Early-Stage Researcher 7 (ESR7) / PhD student

ENDOMETRIAL INFLAMMATION AND FERTILITY

PhD student will carry out her/his doctoral research and training jointly at two degree-awarding universities and will be awarded a double PhD degree from **the University of Oulu (Finland)** as the main host, and **the University of Leuven (Belgium)** as the co-host.

Universities and research units

A successful candidate will be selected to work on a research project coordinated by **the University of Oulu** in a productive and dynamic research team of **prof. Terhi Piltonen** that is well established in the field of reproductive medicine. **Medical Research Center Oulu (MRC Oulu)** is a multidisciplinary research environment for clinical, translational and healthcare socioeconomic research. MRC Oulu, located at the Kontinkangas campus, has wide range of infrastructures to conduct high-quality research, including facilities of Faculty of Medicine, Biochemistry and Molecular Medicine, the Biocenter core facilities, Northern Finland Birth Cohort, the Northern Finland Biobank Borealis and Oulu University Hospital.

The research fellow will also work at **the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven** for the secondment period for an estimated period of 16 months. **The lab of Endometrium, Endometriosis & Reproductive Medicine (LEERM)** under supervision of **Prof. Joris Vriens** is part of **the Lab of Ion Channel Research**. LEERM has a clear focus on the role of ion channels and receptors in the female reproductive tract and the regulatory role of intracellular calcium concentrations during the implantation process. This internationally reputed lab has a wide range of infrastructure to conduct high quality in vitro and in vivo experiments and a very close collaboration with **the Leuven University Fertility Center of the University Hospital**.

Project

A PhD researcher will be hired on a project funded through **the EU project MATER**, a Marie Curie Training Network.

The goal of the project is to study the function of human endometrium. The first aim is to assess endometrial inflammation during the menstrual cycle and its effect on endometrial function and fertility. In this project the research fellow will learn to isolate and culture different cell types of the endometrium and to manipulate the cells with different techniques. The second aim is to investigate endometrial renewal and cellular stability, especially in women affected with polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS).

ESR7 will mostly be hosted by the University of Oulu and will be seconded for a shorter period to the University of Leuven (minimum of 6 months in total). The position also includes a training period in European company focusing on reproductive health.

Eligibility criteria

- Researchers can be of any nationality.
- There is no age limit.

- All researchers recruited in a Marie Sklodowska-Curie ITN must be ESRs. An ESR shall, at the time of recruitment by the host organisation, be in the first four years of their research career and not yet have been awarded a doctoral degree. The four years start to count from the date when a researcher obtained the degree, which would formally entitle her/him to embark on a doctorate.
- Researchers are required to undertake transnational mobility (i.e. move from one country to another) when taking up their appointment.
- One general rule applies to the appointment of researchers: At the time of recruitment by the host beneficiary, researchers must not have resided or carried out their main activity (work, studies, etc.) in the country of their host beneficiary for more than 12 months in the 3 years immediately prior to the reference date. Note that the mobility rule applies to the beneficiary where the researcher is recruited, and not to beneficiaries to which the researcher is sent or seconded.

Requirements for a successful PhD candidate:

- Master's degree (MSc) in biology, biochemistry, biotechnology, medicine or in a related discipline;
- Highly motivated candidate with strong interest in female reproduction, endometrial function and the immune system;
- Experience in molecular biology and cell culture techniques;
- Proven proficiency in English, both written and orally;
- Strong writing and analytical skills;
- Good communication and organization skills;
- Ability to meet deadlines and complete a PhD thesis within the defined project time;
- Capacity to work both as an independent researcher and as part of a team;
- Ability to work in an interdisciplinary context.

What we offer

We are offering one full time appointment (100%) as a PhD student for a period of 4 years, of which the first three years are covered by the Marie Curie ITN project and the fourth year by the hosting research institutes. ESR7 will be hosted by the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology (University of Oulu) and Lab of Endometrium, Endometriosis & Reproductive Medicine (University of Leuven). The starting date is negotiable. ESR7 will be awarded a PhD by the University of Oulu and University of Leuven.

The project also offers a unique opportunity to train under several established researchers in the field of reproductive health and thus opportunity to obtain vast network facilitating establishment of fellow's future career. The multinational research environment will help in advancing adaptation and organization skills, both important traits to become a successful researcher.

Interested?

For more information please contact **Dr. Riikka Arffman** (riikka.arffman@oulu.fi), **Prof. Terhi Piltonen** (terhi.piltonen@oulu.fi) or **Prof. Joris Vriens** (Joris.Vriens@kuleuven.be).

For questions regarding MSCA EJD double degree, please contact Teemu Pennanen (teemu.pennanen@oulu.fi) at the University of Oulu or Nathalie Laurent (nathalie.laurent@kuleuven.be) at KU Leuven.

Apply here: https://mater.ut.ee/application

Candidates who make the shortlist will be invited for an interview. These may be conducted in person or via Skype.