

The research group of Experimental stem cell transplantation

at the Department of Medicine II, University Hospital Würzburg invites applications for a

PhD position (m/f/d) in Stem Cell Transplantation with focus on Immunotherapy

Applications are invited for a PhD student position in the research group of Dr. Haroon Shaikh (Experimental Stem Cell Transplantation) under the leadership of Prof. Andreas Beilhack at the Department of Medicine II, University Hospital Würzburg. The successful candidate will join an interdisciplinary research project funded by Interdisciplinary Centre for Clinical Research (IZKF) Würzburg focused on the development and application of chimeric antigen receptor (CAR)-based immunotherapies for B-cell leukemia in the setting of allogeneic hematopoietic stem cell transplantation (allo-HCT).

In close collaboration with Dr. Ignazio Caruana (Department of Pediatrics, University Hospital Würzburg), project aims to develop next-generation immunotherapeutic strategies that enhance graft-versus-leukemia (GvL) activity while minimizing graft-versus-host disease (GvHD) following allo-HCT. A major focus of our work is the investigation of cellular mechanisms and immune interactions that drive pro- and anti-inflammatory responses (Flamman C* & Shaikh H* et al., 2025 *Blood*; Shaikh et al., 2025 *bioRxiv*; Jorgacevic I* & Shaikh H* et al., 2025 *Cardiovascular Research*; Shaikh H et al., 2022 *JCI Insight*; Shaikh H et al., 2021 *Frontiers in Immunology*). State-of-the-art preclinical animal models, primary leukemic tissue together with cutting-edge technologies including advanced microscopy (confocal, LSFM), cellular methods (flow cytometry) as well as RNA-seq approaches (i.e. bulk and single cell) as well as numerous molecular biotechnological methods such as gain- and loss-of-function assays are applied in our research.

We offer:

- An excellent scientific environment within the framework of an interdisciplinary (The Interdisciplinary Centre for Clinical Research) IZKF and German Research Foundation (DFG)-funded transregional collaborative research center.
- Project on the forefront of translational research and prospects for clinical translation.
- Training in the Graduate School of Life Science (GSLS) at the University of Würzburg.
- Attractive salary according to TV-L including annual special payment.
- The opportunity to work on a fascinating scientific topic in an international research team.
- Continuous scientific mentoring and academic training.

Your profile:

- Excellent Master's degree in life science (or equivalent).
- Sound knowledge and strong interest in immunology and cell biology.
- Experience with animal experimentation and/or cellular therapy.
- Very good written and spoken English skills.
- Motivation, reliability and dedication to work in an academic research lab are a must.

Responsibilities:

- Development of project: perform experiments, evaluate and quantify results ensuring the project evolves and fulfils the goals and work packages.
- Application of modern immunotherapy and gene editing technologies (including CARs, TRUCKs and CRISPR/Cas9).
- Produce written reports and draft papers.
- Presentation of results at scientific conferences and publication in scientific journals.
- Assist with training other researchers, including Masters' and undergraduate project students.

Please send your application in English (Subject: PhD position-Immunotherapy) including a letter of motivation with a brief description of past scientific achievements and academic goals (2 pages max.), CV, publication list (if applicable), and contact information of two academic references as a **single PDF-file** until 31st June, 2026 via email to Shaikh_H@ukw.de.

More information: <http://www.beilhack.org/>