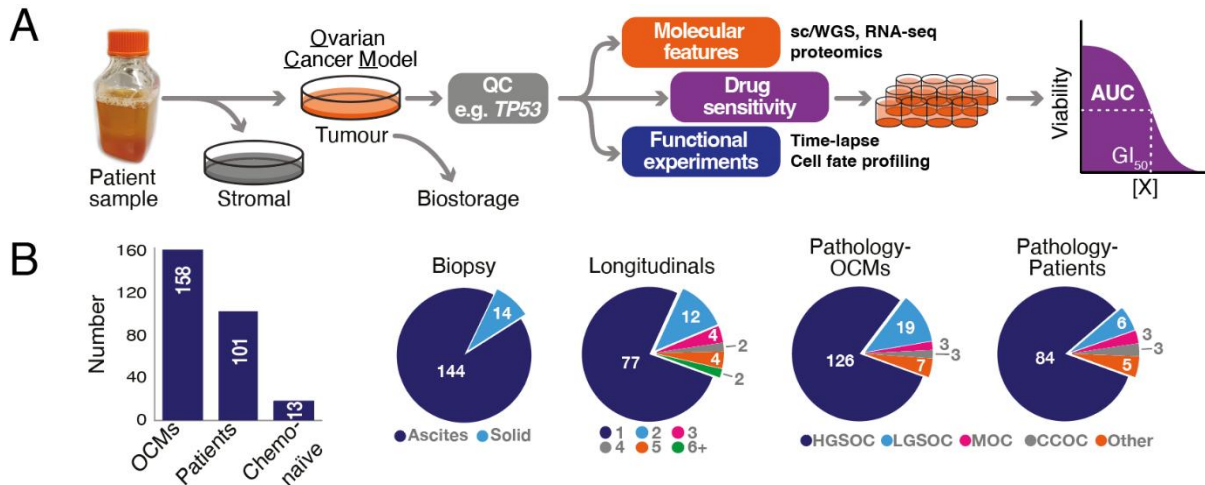


Figure 3. The Living Biobank. **A:** Workflow for generation, validation and characterisation of ovarian cancer models (OCMs). **B:** Bar graph showing number of patients, OCMs and chemo-naïve models as of April 2025. Pie charts quantitating biopsy type, longitudinal subsets; and subtype by both OCM and patient.

chromosome instability. From the WGS, we can determine HR status using the [SeqOne Genomics](#) platform, and interrogate specific events of relevance, e.g. *BRCA1/2* mutation, *CCNE1* amplification.

The biobank is managed by Prof Taylor's Research Technician, who will provide expertise to support you in utilising the OCMs for a research project. Thus, you will have a unique opportunity to gain experience in the culture of patient-derived cells and to utilise this highly unique resource for your research.

This post

The position is a Grade 6 Research Associate, which is available for immediate start. You will join the team and contribute to our research exploiting the living biobank to drive discovery science that aims to improve HGSOc treatment.

The project will align with the existing research themes outlined above (**Figure 1**), however, to attract the best candidates, which project(s) specifically and their subsequent direction will depend on your specific skill sets and interests. We welcome candidates without prior interest in ovarian cancer who have new or cutting-edge skills that can be applied to this field. For example, we would be interested in individuals with prior experience using cell barcoding to track clones in culture, or Nanopore sequencing to deepen our understanding DNA replication dynamics (**Figure 4**), as we have recently acquired a Nanopore sequencer.

You will need a solid grounding in cell culture and molecular cell biology techniques. Attention to detail is crucial, as well as an ambition to produce high-quality outputs, e.g. datasets and figures, as well as written documents for presentations and publications. Most importantly, you will be a good team player.

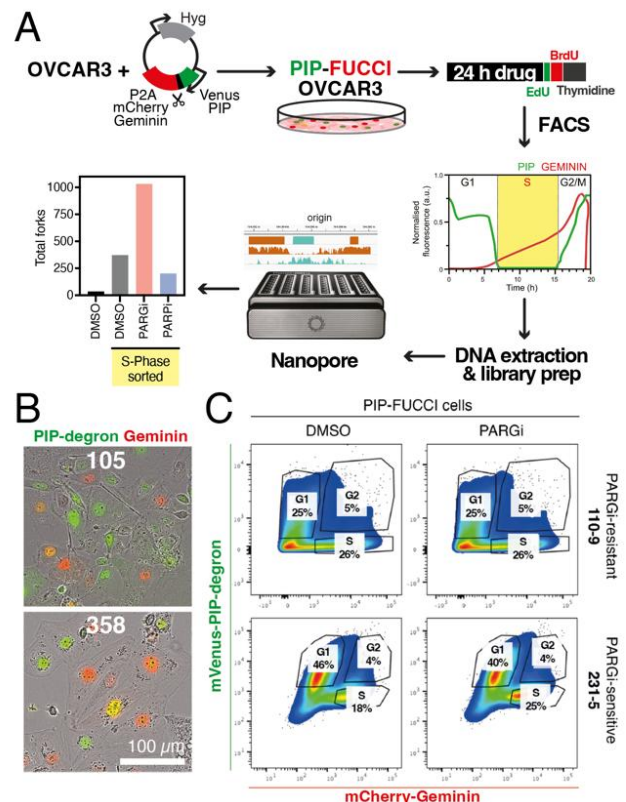


Figure 4. Analysis of replication fork dynamics using Nanopore sequencing. **A:** Cells are transduced with PIP-FUCCI lentiviral plasmid, pulsed with nucleoside analogues and sorted to isolate S-phase cells. DNA is extracted before library prep for ONT sequencing. **B:** PIP-FUCCI expression in two OCMs. **C:** Exemplar FACS plots of two PIP-FUCCI-expressing OCMs. Following 24 h PARGi treatment, the S-phase population increases in the sensitive, but not the resistant OCM, consistent with previous findings (1, 5, 8).



Key publications

1. Pillay, N., et al., *DNA Replication Vulnerabilities Render Ovarian Cancer Cells Sensitive to Poly(ADP-Ribose) Glycohydrolase Inhibitors*. *Cancer Cell*, 2019. **35**: 519-533 e8.
2. Nelson, L., et al., *A living biobank of ovarian cancer ex vivo models reveals profound mitotic heterogeneity*. *Nat Commun*, 2020. **11**: 822.
3. Barnes, B.M., et al., *Distinct transcriptional programs stratify ovarian cancer cell lines into the five major histological subtypes*. *Genome Med*, 2021. **13**: 140.
4. Bronder, D., et al., *TP53 loss initiates chromosomal instability in fallopian tube epithelial cells*. *Dis Model Mech*, 2021. **14**: dmm049001.
5. Coulson-Gilmer, C., et al., *Replication catastrophe is responsible for intrinsic PAR glycohydrolase inhibitor-sensitivity in patient-derived ovarian cancer models*. *J Exp Clin Cancer Res*, 2021. **40**: 323.
6. Golder, A., et al., *Multiple-low-dose therapy: effective killing of high-grade serous ovarian cancer cells with ATR and CHK1 inhibitors*. *NAR Cancer*, 2022. **4**: zcac036.
7. Nelson, L., et al., *Exploiting a living biobank to delineate mechanisms underlying disease-specific chromosome instability*. *Chromosome Res*, 2023. **31**: 21.
8. Coulson-Gilmer, C., et al., *Intrinsic PARG inhibitor sensitivity is mimicked by TIMELESS haploinsufficiency and rescued by nucleoside supplementation*. *NAR Cancer*, 2024. **6**: zcae030.
9. Tighe, A., et al., *Screening a living biobank identifies cabazitaxel as a strategy to combat acquired taxol resistance in high-grade serous ovarian cancer*. *Cell Rep Med*, 2025. **6**: 102160.



Key Responsibilities, Accountabilities and Duties

The range of duties will include:

- Develop and maintain up-to-date knowledge of the relevant scientific literature and apply emerging concepts, techniques and methodologies to ongoing research.
- Take responsibility for the design, day-to-day management and delivery of a research project, setting objectives and driving progress in a rigorous, efficient and timely manner.
- Undertake high-quality research using appropriate laboratory and core facility resources, with the aim of producing publishable outputs in high-impact peer-reviewed journals.
- Use creativity and initiative to analyse and interpret experimental data, draw conclusions, and subsequently identify and drive new research directions and extend the research programme.
- Maintain accurate, detailed, and accessible records of experimental methods and findings.
- Communicate with Dr Coulson-Gilmer on a regular basis to (i) report findings and progress and (ii) discuss next steps; seek advice as and when necessary to ensure timely progress.
- Actively participate in group lab meetings by regularly presenting data and discussing results with the team.
- Present research findings at internal divisional seminars and meetings, as well as at national/international conferences.
- Write up research in a clear, concise and timely manner, including publication figure preparation and assisting with preparation of proposals and applications to external bodies, e.g. for funding and contractual purposes.
- Work collaboratively with colleagues, students and external partners, contributing to joint projects and collaborative decision making as required.
- Liaise with colleagues and students in a professional manner, build internal contacts and participate in internal and external networks for the exchange of information and to form relationships for future collaboration.
- Supervise, support and assess students where appropriate, contributing to training and development of research skills.

General

- Maintain confidentiality of information in line with data protection requirements and University policy.
- Balance, with support, the competing pressures of research and administrative demands and deadlines.
- Embrace the team ethos, to help sustain an environment where all team members can perform to the best of their abilities.
- Comply with Health and Safety requirements, including having an awareness of personal responsibilities to maintain a safe working environment, as well as the potential impact of workplace environment risks on their own work and that of others.



Social Responsibility (All Staff)

One University: A 'One University' approach, whereby we break down silos and work collaboratively towards furthering the University's strategic goals, vision and values.

Inclusion: Support the University's ambition to create an inclusive place to work where every person matters, demonstrating a commitment to non-discriminatory conduct and respect for others, and fostering a University where people feel deeply connected to each other, to Manchester, and to the wider world.

Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom: Support the University's commitment to securing and actively promoting the importance of free speech and academic freedom within our community.

Service Excellence: Committed to prioritising service excellence and high performance to deliver great people-centred experiences.

Agility: Demonstrate a commitment to agility and continuous improvement by embracing change, championing innovation, and being flexible and forward thinking to adapt.

Sustainability: A sustainable approach that safeguards the University of the future by championing environmental practices, advancing digital capability, and supporting financial stability and philanthropic initiatives.

Social Responsibility: Promote and champion the University's social responsibility ambitions to advance social inclusion, prosperous communities, better health, and cultural engagement.

Person Specification

Essential Knowledge, Skills and Experience:

Background and training:

- Appropriate academic scientific training and a PhD in a relevant subject (e.g. molecular/ cellular/ cancer biology).
- Substantial recent technical experience with the following: cell culture (e.g. established cell lines, primary cells, transfections and viral infections); cell biology (e.g. immunofluorescence, flow cytometry); molecular biology (e.g. PCR, cloning, sequencing); biochemical techniques (e.g. western blotting).
- Proven ability to independently manage and scientifically drive a research project on a day-to-day basis.
- Evidence of an established or emerging high-quality publication record.

Scientific and analytical skills:

- Motivated to seek new knowledge and share ideas.
- Proven recent ability to contribute intellectual to research projects.
- Recent experience of developing and refining experimental approaches.
- Ability to design, optimise and complete experiments, generating publication-quality data.



- Recent experience producing publication-quality figures and tables from raw data, using appropriate quantitative and statistical methods.
- Experience in writing scientific manuscripts, conference abstracts and presentations.

Transferable skills:

- Strong organisational and time/data management skills.
- Effective interpersonal and communication skills.
- Careful and thorough approach to work, with a strong attention to detail.
- Adaptable problem-solver, open to new approaches and responsive to change.
- Excellent written communication and presentation skills.

Team working skills:

- Positive, respectful approach to working with colleagues and students.
- Collaborative attitude, offering practical and intellectual support and contributing to the supervision of junior team members where appropriate.
- Commitment to good lab citizenship, including making constructive contributions to laboratory maintenance and resource organisation.
- Ability to support effective collaboration within the team and with external partners.
- Be aware of equality and diversity considerations in research, including biases in datasets and their impact on analysis, interpretation and applicability of findings.

Desirable Knowledge, Skills and Experience:

- Proficiency with state-of-the-art techniques, such as molecular biology (e.g. Nanopore sequencing); cell biology (e.g. high-resolution imaging and analysis); high-throughput approaches (e.g. assay development, screening); and cell barcoding methodologies (lentiviral titration, low-MOI transduction, barcode recovery).

The above particulars are intended as a general guide to the duties of the post and the conditions of service. They do not constitute a contract of employment between the University and the person appointed. The successful applicant will, however, receive a full set of conditions of service on appointment.



The University of Manchester

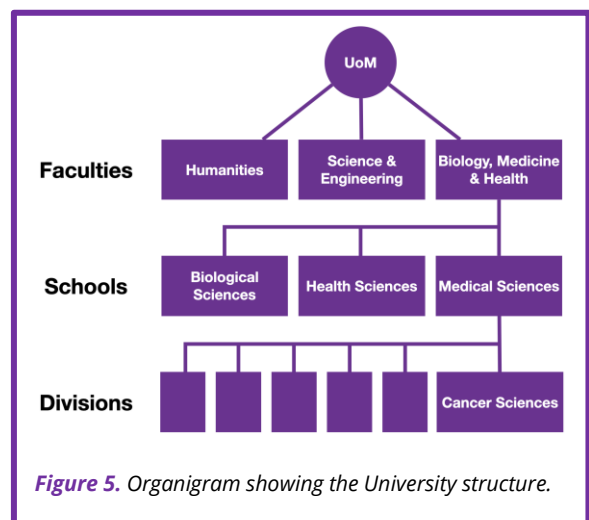
The University of Manchester is one of the largest universities in the UK with more than 44,000 students and 12,000 staff. We aim to strengthen our position as a world-leading research university and are committed to delivering (a) an outstanding teaching and learning experience; (b) contributing to the social and economic success of local, national and international communities; (c) producing the highest calibre graduates; (d) and developing our staff to be amongst the very best of their peers. Our trajectory is excellent, evidenced by recently being ranked 2nd in the world in the [THE Impact](#) rankings.

We are unique in the UK higher education sector in having Social Responsibility as one of our three core strategic goals, sitting equally alongside our commitments to research and teaching. To achieve our ambitious goals, we aim to attract and retain the very best people to work across a range of academic disciplines and support functions.

The University of Manchester strives to make our community a welcoming, caring and enthusiastic one, fuelling ambition, combined with opportunities and support to help us all achieve our personal and professional goals. Our diverse job opportunities include an attractive [benefits package](#) with family-friendly policies that provide for flexible working. We care deeply about career and personal development, offering a structured induction programme for new staff, an annual performance and development review, staff training for all career stages and mentoring opportunities to support your career development. We have a genuine commitment to [equality of opportunity](#) for our staff and students, and our ambition is to employ a workforce that reflects the diverse community we serve.

Faculty of Biology, Medicine and Health (FBMH)

The Faculty of Biology, Medicine and Health (**Figure 5**) has an integrated structure to deliver a truly translational approach to the life sciences, ensuring smooth research pathways – from pure discovery science through to clinical application and patient care. With a total annual income of over £300 million, and over 3,000 members of staff, the Faculty is comparable in size to a medium-sized UK university. Thirty undergraduate and 90 postgraduate programmes offer our 11,000 students opportunities to develop the skills and knowledge they need for a successful career. The integration of discovery biology, clinical application and patient care within a single Faculty, particularly in a region with notable health inequality, provides us with a real opportunity to have a very significant and positive impact on people's lives.



The School of Medical Sciences (SMS)

The School of Medical Sciences is one of three Schools which form the Faculty of Biology, Medicine and Health. Led by Professor Tony Heagerty, the School contains the Divisions of Cardiovascular Sciences; Cancer Sciences; Dentistry; Developmental Biology and Medicine; Diabetes, Endocrinology and Gastroenterology; and Medical Education. In addition to a strong and diverse research base, SMS has a major teaching portfolio, being responsible for the MB ChB and BDS programmes plus a large suite of Masters courses.



Division of Cancer Sciences (DCS)

The Division of Cancer Sciences (DCS), which is effectively a large university department, was created in August 2016 with Prof. Stephen Taylor appointed as Head of Division in February 2019. It is a major contributor to the University's Cancer beacon and the wider Manchester cancer ecosystem, with research interests spanning discovery science, translational research and clinical studies.

The Division currently comprises approx. 360 staff including 64 academics, ~100 researchers, 150 trainees (PhD and Master's students) and 25 admin staff and project managers. ~150 honorary staff and Emeritus Professors are also associated with the Division; while not employees of the University they make invaluable contributions to a wide range of our activities, adding breadth and depth to our research, business engagement, teaching, social responsibility and internationalization.

The Division of Cancer Sciences is very research active; with an annual grant income of ~£20M. DCS has a strong portfolio of income from industry, working with a number of companies including Novartis, AstraZeneca, Merck, GlaxoSmithKline and Varian. The Division has a healthy pipeline of industrial collaborations, and we wish to build on these successful partnerships. Supporting a strong research profile, DCS generates a large number of high-quality publications, and we envisage a strong REF return at the next national audit. A large proportion of publications are in clinical oncology journals (e.g., *Lancet Oncology*, *J Clin Oncol*) consistent with the Division's strength in clinical research, but DCS staff also publish in high impact discovery journals (e.g., *Nature*, *Cancer Cell*).

Division staff contribute to a wide variety of teaching activities, including at undergraduate level within SMS and SBS. The Division contributes to units in other Faculties, (e.g., medical physics in FSE). The Division also runs of a number of Master's programs in the oncology space (e.g. Experimental Cancer Medicine, Oncology, Cancer and Biology and Radiotherapy physics). In 2019, the Division made its first teaching-focused appointment with the primary objective of establishing a novel blended on-line Transformative Oncology Master's program, with the first students enrolling in September 2022.

To manage the Division, we have established a comprehensive sub-structure comprised of an Operations Team, a Senior Leadership Team, a Senior Management Team and committees (Figure 6). The Operations Team meets weekly to update, discuss and action a variety of operational matters. The Senior Leadership Team consists of senior academics whose role is to assist the Head of Division with line management and annual P&DRs of the academic staff, and to provide guidance and advice to the Head of Division. In Spring 2020, we established a comprehensive set of sub-committees covering key areas of activity. The key leads form the Senior Management Team (SMT) who meet frequently to develop and deliver the Division's strategy. This new structure provides a functional framework for the Division and is allowing researchers and junior academics to help shape the Division into a vibrant academic environment. For example, the Researcher Committee has established an internal seminar series, while in parallel, four junior academics have established a 'Next generation'

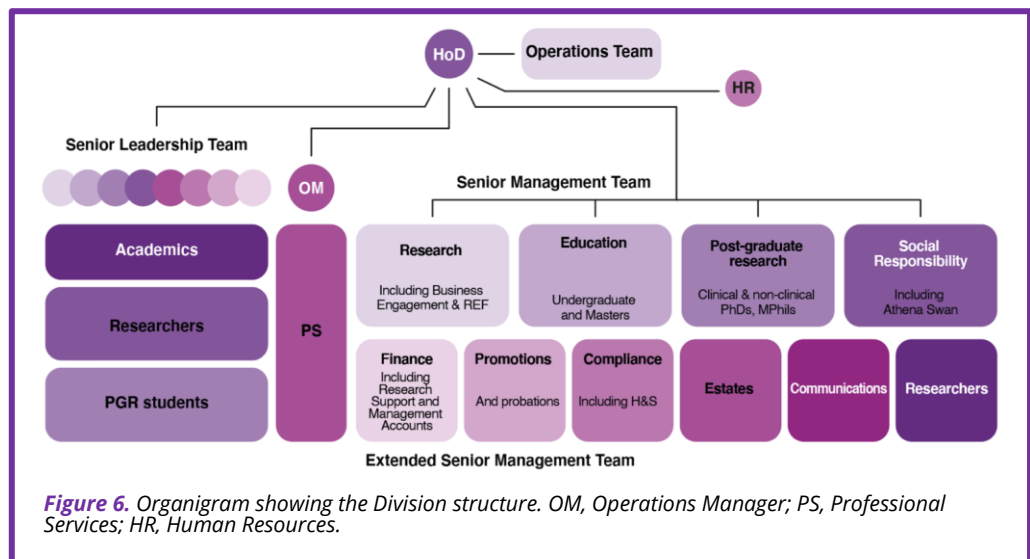


Figure 6. Organigram showing the Division structure. OM, Operations Manager; PS, Professional Services; HR, Human Resources.

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external seminar program which showcases external cancer-related research from investigators at the early stages of their independent careers.

Our strategic partnerships

The Division of Cancer Sciences has a number of key strategic partnerships that underpin its ambitions to develop next generation teaching and research.

The Manchester Cancer Research Centre. Led by Professor Rob Bristow, the MCRC is a world-leading research partnership founded by The University of Manchester, Cancer Research UK and The Christie NHS Foundation Trust, and is responsible for driving a consistent and integrated strategy for cancer research and innovation in Manchester. The MCRC's vision is that by uniting science and driving clinical excellence we will create a future free from the burden of cancer. In order to achieve this vision, the MCRC is leading in the development of prevention and early detection and precision medicine strategies that enable cancer to be identified earlier and curative treatments to be delivered to everyone. As a hub for Cancer research in the University structure, the Division of Cancer Sciences is a key component of the MCRC with many of our academic cohort working closely with the MCRC to drive a *one-Manchester* cancer vision to achieve *Precision Medicine for All*.

The Cancer Research UK Manchester Institute. Led by Professor Samra Turajlić, the CRUK MI is a leading cancer research institute within The University of Manchester, spanning the whole spectrum of cancer research, from investigating the molecular and cellular basis of cancer, to translational research and the development of therapeutics. The Institute supports several investigative programmes, spanning both basic and translational cancer research. It has excellent laboratory facilities and outstanding core services, including genomic sequencing, confocal microscopy, bioinformatics, histology, and access to mass spectrometry-based proteomics. Staff within the Division of Cancer Sciences work very closely with CRUK MI staff at both the research and operational level, sharing both lab and dry space across the cancer campus, and together with the MCRC we aim to create a truly fantastic working environment that will allow all three partners to deliver their strategic goals.

The Christie NHS Foundation Trust. The Christie hospital is the largest single-site cancer centre in Europe, treating more than 60,000 patients a year. Based in Withington, it serves a population of 3.2 million people across Greater Manchester and Cheshire, while more than a quarter of our patients are referred to us from across the UK. The Christie is ranked as the most technologically advanced cancer centre in the world outside North America and has been named by the National Institute for Health Research as one of the best hospitals providing opportunities for patients to take part in clinical research studies. The Christie's clinical services include radiotherapy, where it is home to one of the world's largest radiotherapy departments and is now also the first NHS organisation in the UK to deliver high-energy proton beam therapy; chemotherapy where it is one of the UK's largest chemotherapy units; highly specialist surgery for complex and rare cancers as well as a wide range of support and diagnostic services.



Commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

The University of Manchester values a diverse workforce and welcomes applications from all sections of the community.

The Division's senior leadership acknowledges that our academic cohort does not reflect the diversity of our wider society. Our desire to address this imbalance by attracting talented individuals from more diverse backgrounds is aligned with the University's commitment to equality for all our staff, students, stakeholders and visitors.

Equality Objectives

1. Improve the representation of women and black and minoritised ethnic (BME) staff in senior leadership, academic and professional support positions.
2. Take action to further understand and improve the experience of disabled staff as indicated in the staff survey.
3. Take action to further understand and address any differential outcomes of undergraduate students in relation to access, retention, attainment and progression to a positive graduate destination in relation to disability, ethnicity, gender and socio-economic status.
4. Take action to understand and address any inequalities for researchers.
5. To better understand the challenges, obstacles and barriers faced by different groups at the University and to foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it.
6. Better understand the potential impact of University functions on certain groups by improving disclosure rates and reporting mechanisms for age, disability, ethnicity, caring responsibilities, religion or belief (including no belief) sexual orientation and gender identity.

We are an open place of enquiry and challenge. We embrace and celebrate difference, diversity and debate, and we pride ourselves on being a place of education, learning and community where we are able, within the law, to question and test received wisdom, express new ideas and explore controversial or unpopular topics and opinions. Find out more from our [Policy on Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom](#).

Charter Marks



The School of Medical Sciences currently holds an Athena Swan Silver Award. The Athena Swan Charter was established in 2005 to encourage and advance the careers of women in STEMM employment. In May 2015 the Charter was expanded to include non-STEMM Schools, professional and support staff, technical staff, and Trans staff and students. The Charter now also recognises work undertaken to address gender equality more broadly, and not just barriers to progression that affect women.



The Race Equality Charter Mark aims to improve the representation, progression and success of minoritised ethnic staff and students within higher education.

We have successfully been awarded silver status for the Race Equality Charter Award (formally the Equality Challenge Unit, ECU), in 2023 for excellence in advancing racial equality in higher education.

The framework for the race equality charter mark builds on the experience and methodology of ECU's Athena SWAN Charter.

The University of Manchester was proud to be one of the 31 higher education institutions involved in the trial of the Race Equality Charter Mark.

The University of Manchester placed 7th in the 2024 Stonewall Equality Index making it the most inclusive University in England for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans* employees.



Stonewall is Britain's leading charity for lesbian, gay, bi and trans equality, working to create a world where every single person can be accepted without exception.

Stonewall's Top 100 is compiled from submissions to the Workplace Equality Index, a powerful benchmarking tool used by employers to assess their achievements and progress on LGBT equality in the workplace, as well as their wider work in the community and on service provision.

Each organization must demonstrate their expertise in 10 areas of employment policy and practice, including networking groups, senior leadership, procurement and how well they've engaged with LGBT communities.



The University is a Disability Confident Leader. The Disability Confident scheme, accredited by the Department for Work and Pensions, helps employers recruit, retain and train great people. Disability Confident organisations play a leading role in changing attitudes about, and increasing understanding of, disability. There are three levels of the scheme with Leader being the highest.



Learning, Development and Progression

Talent Development

The University's Talent Development (Staff Learning and Development) team support the personal and professional development of all staff in the University.

They work closely with learning experts around the University including those based in local HR teams and those supporting academic staff and early career researchers (ECR)

Talent Development offer everything from off-the-shelf, face-to-face training, to bespoke one-to-one development support. By planning activity both in response to the strategic goals of the University and the learning needs of individuals, we aim to become a truly leading learning organisation.

Centre for Academic and Researcher Development

Based within the Faculty of Biology, Medicine and Health, the Centre for Academic and Researcher Development delivers a number of face-to-face training programmes providing a variety of development opportunities for postgraduate students, research staff and academic staff.

Their goal is to create an environment that supports you through every stage of your career, allowing you to excel and reach your full potential.

Development opportunities include:

- Faculty-specific 'New Academic and Fellows Programme' – The Academic Development Programme – supporting you through the different stages of your academic career
- Pedagogic and Staff Development Programme
- Mentoring
- Leaders in Teaching Programme
- Promotion workshops and access to 'Promotion Champions'