University of St Andrews

## School of Psychology and Neuroscience

# Research and Innovation Associate



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# Introduction



*"Our remarkable students and staff are the lifeblood of St Andrews. It is their energy, vision and momentum [we] aim to support, to free them to use knowledge, ideas, and potential for the benefit of all."* The Principal, Professor Sally Mapstone

Founded in 1413, the University of St Andrews is Scotland's first university and one of the oldest in the English-speaking world. With more than 600 years of academic excellence, we are proud of our reputation as a world-class centre for learning, teaching, and research.

St Andrews is a close-knit, international community set in a beautiful historic town on Scotland's east coast. Our students and staff come from over 140 countries, creating a diverse and globally minded environment. We strive to create an inclusive culture in which all can flourish, and the University has attained several diversity awards, including those related to race and gender equality, and support for carers, which demonstrate our commitment to this ambition. The University is consistently ranked among the UK's top institutions for student satisfaction, research quality, and teaching excellence.

We are a research-intensive university where creativity, collaboration, and critical inquiry are at the heart of everything we do. Whether you are joining us in an academic, professional, or support role, you will be part of a team committed to delivering outstanding education and making a meaningful contribution to society.

For those looking to be part of a university with deep-rooted heritage, a global outlook, and a forward-thinking approach, we invite you to consider joining our community at the University of St Andrews.

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# School of Psychology and Neuroscience

The School of Psychology and Neuroscience comprises in the region of 40 academic staff, approximately 30 administrative, technical and research staff, and more than 60 research post-graduate students.

Our research covers a broad remit, from cellular neuroscience to crowd behaviour. There are 4 general groupings: Cellular and Behavioural Neuroscience, Perception, Cognition, and Action, Origins of Mind, and Social and Group Processes (https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/psychology-neuroscience/research/research-groups/). There are also several inter-disciplinary institutes and centres, including the Institute of Behavioural and Neural Sciences (IBANS), and Centre of Biophotonics (CoB). There is considerable overlap between the 4 research groupings, with some colleagues belonging naturally to more than one grouping and with many cross-group collaborative research projects. We also have a wide range of international links.

In the Zwart lab, we are interested in the neuroscience of how animals move to meet their needs. We explore the mechanisms that underlie the generation of movements using a combination of multi-disciplinary approaches that include imaging, electrophysiology, and connectomics. We are also a maker lab, building custom microscopes and other setups to help us do the experiments we want to do. We use the zebrafish, fruit fly, and red flour beetle larval model organisms to see how the nervous systems of these diverse animals have evolved to move around in their environment. We are a highly collaborative lab, working with other teams across the UK and globally, and place a strong emphasis on career development.

The School holds an Athena Swan gold award (Nov 2024) and is fully committed to equality, diversity and inclusion. All applicants should include in their cover letter a statement on how/why diversity is important to you.



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# Job Description

**Reporting to: Maarten Zwart**

**Location: St Andrews**

**Job Family: Academic Research**

**Working Hours: Full time / 36.25 hours per week**

**Grade/Salary Range: Grade 6, £38,784 - £44,746 pa**

**Reference Number: AR3363RS**

**Start Date: 14 December 2026**

**Interview Date: 23 November 2026 (TBC)**

**Duration of post: 9 months**

## Main Purpose of the Role

The post holder will work on a Leverhulme Trust-funded project to develop new methods to map the brains of living animals. This project is interdisciplinary and collaborative, notably with the research team led by Prof Juan Ye at the University of St Andrews and a wider set of collaborators including at Cambridge.

The project combines existing and new datasets from larval zebrafish to develop state-of-the-art computational tools to map its neural circuits. The aim is to determine whether AI approaches can augment simple, easy-to-obtain datasets to achieve results that normally require expensive and extremely laborious techniques. The results can be used to target specific questions on brain function that will be developed by the Research Fellow in collaboration with the PI and team.

The main purpose of the role is to facilitate the project by community engagement, workshop and conference organization (as appropriate), and dissemination activities. This role offers opportunity for, and will benefit from, collaboration within our inclusive, team-oriented research environment. The post holder will be encouraged to develop independent projects according to their expertise and interests.

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# Key Responsibilities

**Research and Scholarship:**

- Plan and conduct own activities within the project to meet deadlines and deliverables.
- Understand and convey material of a specialist or highly technical nature to the team and, where applicable, the funding body/sponsor through presentations, discussions and progress reports.
- Proactively engage with other members of the research group and engage with the research environment within the School.
- Develop specialist knowledge in the research area to deal with problems affecting the achievement of research objectives and deadlines, devising solutions to unexpected challenges in collaboration with the PI.

**Planning and Organising:**

- Engage in networking activities to make internal and external contacts, to develop knowledge and to form relationships for future research collaboration.
- Organise networking activities to engage with potential interested parties to ensure the project's aims and directions are aligned with the priorities of the field
- Plan and manage own administrative activities.
- Use initiative and creativity to identify areas for research, develop new research methods and extend the research portfolio.
- Identify potential sources of funding and write or contribute to research proposals and grant applications to external bodies.
- Ensure compliance with all legal and regulatory requirements including equality and diversity, data protection, copyright and licensing, security, financial, health and safety and other University policies, procedures and codes as appropriate.

Special Requirements:

This position might involve international travel to attend conferences. Some evening or weekend work may be required.

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# Person Specification

| Attributes | Essential | Desirable | Means of Assessment (i.e. application form, interview, test, presentation etc.) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Education & Qualifications<br><br>(*technical, professional, academic qualifications and training required)* | Good first degree in relevant subject<br><br>Hold or be close to submission of further degree in relevant subject | | Application/certificates |
| Experience & Knowledge<br><br>(*examples of specific experience and knowledge sought*) | Strong quantitative skills derived from a background in computational neuroscience or neuroscience<br><br>Experience of organising activities for scholarly or public audiences.<br><br>Demonstrate clear potential for high-quality research publications<br><br>Experience in two or more of the following techniques:<br><br>• Connectomics<br>• Wet-lab neuroscience<br>• Imaging | Experience of applying for external funding | Interview/Presentation<br><br>Interview |

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# Person Specification

| Attributes | Essential | Desirable | Means of Assessment (i.e. application form, interview, test, presentation etc.) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Competencies & Skills<br><br>(*e.g. effective communication skills, initiative, flexibility, leadership etc*) | Effective communicator (orally and in writing)<br><br>Well-developed presentation skills including ability to communicate complex, theoretical and technical material in an engaging and intelligible way to a range of audiences including non-specialists.<br><br>Impact and engagement evidence of disseminating research to constituencies beyond the academic community.<br><br>Collegiality/willingness to work in a collaborative environment.<br><br>Ability to work autonomously and to be proactive in identifying and resolving issues | | Application/Interview<br><br>Interview/Presentation<br><br>Interview/References<br><br>Interview/References<br><br>Interview/References |

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# Person Specification

| Attributes | Essential | Desirable | Means of Assessment (i.e. application form, interview, test, presentation etc.) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Competencies & Skills<br><br>(*e.g. effective communication skills, initiative, flexibility, leadership etc*) | Administrative and IT skills appropriate for the efficient and effective delivery of research.<br><br>Well-developed time management skills with the ability to meet deadlines | | Interview/References<br><br>Interview/References |
| Other Attributes/Abilities<br><br>(if applicable) | Evidence of keeping up to date with new developments in relevant knowledge and techniques.<br><br>Evidence of participation in relevant academic and professional associations/bodies and external research networks. | | Application/Interview<br><br>Interview/References |

**Essential Criteria** – requirements without which a candidate would not be able to undertake the full remit of the role. Applicants who have not clearly demonstrated in their application that they possess the essential requirements will normally be rejected at the short-listing stage.

**Desirable Criteria** – requirements which would be useful for the candidate to hold. When short listing, these criteria will be considered when more than one applicant meets the essential requirements.

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# Benefits

St Andrews offers more than just a place to work—it is a place to belong. We value collegiality, inclusion, and wellbeing, and we are committed to creating a workplace where staff can thrive and perform at their best.

In addition to the salary on offer for this position, there are a wide range of benefits for staff working at the University of St Andrews. The package for the Research and Innovation Associate includes:

- Financial contribution to relocation (subject to eligibility)
- Membership of the USS Pension Scheme with a generous employer contribution of 14.5%
- A hybrid working environment, including partial homeworking where appropriate and a range of family friendly policies, supporting work-life balance
- Staff discount scheme for local and national goods and services
- Free staff parking, employee Carshare and Cycle to Work Schemes and subsidised local bus travel
- Subsidised sports membership, reduced tuition fees on degree programmes for staff, access to training and development opportunities including LinkedIn Learning, access to library facilities, salary sacrifice scheme
- 34 Days Annual Leave plus 5 Public Holidays.



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# How to Apply



We are committed to creating an accessible, fair and inclusive recruitment process for all candidates. If you require reasonable adjustments or accommodations during the application or interview process then please let us know and we will be happy to discuss support with you.

We encourage applicants to apply online at www.vacancies.st-andrews.ac.uk/welcome.aspx

If you have difficulties in completing the online application form, then please call +44 (0)1334 461990 or contact vacancies@st-andrews.ac.uk to discuss available support.

Applications should consist of:

- Cover letter that outlines why you are interested in the post and how you meet the Person Specification, using specific examples. Also add a statement on why diversity is important to you
- CV
- Names and contacts of two referees

For all applications, please quote ref: **AR3363RS**

The University of St Andrews is a charity registered in Scotland (No SC013532).

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# Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

At St Andrews, we see diversity as a strength and value the rich variety of backgrounds, identities and experiences of our staff, students and alumni. We are committed to making the University a beacon of inclusivity and creating an environment where everyone can flourish and realise their potential.

*We will achieve this through an approach that empowers our whole community and involves a determined shift in culture. Inclusivity will inform all of our policies and practices. The Principal, Professor Sally Mapstone*

Diverse is a core theme of the University Strategy, and alongside our People Strategy, outlines a number of actions we are taking to create an inclusive culture. Our objectives include raising awareness of diversity events, initiatives and support, strengthening support for staff networks, creating more opportunities for employees to engage in consultations and discussions, offering a diverse range of rewarding career pathways and ensuring a working environment which supports positive working practices and behaviours.

We commit to providing a high-quality staff experience which enables all our staff to contribute, thrive, and perform at their best. By joining us at the University of St Andrews, you are joining a community which values difference, being your authentic self, and where you can play an active role in ensuring an inclusive environment for all.



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# St Andrews

A modern location surrounded with ancient history, St Andrews is a dynamic and friendly town found on the east coast of Scotland. Situated in the Kingdom of Fife, St Andrews has easy links to nearby commuter towns and transport links (including airports) to the nearby cities of Dundee (13 miles) and Edinburgh (c. 1 hour by train).

Beyond the lecture halls and labs, St Andrews is home to stunning, unspoilt beaches and fresh sea air. Take a peaceful stroll or an energising walk with friends along the iconic two-mile stretch of the West Sands. If you prefer the water, ride the waves at the East Sands or try sailing, sea kayaking and windsurfing. For breathtaking views, a walk to the end of the stone pier is an experience not to be missed.

St Andrews and the surrounding area is home to a wide range of restaurants and shops, while boasting an array of beautiful beaches. St Andrews is also the home of golf and there are seven local courses including the famous Old Course.

Fife is an area filled with history and culture. There are nearly 5,000 listed buildings and 50 conservation areas across the Kingdom, with some historic structures dating all the way back to the 12th century. St Andrews enjoys a microclimate and is typically much drier than western parts of the country.



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# Further Information

This post will be primarily based in St Andrews.

Interviews will be held on **23 November 2026 (TBC)**

The University encourages all interested candidates to apply, and all applications received are assessed against the essential and desirable criteria listed in the further particulars. The successful candidate will have to demonstrate their right to work in the UK prior to commencing employment and where required, the University can support with visa sponsorship.

You are expected to uphold a duty of care towards colleagues, students, and communities, and to actively contribute to a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment. This includes responding appropriately to disclosures or reports of sexual misconduct, gender-based violence, bullying, harassment, or other concerns, in line with organisational policies, and signposting individuals to the appropriate departments




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