

Job title	Research Assistant
Grade	Grade 5
Salary range	£25,298 - £29,301
Staff Group	Research
Department / Institution	The Sainsbury Laboratory

## Role-specific information

### Role Summary

The Sainsbury Laboratory is a scientific research institute focusing on plant developmental biology and computational modelling of plant development. Since opening in 2011, it has expanded rapidly to around 150 researchers and 30 support staff in approximately 20 sub-groups.

The role holder will be a member of Dr Siobhan Braybrook's research group at the Sainsbury Laboratory. The group focuses on plant biomechanics and development.

The post holder will be involved in both research and lab management. They will organise and execute their own research as well as maintaining the research environment, facilitating others' research in a team environment, transferring of skills and training of new members and collation of results and development of new methods.

### Key Responsibilities

<p><b>1. Research and scholarship</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undertake basic research for example by preparing, setting up, conducting and recording the outcome of experiments and field work, the development of questionnaires and conducting surveys, using straightforward mathematical modelling or scientific computation;</li> <li>• Conduct literature and database searches;</li> <li>• Continue to update knowledge and develop skills;</li> <li>• Write up results of own research;</li> <li>• Contribute to the production of research reports and publications;</li> <li>• Present information on research progress and outcomes to bodies supervising research, e.g. steering groups, sponsors or members of research groups;</li> <li>• Prepare papers for steering groups and other bodies;</li> <li>• Make use of standard research techniques and methods;</li> <li>• Analyse and interpret the results of own research and generate original ideas based on outcomes;</li> <li>• Develop new or improved methods of testing;</li> <li>• Innovation and creativity in method optimisation and development;</li> <li>• Documentation of clear and complete protocols for lab methods and equipment usage.</li> </ul>	
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<b>2. Teaching and learning support</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May assist in the supervision of student projects;</li> <li>• May provide supervision/instruction to classes/outreach visitors;</li> <li>• Provide clear and adaptive training on lab equipment to new members, students, and guests;</li> <li>• Instruct visiting students in safe working practices including overseeing activities in the labs;</li> <li>• Synthesis of effective and clear protocols and training guides for lab activities and equipment;</li> <li>• Ability to manage shared equipment and master new equipment when required;</li> <li>• Provide technical advice to visiting research students and researchers in the design of experiments or equipment.</li> </ul>	
<b>3. Liaison and networking</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Liaise with colleagues and students on routine matters;</li> <li>• Make internal and external contacts to develop knowledge and understanding and form relationships for future collaboration;</li> <li>• Participation in Horticultural, Technician, and Health &amp; Safety Committees within the institute and communication of information between these groups and the research team.</li> </ul>	
<b>4. Planning and organising</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plan own day-to-day research activity within the framework of the agreed programme;</li> <li>• Co-ordinate own work with that of others to avoid conflict or duplication of effort;</li> <li>• Contribute to the planning of research projects;</li> <li>• Interaction with other team members on collaborative projects, provide effective and efficient experimental/facilitative help to other lab members;</li> <li>• Monitor lab resources and place orders when required including expenditure within a set budget;</li> <li>• Work within existing lab organisational framework to maintain lab efficiency while presenting new ideas/solutions when efficiency could be improved.</li> </ul>	

## Person Profile

This section details the knowledge, skills and experience we require for the role.

<b>Education &amp; qualifications</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educated to first degree level (or equivalent) in cell biology, plant biology or a related discipline</li> </ul>
<b>Specialist knowledge &amp; skills</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Possess sufficient breadth or depth of knowledge in the discipline and of research methods and techniques to work within own area</li> </ul> <p><b>Desirable</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledge of RNA work, RNAseq, quantitative PCR, gene cloning, histology, confocal microscopy and plant growth</li> </ul>
<b>Interpersonal &amp; communication skills</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrate honest, clear, effective communication within a team</li> <li>• Ability to interact diplomatically within the team and within the institute</li> <li>• Be able to provide and process constructive feedback with a team</li> <li>• Solution oriented</li> <li>• Display critical, analytical and pragmatic thinking</li> <li>• Ability to efficiently and effectively communicate in English, oral and written</li> </ul>

<b>Relevant experience</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good knowledge of plant development, molecular biology and plant genetics</li> </ul> <p><b>Desirable</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experience in working with scientists in a team</li> <li>• Experience in problem solving and creative thinking in a research environment</li> <li>• Demonstrate enthusiasm and perseverance in learning new research skills such as new techniques or methods</li> <li>• Practical experience in self-organisation, goal setting, and prioritisation</li> <li>• Ability to design and execute work in an efficient and effective way</li> </ul>
<b>Additional requirements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good IT literacy</li> <li>• Accuracy and outstanding record keeping, including protocol preparation, lab organisational documents, and research note keeping and data organisation</li> </ul>

## Terms and Conditions

<b>Location</b>	The Sainsbury Laboratory
<b>Working pattern</b>	Full time
<b>Hours of work</b>	<p>There are no conditions relating to hours and times of work but you are expected to work such hours and days as are reasonably necessary for the proper performance of your duties.</p> <p>Your times of work should be agreed between you and your line manager.</p>
<b>Length of appointment</b>	Fixed-term: The funds for this post are available until 30 September 2017 in the first instance.
<b>Limited funding</b>	In the first instance, the funding supporting the post is available until 30 September 2017.
<b>Probation period</b>	3 months
<b>Annual leave</b>	Full time employees are entitled to annual paid leave of 6.6 weeks (or 33 days for those working full time), plus public holidays.
<b>Pension eligibility</b>	<p>Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS)</p> <p>Pension scheme details are available on our web pages at: <a href="http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/pensions/schemes.html">http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/pensions/schemes.html</a>. Information about the legal requirement for the University to automatically enrol its eligible jobholders into a qualifying workplace pension scheme from 1 March 2013 is available at: <a href="http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/pensions/autoenrolment/">http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/pensions/autoenrolment/</a>.</p>
<b>Retirement age</b>	The University does not operate a retirement age for research staff.

## Screening Check Requirements

We have a legal responsibility to ensure that you have the right to work in the UK before you can start working for us. If you do not have the right to work in the UK already, any offer of employment we make to you will be conditional upon you gaining it. If you need further information, you may find the Right to Work page within the 'Applying for a job' section of the University's Job Opportunities pages helpful (please see <http://www.jobs.cam.ac.uk/right/have/>).

## Application Process

To submit an application for this vacancy, please click on the link in the 'Apply online' section of the advert published on the University's Job Opportunities pages. This will route you to the University's Web Recruitment System, where you will need to register an account (if you have not already) and log in before completing the online application form.

Please ensure that you upload a copy of your full CV, a covering letter highlighting your suitability for the position and contact information of three referees.

The closing date for applications is Sunday 19 March 2017. If you have any questions about this vacancy or the application process, please contact [enquiries@slcu.cam.ac.uk](mailto:enquiries@slcu.cam.ac.uk).

## General Information

### The University of Cambridge

The University of Cambridge is one of the world's oldest and most successful Universities, with an outstanding reputation for academic achievement and research. It was ranked first in the 2011 QS World University Rankings and its graduates have won more Nobel Prizes than any other university in the world. The University comprises more than 150 departments, faculties, schools and other institutions, plus a central administration and 31 independent and autonomous colleges.

The University and the Colleges are linked in a complex historical relationship. The Colleges are self-governing, separate legal entities which appoint their own staff. They admit students, provide student accommodation and deliver small group teaching (supervisions). The University awards degrees and its faculties and departments provide lectures and seminars for students, determine the syllabi for teaching and conduct research.

There is much more information about the University at <http://www.cam.ac.uk/univ/works/index.html> which we hope you will find helpful.

### The Sainsbury Laboratory

The Sainsbury Laboratory Cambridge University (SLCU) is a new research institute funded by the Gatsby Foundation. The aim of the Laboratory is to elucidate the regulatory systems underlying plant growth and development. SLCU will ultimately house approximately 12 research groups each consisting of around 10 researchers. The laboratory runs a range of centrally managed facilities and services including plant growth facilities, microscopy, tissue culture rooms, level 2 containment facility and a seed store.

Further information about the Sainsbury Laboratory is available at: <http://www.slcu.cam.ac.uk/>

### What the University can offer you

One of our core values at the University of Cambridge is to recognise and reward our staff as our greatest asset. We realise that it's our people who have built our outstanding reputation and that we will only maintain our leading position in the academic world by continuing to attract and retain talented and motivated people. If you choose to come and work with us, you will find that we offer:

- **Excellent benefits** – You will be eligible for a wide range of competitive benefits and services, including numerous discounts on shopping, health care, financial services and public transport. We also offer defined benefits pension schemes and tax-efficient bicycle, car lease and charity-giving schemes.

We will help you balance your home and work life by providing you with generous annual leave entitlement and procedures for requesting a career break or flexible working arrangements if you need them. You will also have access to a range of well-being support services, including in-house Occupational Health and Counselling services. If you have childcare responsibilities, you may also benefit from the enhanced maternity/adoption pay, two nurseries and a holiday play scheme that we provide.

We are keen to welcome new employees from other parts of the UK and other countries to Cambridge. If you will be relocating to Cambridge on a centrally funded appointment of two years or more, you may be eligible for our relocation expenses scheme. The University Accommodation Service (<http://www.accommodation.cam.ac.uk/>) will also be available to help you find suitable rented accommodation and to provide advice on renting arrangements and local facilities, if required. In addition, certain academic and academic-related appointments are eligible for the Shared Equity Scheme which offers financial assistance with the purchase of living accommodation.

- **A welcoming and inclusive environment** - We will help you settle into your new role and working environment through a central University induction event, local induction activities and our online induction package. Where appropriate to your role, you will have a probation period to provide a supportive framework for reviewing your progress and discussing your training and development needs.
- **Extensive development opportunities** - The encouragement of career development for staff is one of the University's core values. We put this into practice through various services and initiatives, including:
  - A wide-range of training courses and online learning packages.
  - The Staff Review and Development (SRD) Scheme, which is designed to enhance work effectiveness and facilitate career development post-probation.
  - Leave for career and personal development, including long-term study leave for assistant staff and sabbatical leave for academic staff.
  - The CareerStart@Cam programme, which supports assistant staff roles without higher education qualifications to develop their skills, experience and qualifications. Assistant staff may also apply for financial assistance for study which results in a qualification.
  - Reduced staff fees for University of Cambridge graduate courses.
  - The opportunity to attend lectures and seminars held by University departments and institutions.
  - Policies and processes dedicated to the career development of researchers and the implementation of the principles of the Concordat, which have led to the University being recognised with an HR Excellence in Research Award by the European Commission.

You can find further details of the benefits, services and opportunities we offer can be found in our CAMBens Employee Benefits web pages at <http://www.hr.admin.cam.ac.uk/pay-benefits/cambens-employee-benefits>. A range of information about living and working in Cambridge is also available to you within the University's web pages at <http://www.jobs.cam.ac.uk/> and <http://www.hr.admin.cam.ac.uk/hr-staff/information-staff>.

## Equality of Opportunity at the University

We are committed to a proactive approach to equality, which includes supporting and encouraging all under-represented groups, promoting an inclusive culture and valuing diversity. We make selection decisions based on personal merit and an objective assessment against the criteria required for the post. We do not treat job applicants or members of staff less favourably than one another on the grounds of sex (including gender reassignment), marital or parental status, race, ethnic or national origin, colour, disability (including HIV status), sexual orientation, religion, age or socio-economic factors.

We have various diversity networks to help us progress equality; these include the Women's Staff Network, the Disabled Staff Network, the Black and Minority Ethnic Staff Network and the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Staff Network. In addition, we were ranked in the top 100 employers for lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) staff in Stonewall's Workplace Equality Index 2013 and we hold an Athena SWAN silver award at organisation level for promoting women in Science, Technology, Engineering and Medicine.

We are supportive of staff with caring responsibilities, such as through our flexible working, career break and returning carers schemes. We encourage individuals to include details of any breaks in employment due to caring responsibilities in applications for employment so that these can be taken into consideration in assessments made, where appropriate.

## Information if you have a Disability

The University welcomes applications from individuals with disabilities and we are committed to ensuring fair treatment throughout the recruitment process. We will make adjustments to enable applicants to compete to the best of their ability wherever it is reasonable to do so, and, if successful, to assist them during their employment. Information for disabled applicants is available at <http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/hr/staff/disabled/>.

We encourage you to declare any disability that you may have, and any reasonable adjustments that you may require, in the section provided for this purpose in the application form. This will enable us to accommodate your needs throughout the process as required. However, applicants and employees may declare a disability at any time.

If you prefer to discuss any special arrangements connected with a disability, please contact, Amy Coussell (Senior HR Coordinator), who is responsible for recruitment to this position, on 01223 761115 or by email on [Amy.Coussell@slcu.cam.ac.uk](mailto:Amy.Coussell@slcu.cam.ac.uk). Alternatively, you may contact the HR Business Manager responsible for the department you are applying to via [hrenquiries@admin.cam.ac.uk](mailto:hrenquiries@admin.cam.ac.uk).