

Research Associate in Natural Language Processing for Medicines Development

Department	Strathclyde Institute of Pharmacy and Biomedical Sciences (www.strath.ac.uk/science/strathclydeinstituteofpharmacybiomedicalsciences/)		
Faculty	Faculty of Science (www.strath.ac.uk/science/)		
Staff Category	Research	Reference No	391554
Reports To	Platform Lead	Grade:	7
Salary Range:	£32817 - £40322	Contract Type:	Fixed Term (29/03/2025)
FTE	1 (35 hours/week)	Closing Date	04/10/2021

Job Advert

CMAC is a world leading medicines manufacturing research centre that hosts a portfolio of collaborative research programmes aimed to transform the development and manufacture of medicines (www.cmac.ac.uk). Building on our long standing partnerships with a wide range of pharmaceutical manufacturers, technology providers and leading universities, we are establishing a new EPSRC-funded Centre focussed on enabling digital transformation. The Made Smarter Innovation – Digital Medicines Manufacturing Research Centre (DM²) is a 3.5-year programme that will accelerate the adoption of industrial digital technologies (IDTs) in the pharma sector across five core Platforms covering data, advanced manufacturing, digital QC, patient centric supply and networking and skills. The DM² Centre connects a leading multidisciplinary team of researchers across Strathclyde, Loughborough and Cambridge universities with leading digital technology providers, medicines manufacturers and healthcare providers, to drive a digital transformation in medicines manufacturing.

The five integrated Platforms designed by the academic and industrial researcher partners are: (1) The Data Platform; (2) Autonomous MicroScale Manufacturing Platform; (3) Digital Quality Control Platform; (4) Adaptive Digital Supply Platform; and (5) The DM² Network & Skills Platform.

This ambitious programme is supported by a large team of Post-doctoral Research Associates, Research Technicians and management staff to plan, deliver and disseminate the ambitious research, networking and training activities.

We are currently seeking applicants for a PDRA post based at the University of Strathclyde within Platform 1 – The Digital Platform. This Platform addresses one of the sector's core digitalisation challenges - a lack of large data sets and ways to access such data. The DM² Data Platform will extract, store and analyse data from across the DM² project, making it accessible, searchable and reusable for the medicines manufacturing community. New approaches for ensuring consistently high quality data, such as good practice guides and standards, will be developed alongside data science activities which will identify what the most important data are and how best to use them with IDTs in practice. The focus of this role will be the development of tools for automated extraction of information from the medicines manufacturing literature and partners' data systems.

This is a unique opportunity to help realising the next generation of pharmaceutical data systems through the development of an integrated data platform that accelerates research and significantly increases the value of data generated in R&D. You will work closely with the DM² team and leading digital and pharmaceutical technology providers and global pharmaceutical companies.

You will have a PhD in a relevant subject (Computer Science with emphasis on Software Engineering and Text Mining or related discipline) with appropriate experience in information extraction, terminology management, text classification, text mining infrastructures and semantic search systems. You will develop interoperable text mining infrastructure specifications, design the architecture of text mining platforms, develop and integrate text mining tools for the project's use cases with other domain experts.

You must have excellent verbal and written communications skills with the ability to write clearly and succinctly for publication. You must also be able to work as a member of a research team, as well as demonstrate a successful track record of research achievement. You should be able to independently develop new concepts in your research, have excellent organisational skills, initiative, and the ability to pay close attention to detail.

Job Description

Brief Outline of Job:

You will develop interoperable text mining, NLP infrastructure specifications, design the architecture of text mining platforms, develop and integrate text mining tools for the project's use cases with other domain experts.

Main Activities/Responsibilities:

1.	Develop interoperable text mining infrastructure specifications.
2.	Design, implement and validate the architecture of the DM ² NLP text mining platforms.
3.	Integrate NLP text mining tools for the project's use cases across DM ² Platforms 1-4.
4.	Engage with other DM ² Platforms and contribute to the planning of the programme.
5.	Engage in regular project meetings, sharing updates on work and collating feedback to ensure research aligns with end user needs.
6.	Provide regular reports on progress to project team to ensure the timely delivery of high quality research with impact.
7.	Disseminate results emerging from research in an effective and timely manner and submit publications to high quality peer reviewed journals.
8.	Develop and participate in networks to foster research collaborations, inform the development of DM ² research objectives and identify potential sources of future funding.
9.	Carry out Department/School, Faculty and/or University administrative and management functions, for example through membership of committees.
10.	Engage in continuous professional development.

Person Specification

Educational and/or Professional Qualifications

(E=Essential, i.e. a candidate must meet all essential criteria to be considered for selection, D=Desirable)

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| E1 | Degree in a relevant subject (Pharmaceutical Sciences, Chemistry, Chemical Engineering, Computer Science or related discipline). |
| E2 | PhD (or equivalent professional experience) in a relevant subject area (Computer Science with emphasis on Software Engineering and Text Mining or related discipline). |
| D1 | Membership of relevant Chartered/professional body. |

Experience

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| E3 | Experience of Software Engineering. |
| E4 | Experience of Text Mining in particular Natural Language Processing for extraction of data from unstructured sources e.g. Named-entity recognition and relation extraction. |
| E5 | Experience implementing AI models and the application of AI methodologies including Machine Learning (ML) and Deep Learning (DL). |
| E6 | Expertise in implementing ML/DL solutions using industry standard frameworks e.g. Tensorflow, Keras. |
| D2 | Familiarity and experience creating structured data e.g. data models and ontology engineering. |

Job Related Skills and Achievements

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| E7 | Excellent programming skills. |
| E8 | Ability to plan and organise workload, including the ability to supervise and delegate work. |
| E9 | Ability to work with partners out with the University and promote DM ² research. |
| E10 | Excellent organisational skills to plan, execute and report on research project. |
| E11 | Good computer literacy. |
| D3 | Ability to provide student supervision and teaching activities. |

Personal Attributes

E12 Excellent interpersonal and communication skills, with the ability to listen, engage and persuade, and to present complex information in an accessible way to a range of audiences.

E13 Ability to work within a team environment.

E14 Excellent written and oral communication skills.

E15 Ability to work to deadlines with accuracy and precision.

E16 Proactive and able to use initiative.

D4 Ability to influence senior colleagues to implement change.

Other Relevant Factors

E17 Ability to balance work and time between conflicting demands.

E18 Able to present at conferences and seminars with authority and coherence.

Application Procedure

Applicants are required to complete an application form including the name of three referees who will be contacted before interview without further permission, unless you indicate that you would prefer otherwise. Applicants should also submit a Curriculum Vitae and a covering letter detailing the knowledge, skills and experience you think make you the right candidate for the job. Applicants should also complete the Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form.

Other Information

Further information on the application process and working at Strathclyde can be found on our website (<http://www.strath.ac.uk/hr/workforus>).

Informal enquiries about the post can be directed to Prof Blair Johnston, DM² Co-I and Platform I Lead (blair.johnston@strath.ac.uk).

Conditions of Employment

Conditions of employment relating to the Research staff category can be found at: [Conditions of Employment](#).

Rewards and Benefits

Our staff have access to a wide range of outstanding benefits that include financial rewards, family friendly and wellbeing benefits and career development opportunities, details of which can be found [here](#).

Probation

Where applicable, the successful applicant will be required to serve a 9 month probationary period.

Pension

The successful applicant will be eligible to join the Universities' Superannuation Scheme. Further information regarding this scheme is available from [Payroll and Pensions](#).

Relocation

Where applicable, the University offers a relocation package to support new employees who meet the eligibility criteria. The relocation package is offered as a contribution towards costs incurred, and is designed to be flexible, allowing staff to use the financial support available in the way that will be most helpful to them. Further details are outlined in the Relocation Policy.

Equality and Diversity

We value diversity and welcome applications from all sections of the community.

The University currently holds a Bronze Athena SWAN award, recognising our commitment to advancing gender equality in academia across all academic disciplines and professional and support functions.

University Values

The University's Values capture what we're all about: who we are, what we believe in and what we stand for. [Our Values](#) have been derived from how we act and how we expect to be treated as part of Strathclyde.



Conditions of Employment

Research Staff

1. GENERAL CONDITIONS

Members of staff are subject to the Charter and Statutes and the Ordinances and Regulations of the University, published in the Calendar, and to any amendments or additions thereto approved by the University Court and, in the case of the Charter and Statutes, the Privy Council. Staff are also expected to familiarise themselves with, and adhere to, general University policies and procedures, as published on University web pages.

The University Court recognises Strathclyde Universities and College Union (SUCU) as the sole body with which it will negotiate and consult on all collective issues concerned with the terms and conditions of employment of Research Staff. Such terms and conditions may be varied by the University Court after negotiation and consultation with SUCU.

Each member of staff is responsible for the proper performance of allocated duties to the person or persons specified in the member of staff's letter of appointment and any accompanying papers.

The University is committed to ensuring that its business is conducted in an open and transparent manner and will take all appropriate steps to address risks of bribery or corruption. Members of staff are required at all times to act honestly and with integrity and to safeguard the resources for which they are responsible. The University has in place a robust Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblowing) Policy to enable concerns to be brought to its attention. This is available at www.strath.ac.uk/publicinterestdisclosure. Other relevant policies, e.g. Fraud Prevention and Conflicts of Interests, can also be found on the University's website.

Any member of staff may at any time be exposed to commercially sensitive information, information related to potentially valuable intellectual property or information which may otherwise be of a confidential nature. This information, which could be found anywhere in the University, may be written or disclosed orally, can include information of a commercial or technical nature, and may be owned by the University or by third parties. The University requires all employees to keep any such information confidential in the first instance and not disclose, publish or otherwise disseminate it without prior consent of the University. Such confidentiality obligations are commonplace and in the commercial interests of the University. When in doubt advice should always be sought from Research and Knowledge Exchange Services prior to disclosure.

The University operates probationary periods for new staff, the duration of which will be specified in individual letters of appointment. The normal probation period for posts in this staff category is 9 months for those at grades 6 and 7, and 12 months for grades 8 and above. Further guidance on probationary procedures is published at <http://www.strath.ac.uk/staff/policies/hr/>.

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Further information on the terms and conditions specified in this document and other staffing policies and procedures can also be found at www.strath.ac.uk/hr.

2. SALARY

Appointments are made at an appropriate salary point on the University's grading structure, with initial placing determined according to qualifications and experience. Increments are paid to staff on the 12 month anniversary of their appointment. Where this is not the first of the month, the increment will be paid on the first of the month directly

after the 12 month anniversary. This allows 1 progression to the next point on the salary scale until the top guaranteed point of the scale is reached.

Salaries are paid directly to staff members nominated bank account, normally on the second last working day of the month.

3. HOURS OF WORK

Working time is that required to fulfil the duties of the post. The University Court recognises that research staff carry out these duties in a variety of ways appropriate to the nature of the research activity, but expects regular contact to take place between the research staff employee and the supervisor/granholder (where these positions are occupied by different individuals) during normal working hours on week days. There are exceptions to this pattern which may involve contact at other locations or in the evenings, or at weekends, but these arrangement will be made with the agreement of the member of staff concerned.

Duties may, by arrangement with Head of Department/School/Director, include some teaching associated with the post (up to a maximum of 40 hours per semester) for which no additional payment will be made.

Additional work which does not fall within the scope of that described above may by arrangement attract payment which must be authorised and processed through the payroll.

4. HOLIDAYS

Annual leave entitlement is 31 days per year to be taken by agreement with the line manager. For staff members working on a part-time basis, holidays will be calculated on a pro-rata basis.

In addition to annual leave there is an entitlement to eleven public holidays per year which should be taken on days that the University is closed for this purpose. The University presently closes for four additional days over the Christmas and New Year period. **These additional days count against the annual leave entitlement.**

For staff members working on a part-time basis, public holiday entitlement will be calculated on a pro-rata basis.

Annual leave and public holiday entitlements should be taken in the leave year to which they relate. Up to five days leave can be carried forward into the new leave year subject to line management agreement. In exceptional circumstances, Heads of Department/School/Director may approve carry forward of accrued annual leave in excess of five days.

The University's expectation is that staff take all accrued holidays prior to their termination date. If staff have exceeded their entitlement the University will deduct an equivalent number of days pay from final salary payments.

5. SICKNESS ABSENCE

During any period of absence through illness or injury provided the appropriate notification and certification procedures have been followed the University will pay a member of staff (having taken account of the aggregate of all periods of absence due to illness during the twelve months immediately preceding the first day of the current absence) as follows:

Period of Continuous Employment at start of absence from work	Full Pay	Half Pay
Less than 1 year	1 month	1 month
1 year but less than 2 years	2 months	2 months
2 years but less than 3 years	4 months	4 months
3 years but less than 5 years	5 months	5 months
5 years or more	6 months	6 months

In order to manage the University's sick pay scheme the University requires to maintain sickness absence records on individual members of staff. When making payments after the expiry of statutory sick pay the University will deduct an amount equivalent to any benefit normally payable by the Department of Work and Pensions. For full details on the general University policy in this area please refer to the Sickness Absence Management Policy at www.strath.ac.uk/staff/policies/hr.

6. PENSIONS

If you are under age 75 at the date your appointment commences you will automatically become a member of the pension scheme operated by the University – the Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS). You will be admitted to the career revalued benefits scheme called the USS Retirement Income Builder, the contribution rate that currently applies is 9.6% of pensionable salary. A threshold applies to the maximum salary that counts towards the USS Retirement Income Builder. From 1 April 2021, the threshold is £59,883.65 per year. Contributions based on salary above the monthly equivalent rate of the threshold are paid to the defined contribution section of the scheme called the USS Investment Builder. Information regarding USS can be found in the scheme booklet located on the website: https://www.uss.co.uk/-/media/Project/USSMainSite/Files/For_members/Guides/Your_guide_to_Universities_Superannuation_Scheme.pdf. The scheme booklet is called 'Your Guide to the Universities Superannuation Scheme'.

The University operates a salary exchange arrangement, Pensions Plus, for members of the USS. Pensions Plus enables pension contributions to be made in a manner so that both employees and the University can benefit from available National Insurance Contribution savings. You will be automatically included in Pensions Plus, provided it does not adversely affect your take-home pay or your ability to claim certain state benefits. If your earnings fall below the Pension Plus pay protection limit you will be opted out of Pension Plus. This will not affect your membership of the USS.

New members of staff may opt out of USS within three months of taking up appointment and will then be treated as if they had never been a member of the scheme. After three months members of staff who wish to withdraw from USS during their employment will be required to give a minimum of 28 days' notice in writing to the University. Any member of staff who wishes to opt out should contact the Pensions Section, Finance, in the first instance (pensions@strath.ac.uk). Please note that if you are a member of Pensions Plus and withdraw from USS with less than two years of membership, or cease employment with the University and have less than two years of USS membership, the option of a refund of pension contributions will not be available to you. Instead, USS must provide you with a pension benefit that is payable from your Normal Pension Age. Regardless of whether you participate in Pensions Plus, if you are a member of the pension scheme for two years or more you are not entitled to a refund of pension contributions on leaving the scheme, you will be entitled to a pension benefit.

The University reserves the right to alter or withdraw Pensions Plus as it sees fit or as required to comply with legislative changes. Withdrawal or amendment of Pensions Plus will not affect your membership of USS. If you do not wish to participate in Pensions Plus but wish to remain in

the pension scheme please contact the Pensions Team who will provide you with a non-participation form.

Information regarding pension scheme membership can be found on the Pensions pages of the University's website. Full information regarding USS can be found on the USS website – www.uss.co.uk

7. PLACE OF WORK AND RESIDENCE

Members of staff will be based on the John Anderson Campus, unless otherwise stated in the letter of appointment. The Department/School in which the post is initially placed will be specified in the letter of appointment although there will be an expectation to work at such other places as required in the course of employment.

If the need arises for members of staff to work outside the UK for a period (or periods) of more than one month then such arrangements will be subject to mutual agreement. Members of staff would then be provided with a statement in advance setting out the terms covering such periods of employment.

The University does not normally place specific restrictions upon the place of residence of members of staff. All staff are, however, expected to reside in a location which is compatible with the satisfactory fulfilment of all the duties associated with their appointment.

8. CONSULTANCY/FURTHER ACTIVITIES

To support the strategic objectives of the University and to facilitate individual professional development, the University encourages staff to engage in professional activities with outside bodies related to their field of work. In many cases, such activity will be approved on the basis that it represents University knowledge exchange activity and should therefore be treated as part of the individual's overall workload and managed through the University's systems. It is also recognised that there will be some cases where an activity is entirely separate from the University and should thus be notified/approved as a personal business activity. For further information please refer to the "University Procedure in relation to Work for Outside Bodies including Consultancies", which forms part of the employment contract and can be accessed at www.strath.ac.uk/hr

9. DISCIPLINARY AND GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

Further information on the University's disciplinary and grievance procedure can also be found at www.strath.ac.uk/policies/hr or on request from Human Resources.

10. NOTICE AND TERMINATION

Members of staff are employed on the conditions indicated in individual letters of appointment and any accompanying papers. The University is not obliged to give notice of termination or continue any employment beyond the end of that period. Where the period of the contract of employment is for one year or less it may be terminated short of the fixed term period by one months notice on either side. Where the period of the contract of employment is for more than one year, or where there have been a further contract or series of contracts immediately consecutive, the employment may be terminated short of the fixed term period by three months' notice on either side, except during the probationary period when the notice period is one month.

If the appointment is for a fixed term it will expire at the end of the period without the necessity for notice.

Revised April 2021