Düsseldorf University Hospital (UKD) is the largest hospital in the state capital and a leading medical center in North Rhine-Westphalia. With 9,300 employees, UKD and its subsidiaries provide care for over 45,000 inpatients and 270,000 outpatients annually. UKD is renowned for its international excellence in patient care, research and teaching, as well as for innovative and safe diagnostics, therapies and preventive measures. Our patients benefit from the intensive interdisciplinary collaboration among 60 clinics and institutes. The University Hospital's strength lies in the close integration of clinical and research work, paving the way for the safe application of new methods. Tomorrow's medicine is being created at UKD. Every day.

The **Institute for Molecular Medicine II** is looking for a

PhD candidate (all genders)

The start date is April 1, 2027. This is a full-time position with a regular weekly work schedule of 38.5 hours. The position is subject to the German Academic Fixed-Term Contract Act (WissZeitVG, Section 2 (2)) and is initially limited in terms of duration until the end of the project on March 31, 2030.

MSCA – Doctoral Network
Lectin LIgands for Modulation of ImmuniTy = LLiMiT

LLIMIT is a European doctoral training network dedicated to advancing immunomodulatory glycoscience. Its aim is to empower a new generation of researchers with the skills to design and develop ligands/antagonists targeting immune-related lectins—an innovative but underexplored therapeutic strategy against immune disorders such as allergy, cancer and autoimmunity, one of today's major global health challenges. The consortium unites 7 academic institutions with accredited PhD programs in organic and medicinal chemistry, molecular biology, structural biology, immunology and pharmacology, each with strong expertise in glycoscience. They are joined by 7 non-academic partners and a graduate and research academy, ensuring comprehensive, cross-sector training that spans fundamental science, translational research, and entrepreneurship. Key objectives of LLIMIT include: a) recruiting and training 14 doctoral candidates in a joint, research-based program supported by expert supervision and specialized training events, b) advancing innovative research on immune lectins and carbohydrate ligands, covering the full early drug discovery pipeline: from target identification and validation, through advanced glycochemistry and drug design, to hit and lead discovery; c) establishing a sustainable foundation for European excellence in glycodrug and immunomodulatory research; d) developing a common glycodrug curriculum across participating institutions to standardize and strengthen education in this field; e) building and maintaining long-term partnerships that ensure continuity in training, research, and innovation well beyond the project's duration.

DC12 PROJECT TITLE. ***Siglec-9 as target molecule to improve anti-tumour immunity.***

Host Institution: Institute for Molecular Medicine II, Medical Faculty, Heinrich-Heine-University Düsseldorf (UDUS), Germany. https://www.hhu.de/

Duration: 36 months, April 2027 - March 2030

Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Philipp Lang. profile; profile - publications

Co-supervisors: Jun.-Prof. Dr. Jonathan Cramer (Heinrich-Heine-University Düsseldorf – UDUS, DE), Dr. Caroline Aspord (Université Grenoble Alpes – UGA, FR)

Progress Committee Members: Dr. Caroline Aspord (Université Grenoble Alpes – UGA, FR), Dr. Nadia Rose (SARomics).

DC12 PROJECT. The research programme of DC12 will investigate the role of Siglec-9 as a potential therapeutic target to enhance anti-tumour immunity. Recent studies have highlighted the involvement of Siglec-9 in cancer, including glioblastoma, and suggest that targeting this pathway may improve anti-tumour immune responses. The project will focus on the effects of Siglec-9 on T-cell function and its therapeutic potential in preclinical cancer models, including the development of bispecific antibodies. Additionally, other glyco-immune checkpoints and their ligands will be explored as potential immunotherapeutic targets using CAR-T cell models and tumour organoids.

LLIMIT is to date under the condition that the Grant Agreement is signed

PLANNED SECONDMENTS. 1. SARomics Biostructures AB (Dr. Björn Walse), DC12 will explore the possibility of bispecific Siglec-9-CD3 binding antibodies for specific T cell targeting. 2. Université Grenoble Alpes (Prof. Dr. Franck Fieschi), DC12 will examine the effects of Siglec-9 on cDC2 and the COX-2/PGE2 pathway. 3. University of Basel (Prof. Dr. Daniel Ricklin), DC12 will test the activity of sialomimetic ligands in other Siglecs.

PhD School enrolment: Doctoral school at the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences, Interdisciplinary Graduate and Research Academy Düsseldorf. https://www.igrad.hhu.de/en/

CANDIDATE PROFILE

- Master's degree in Biology, Biomedicine, Biochemistry, Immunology or related fields
- Experience in immunology, biochemistry, molecular biology and cell biology techniques is welcome
- Basic analytical abilities, including experimental design and interpreting complex datasets are desirable
- Good level of English proficiency (understood, spoken and written)
- Interest in translational immunological research and enthusiasm for experimental scientific work
- Team spirit, friendly and situation-appropriate communication skills and proactive attitude

Information also available at: https://euraxess.ec.europa.eu/

APPLICATION PROCEDURE. The position is open to candidates of any nationality, as long as they fulfil the requirements set for the DCs funded by Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions defined in the Work Programme 2026-2027 (Section 1.3.2. Recruited researchers: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/wp-call/2026-2027/wp-2-marie-sklodowska-curie-actions_horizon-2026-2027_en.pdf).

The salary of the DCs will be paid according to the MSCA rules. See: https://marie-sklodowska-curie-actions.ec.europa.eu/funding/msca-doctoral-networks-2026

The employment contract will be concluded with Heinrich Heine University Düsseldorf.
Remuneration will be based on TV-L in pay grade 13, taking into account all previous periods of service.

Heinrich Heine University Düsseldorf is committed to increase the proportion of women in its workforce. Applications from women will be prioritized if they demonstrate similar qualifications, skills, and performance unless there are overriding reasons related to another candidate. Heinrich Heine University is committed to the principle of excellence through diversity. It has signed the "Diversity Charter" and successfully participated in the "Shaping Diversity" audit conducted by the Stifterverband. It is certified as a family-friendly university and promotes a healthy work-life balance between academic/professional pursuits and family life. We specifically encourage applications from qualified severely disabled individuals and equivalent persons under SGB IX.

By submitting your application documents, you agree that they become the property of Düsseldorf University Hospital and will not be returned for cost reasons.

If you have any questions regarding the job profile, please contact Dr. Witkowski (email: admin_lang@uni-duesseldorf.de; tel. 0211-81 14532).

Applicants must complete the **LLIMIT Application Form** (provided as a separate document, available at https://llimit.eu/) and submit it together with all the required supporting documents listed in the form to both emails specified (admin_lang@uni-duesseldorf.de and llimit@ffa.uni-lj.si) within **15th January 2027**, including the reference number **557/E/26 and** clearly indicating in the subject "Application for DC12 position". The application for the first round of candidate assessment should consist of the following documents:

- Completed LLIMIT application form;
- Curriculum Vitae (CV) in the Europass format: https://europass.europa.eu/en/create-europass-cv including the details of education and qualifications, work experience, language skills and other relevant skills;
- Motivation Letter;

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- Transcript of record (academic studies) and master's degree certificate (when available);
- Two letters of recommendation from academics or research professionals;
- A summary of the master's degree thesis or a brief description of the past scientific activity;
- A short critical summary of a selected paper: https://link.springer.com/article/10.1038/s44321-026-00387-8,
- Copy of the valid ID card or Passport.

The five highest-ranked applicants following the first round of candidate assessment will be invited for an interview.