Academic successes
At a glance

The Institute of Cancer Research, London, is a college of the University of London and the top academic research institution in the UK.

We were judged to have the highest concentration of top-quality research in the UK, and ranked first for both biological sciences and clinical medicine – putting us among an elite of fewer than 10 universities to come first in multiple units of assessment.

It is the second successive time that the ICR has led the UK for the quality of its academic research, after also finishing first in the 2008 Research Assessment Exercise.

We came first overall in the Times Higher Education league table of university research quality compiled from the Research Excellence Framework (REF 2014).

We were the leading higher education institution in the UK for the impact of our research on society. All our case studies, demonstrating the impact of our research, were judged as having very considerable or outstanding impact in terms of their reach and significance.

In 2017, the ICR was recognised with a highly prestigious Queen’s Anniversary Prize for Higher and Further Education in November 2017 for its pioneering worldleading research in cancer drug discovery.

Analysis by Thomson Reuters Evidence rates the ICR and The Royal Marsden in the top four centres for cancer research and treatment worldwide, based on citations of our publications between 2002 and 2011 in oncology and biological sciences.

The ICR ranked in the top five higher education institutions in the world for research in 2019 in an independent evaluation funded by the European Commission. The assessment, from U-Multirank, scored higher education institutions for the quality of their research and their ‘research linkage’ – which measures collaboration with other academic institutions and industry.

Our teaching

The ICR provides world-class postgraduate education in cancer research and treatment as part of our mission to train the next generation of scientists and clinicians.

The excellence of our teaching has been recognised by the award of institution-specific funding by the Office for Students and Research England.

Institution-specific funding is discretionary funding provided to a small number of institutions to recognise the higher cost, distinctive nature and public value of specialist higher education providers.

We offer fully funded PhD studentships (for non-clinical and clinical students), two-year MD(Res) degrees for clinicians, and an MSc in Oncology to teach clinicians the latest in cancer medicine.

Over the 2019/20 academic year there were 361 students enrolled at the ICR. A total of 222 students were registered on research degrees – PhD, MPhil or MD(Res). Our MSc in Oncology course had 139 enrolled students over the 2019/20 academic year.
Our PhD students have consistently achieved a 100 per cent success rate, and for the 2015/16 cohort of PhD students, 83 per cent submitted their thesis within four years of starting.

Around 90 per cent of our non-clinical PhD students have gone on to scientific research roles at academic institutions and in industry all over the world within a year of leaving the ICR.

Our MSc course in Oncology currently attracts the majority of London-based medical oncology trainees and about half of all clinical oncology trainees in the UK.