POSITION DESCRIPTION

Position Title: Research Assistant  
Employer: Baker IDI Heart and Diabetes Institute  
Department: Basic and Clinical Cardiology  
Division: Heart Failure Pharmacology  
Supervisor/Manager: Rebecca Ritchie  
Date: 27 March 2013

BACKGROUND:
Baker IDI Heart and Diabetes Institute was established in 2008 following the merger of the Baker Heart Research Institute and the International Diabetes Institute. Baker IDI is the nation’s first multi-disciplinary organisation tackling the deadly trio of obesity, diabetes and cardiovascular disease through research, education and patient care.

DEPARTMENT:
The Heart Failure Pharmacology laboratory core activities centre on the prevention and treatment of the cardiac complications of diabetes, hypertension (high blood pressure) and myocardial infarction (heart attack), alone and in combination. These complications include structural changes to the heart, specifically cardiac hypertrophy (an enlarged heart and/or cardiac myocytes) and cardiac fibrosis (increased extracellular matrix deposition), which together are known as left ventricular (LV) remodeling. Cardiac function may also be impaired in these settings: LV systolic dysfunction (reduced cardiac contractile function) and/or diastolic dysfunction (impaired cardiac relaxation and delayed LV filling following each contraction) may be evident. The Heart Failure Pharmacology laboratory focuses on pharmacological and transgenic means to treat and prevent these precursors of heart failure, using small laboratory animals. These cardiac pathophysiological disorders can otherwise progress to heart failure (and perhaps death) if not well managed.

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<th>Position</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Supervisor</th>
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<tr>
<td>Laboratory Head</td>
<td>Incumbent</td>
<td>Laboratory Head</td>
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<tr>
<td>Postdoctoral fellows (2)</td>
<td>Incumbent</td>
<td>Laboratory Head</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research Assistant</td>
<td>Being recruited</td>
<td>Laboratory Head</td>
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<td>PhD/Masters students (2)</td>
<td>Incumbent</td>
<td>Laboratory Head</td>
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<td>Honours students (2)</td>
<td>Incumbent</td>
<td>Laboratory Head</td>
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<td><strong>8 FTE</strong></td>
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NATURE OF ENVIRONMENT:
Deadline-driven, tight schedules.

SUPERVISORY RESPONSIBILITIES:
Work with support, guidance and/or routine direction from staff at levels above.
No major supervisory responsibilities, but may be required to assist in training of graduate students.

TRAVEL REQUIREMENTS:
None anticipated

KEY JOB REQUIREMENTS, RESPONSIBILITIES & DUTIES:

- Perform routine experimental procedures in one or more areas of work, such as biochemistry, histology (i.e. H&E, Immunofluorescent, Sirius Red and DHE staining), or molecular biology (i.e. RT-PCR, Western blotting)
- Collect tissue and culture samples, stain and prepare slides and perform tests and assays.
- Calibrate and/or operate various laboratory equipments, including microscopes, centrifuges and measuring devices.
• Perform routine experimental procedures on laboratory animals (i.e. mice and rats), including the administration of drugs (i.e. IP injection)
• Assist in small animal surgical procedures (e.g. animal monitoring under anaesthesia and recovery)
• Record and consolidate research data.
• Limited administrative functions, primarily concerned with own area of research.
• Proactive attendance at team meetings and attendance at all relevant seminars and staff meetings

MEET STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS OF THE COMPANY
Compliance with Institute policies regarding OH&S, animal ethics and Baker IDI Research Conduct Policies

PROBLEM SOLVING COMPLEXITY:
• Solve directly related issues with the research methodology; refer to more senior research staff as required.

MANAGE AND PERFORM ADMINISTRATION DUTIES
• Basic analyses of research data
• Contribute to general lab housekeeping
• Provide assistance for ordering consumables and reagents

REQUIREMENTS OF POSITION HOLDER

EDUCATION LEVEL:
• Academic knowledge of a health science discipline, such as biochemistry, physiology, pharmacology or pathology, plus ability to translate, adapt and apply this knowledge that is generally associated with a Bachelor's degree or an equivalent combination of education and progressively responsible experience.
• Relevant Undergraduate degree required.

EXPERIENCE:
Research experience in histology and molecular biology will be highly regarded.

ORGANISATIONAL KNOWLEDGE:
Understands their own area of research, and how this team interacts with other directly related groups within the research programme.

COMMUNICATION/INTERPERSONAL SKILLS:
• A high level of interpersonal skills, which enable the appointee to liaise effectively with a wide range of people at a variety of levels internal and external to the Baker.
• Excellent oral and reasonable written communication skills.
• Demonstrated ability to participate positively in a team.

KNOWLEDGE:
• Excellent planning and organisational skills, including the ability to manage a range of tasks with conflicting priorities.

ABILITIES:
• Demonstrated ability to meet deadlines without compromising close attention to detail and accuracy.
• Proven ability to work as a member of a team as well as on own initiative without close supervision.
• Demonstrated ability and willingness to take initiative and to improve and enhance existing systems and procedures (quality assurance).
• Demonstrated ability to maintain confidentiality and comply with privacy requirements.
SUMMARY OF POSITION:
This is a junior research assistant position in the field of Heart Failure Pharmacology with scope of interests including cardiovascular pathophysiology, particularly disorders associated with oxidative stress, such as LV hypertrophy and diabetes.

Last updated (27th March 2013)