IMPERIAL

NHS
Imperial College Healthcare
NHS Trust

# Co-Director, NIHR Imperial Biomedical Research Centre

**Candidate Information Pack**
March 2026

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# CONTENTS

# IMPERIAL BIOMEDICAL RESEARCH CENTRE

Established in 2007, the NIHR Imperial Biomedical Research Centre (BRC) is a long-standing partnership between Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust (ICHT) and Imperial College London (Imperial), bringing together world-leading academic and clinical excellence to accelerate translational research and deliver meaningful improvements in patient care.

With current NIHR investment of more than £107 million, the BRC underpins a wide portfolio of multidisciplinary activity, including translational research, infrastructure, clinical trial capacity, and data platforms to deliver research with real-world impact.

The BRC provides the essential human and technological infrastructure required to conduct early-stage experimental medicine and first-in-human studies within Imperial's Academic Health Science Centre. Drawing on the university's world-leading strengths in science and engineering, the BRC facilitates proof-of-principle breakthroughs within state-of-the-art clinical environments, accelerating the translation of new diagnostics, therapies and technologies into clinical practice. The BRC's approach aligns directly with UK Government priorities in community engagement, digital innovation and preventative healthcare, as reflected in the Modern Industrial Strategy and the NHS 10 year plan.

## Research

The research portfolio is organised into 14 themes unified by four cross-cutting threads – early diagnosis, precision medicine, digital health and convergence science. Together, these capabilities enable the BRC to act as a major engine for translational discovery and innovation. Furthermore, the BRC places significant emphasis on building research capacity, investing in the development of the clinical academic workforce to ensure a sustainable pipeline of future leaders.

## Partnerships

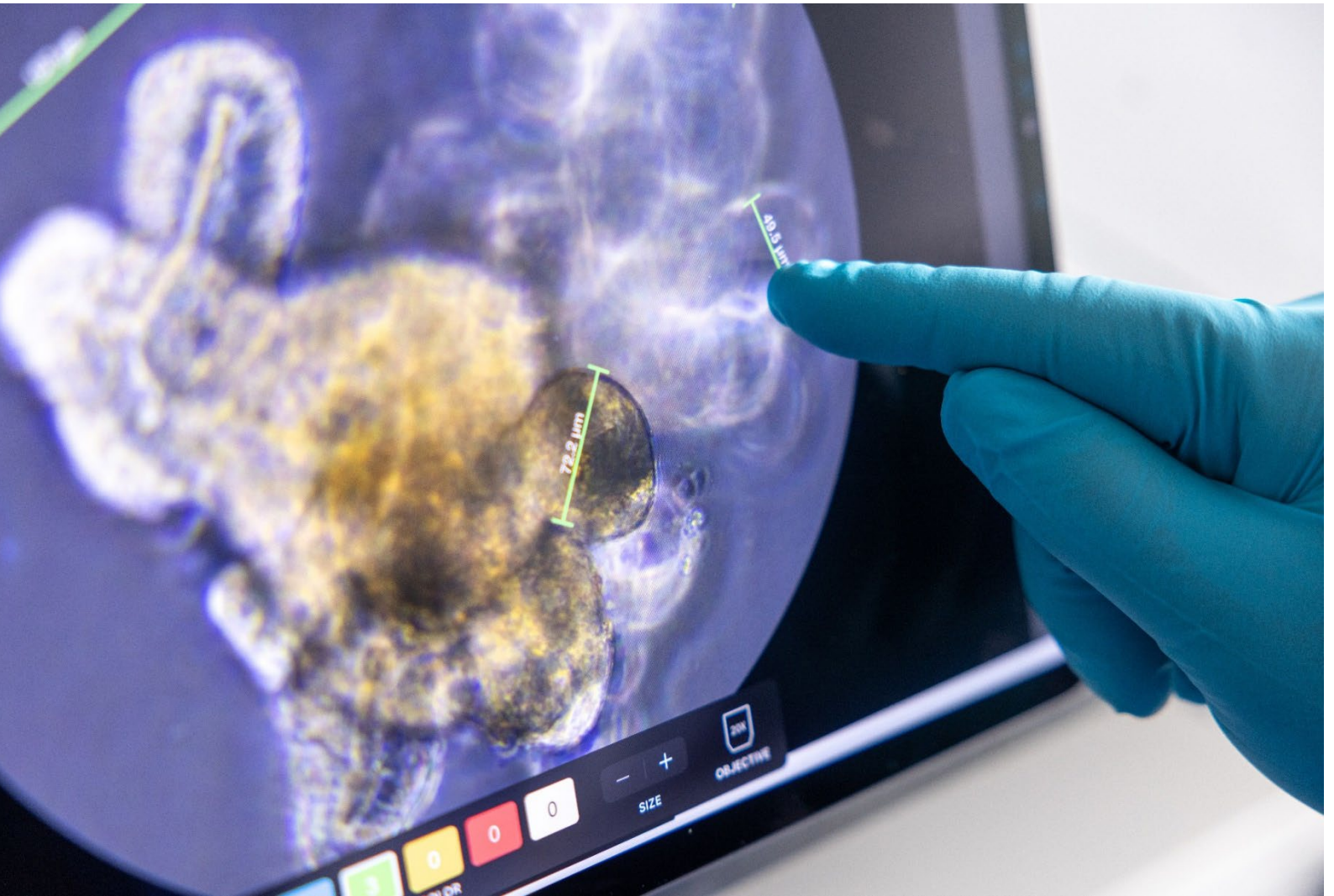
A defining strength of the BRC is its commitment to partnerships by collaborating across NIHR programmes, industry, charities, funders and community organisations. Imperial's researchers work closely with patients, service users and local communities to ensure research is shaped by the needs of the populations it serves, with particular focus on addressing health inequalities across the region.

## NIHR Funding Cycle

As the BRC prepares for the next NIHR funding cycle, it continues to build on its established strengths while identifying new opportunities in discovery science, experimental medicine, convergence science and data-enabled healthcare. This next phase represents a pivotal period in which the BRC will further strengthen its collaborative networks, enhance its scientific platforms and deepen its contribution to translational research of national and international significance.

## Public Engagement

Public engagement is delivered through the BRC's Patient Experience Research Centre (PERC), a core facility made up of clinicians, public health specialists and social scientists. Through public involvement networks, co-produced with community partners, PERC supports inclusive engagement practices and helps researchers involve underrepresented and underserved communities in health research.



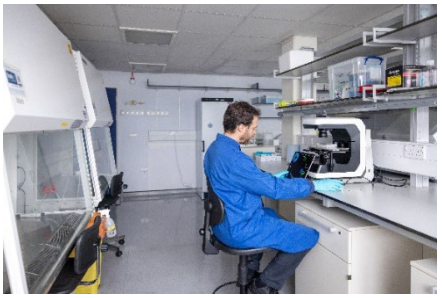
# IMPACT CASE STUDIES

## AI-enabled stethoscopes help diagnose heart conditions in GP surgeries

A large NHS study published in The Lancet has found that a new AI-enabled stethoscope designed to detect serious heart conditions spots them faster and more frequently in primary care. Led by Imperial's National Heart and Lung Institute and supported by the NIHR Imperial BRC, the TRICORDER trial covered 205 NHS GP practices, more than 1.5 million registered patients and included nearly 13,000 AI-assisted heart examinations. Patients examined with the AI stethoscope had significantly higher detection rates – nearly twice as many new heart failure cases and three times as many detections of irregular heart rhythms – compared to patients who were not examined with the AI device.

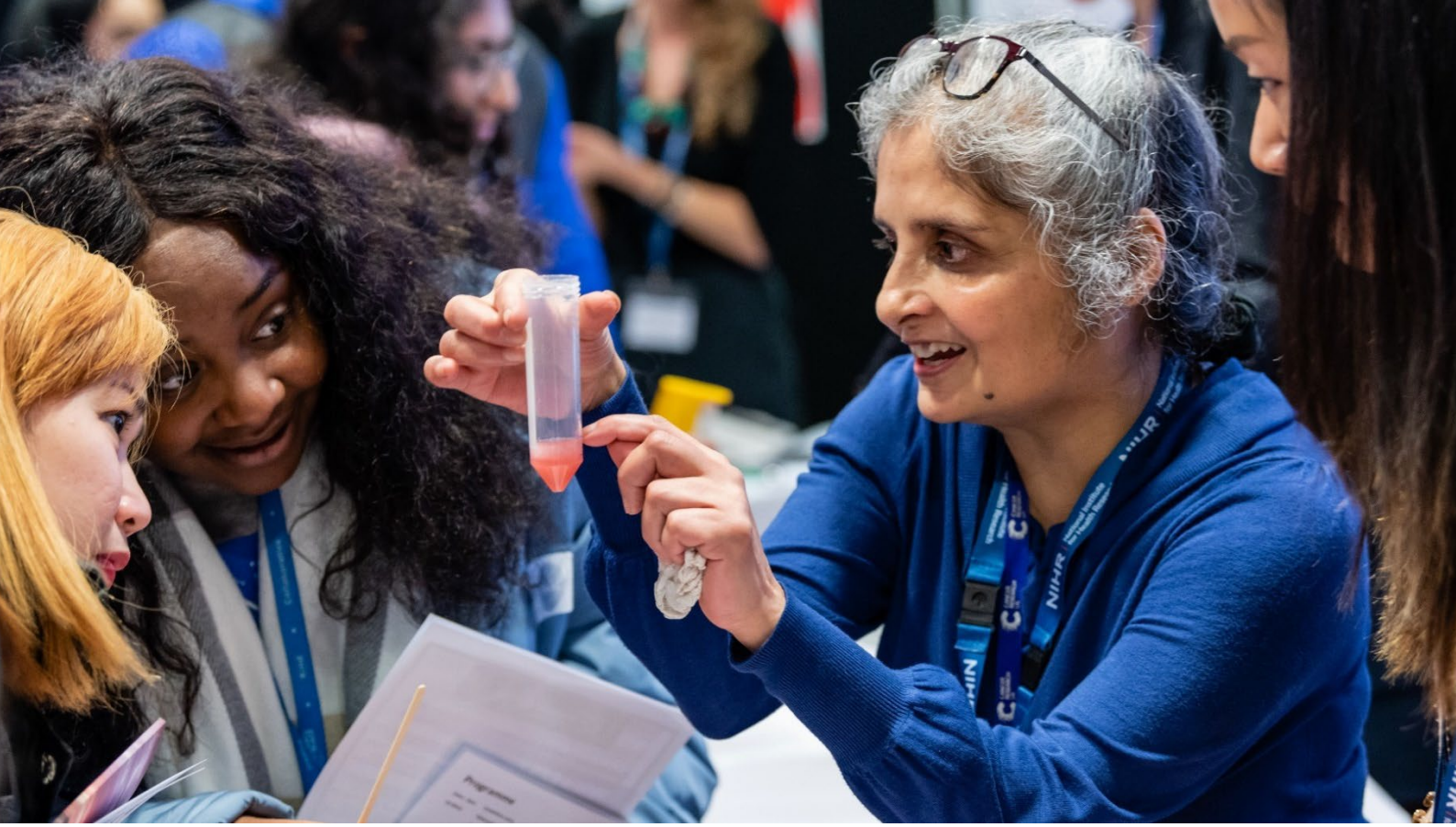
More information can be found here.

## Pfizer Aims to Bring Imperial Obesity Drug Candidates to Clinic in $4.9bn Deal



Pfizer's acquisition of biotechnology company Metsera for $4.9 billion centres on a Phase 2b GLP-1 candidate invented at Imperial College London, named MET-097i. The candidate emerged from Imperial's peptide-engineering programme and early studies conducted within the NIHR Imperial Clinical Research Facility with financial support from the NIHR Imperial BRC. Invented by Professor Steve Bloom, previous Imperial BRC Theme lead, MET-097i could potentially be best-in-class in a new generation of injectable GLP-1 drugs, requiring injections only once per month instead of weekly, and offering improved safety and weight loss.

More information can be found here.



# THE POSITION

The Co-Director will work in partnership with the existing Co-Director, Professor Mark Thursz, to provide joint leadership to the Centre. The Co-Directors will guide the overall direction of the BRC, ensuring its work remains ambitious, and aligned with the wider priorities of ICHT, Imperial and NIHR. They will play a central role in defining the BRC's long-term scientific and organisational strategy, strengthening its position as an internationally recognised centre for translational research.

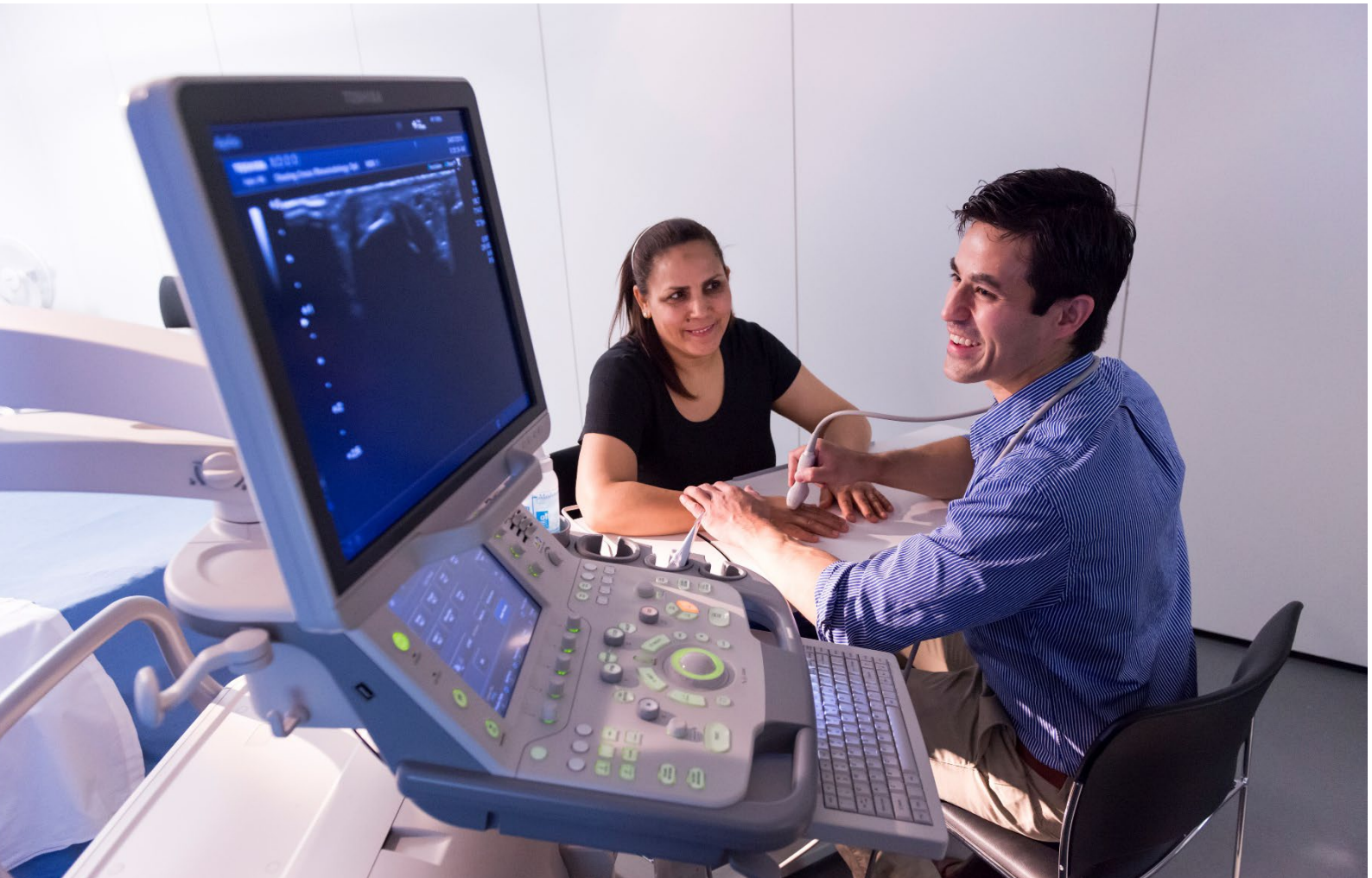
An immediate task of the Co-Directors will be to lead the development of the BRC's renewal bid for the 2028–2033 funding cycle. Drawing on their knowledge of the UK Government Life Sciences Sector Plan and the emerging needs of the NHS, they will identify opportunities for continued growth, ensuring areas of excellence are fully supported while developing a compelling, competitive funding submission.
Working in tandem, the Co-Directors will ensure effective use of the BRC's shared facilities and research platforms (Clinical Phenome Centre, Clinical Imaging Facility, Genomics, Flow Cytometry, Tissue Bank, Organoid Facility, Colebrook Laboratory, iCARE). Additionally, they will support efforts to secure external funding through grants, philanthropy and industry engagement, and provide leadership for developing intellectual property and commercialisation opportunities.

Moreover, initiatives to support the career development of clinical academics and early-career researchers will be prioritised, with the aim of strengthening translational research capacity across the system as a whole

Alongside strategic leadership, the Co-Directors will oversee the governance and financial stewardship of the BRC, ensuring transparency in the allocation of funds. They will provide regular reports to the ICHT Executive, the Trust-level Standing Committee, Group-level Board and relevant university committees. This role reports to the Executive Director of Strategy, Research and Innovation and will work closely with the Chief Executive of ICHT, the Dean of the Faculty of Medicine at Imperial, and the BRC Board/Executive. The Co-Directors are jointly accountable to ICHT, Imperial, and NIHR.

## Roles and Responsibilities

- Develop the renewal bid 28-33, (application anticipated start in 2026 for award commencing in 2028) and oversee associated NIHR infrastructure renewal processes.
- Deliver the existing and future BRC multi-disciplinary research strategy, outcomes and work to strengthen ICHT and Imperial's research excellence and innovation.
- Develop the reputation of the BRC as a leading organisation for multi-disciplinary translational healthcare research and patient care.
- Support the harmonisation of multi-disciplinary research strategies of ICHT, Imperial and the AHSC, ensuring research metrics and KPIs reflect global trends and enable the delivery key objectives.
- Monitor the annual objectives for the BRC research portfolio, reporting progress through the appropriate governance processes and produce an annual report.
- Develop and manage the BRC and present regular financial management reports to the appropriate committees.
- Develop networks and relationships with industry and other related sectors, including the Imperial Health Charity.
- Support career development of all clinical academics, including NMAHPPS, to become future leaders.
- Work with ICHT and Imperial Communications to develop a BRC Communications strategy.
- Collaborate with ICHT and Imperial commercialisation teams to develop intellectual property generated by BRC into licences and spin-outs.
- Work with the Trust's Medical Director, and Divisional Directors, to review the research contributions of NHS Consultants.



# THE PERSON

## Essential Experience

- Has led large, multidisciplinary research programmes/centres with demonstrable translational impact.
- Track record of securing competitive funding & delivering impactful research.
- Experience with NHS–university partnerships and working relationships including clinical research governance.
- Stewardship of multimillion-pound portfolios and shared research infrastructure (e.g., trials unit, imaging, genomics, biobanking).
- Has led Equality, Diversity and Inclusions & Research Culture strategies.
- Developed and delivered research capacity and capability within the health and care system, particularly supporting early career researchers.
- Demonstrable leadership in patient and public involvement, with a strong track record of engaging patients, communities, and the wider public to shape, deliver, and evaluate biomedical research.
- Understanding of the UK Life Sciences ecosystem.
- Currently holds the rank of Full Professor.

## Desirable experience

- Leadership within an NIHR BRC or similar NIHR infrastructure.
- Experience in leading national or international centres/facilities/institutes.
- Knowledge of experimental medicine research and early translation into benefits for patients, public and/or the health and care system.
- Built industry and NIHR collaborations, particularly commercialisation and spin-outs.
- Leveraged interdisciplinary partnerships, particularly with engineers and device development.
- Advanced data/digital leadership (AI/ML, RWD, omics) and convergence science.
- Spearheaded international collaborations and health policy engagement.

## Knowledge and Skills

- Strategic thinking, decision-making, and leadership across complex NHS and academic environments.
- Deep understanding of experimental medicine and translational pathways aligned to the Imperial BRC themes.
- Financial acumen; transparent resource allocation across themes and core platforms.
- Outstanding communication and stakeholder engagement, including patients and public partners.
- Commitment to research integrity, open science, and responsible metrics.

## Attributes

- Visionary, collaborative, and outcome-focused.
- Empathetic, principled, resilient; politically astute and comfortable with complexity.

## Qualifications

- Senior clinician scientist with a PhD/MD (or equivalent).
- Full professional registration and licence to practise in the UK.

# ENQUIRIES AND APPLICATIONS

## Search and Selection Process

Applications or enquiries should be made to WittKieffer, the executive search firm exclusively engaged to assist with this appointment.

Applicants should submit a CV accompanied by a Cover Letter (maximum 2 pages) outlining their suitability for the position and addressing how they satisfy the person specification criteria.

All applicants must be able to provide their top 75 peer-reviewed publications and describe how they are at the top of their field internationally to meet NIHR standards and be eligible for this position.

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Please submit your application to rsmith@wittkieffer.com.

For a confidential discussion about the role and the expectations, please contact:


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