

Director and Group Head, Applied AI

Job ID

REQ-10079914

Jun 16, 2026

LOC_CH

About the Role

Step into a pivotal leadership role at the forefront of scientific innovation, where cutting-edge artificial intelligence meets biomedical research. As Director & Group Head (Applied AI), you will shape how advanced machine learning approaches accelerate drug discovery, translating complex data into meaningful scientific insights that can transform patient outcomes. You will lead high-impact collaborations, guide strategic AI direction across research domains, and empower teams to push the boundaries of what is possible in developing better medicines, faster.

Key Responsibilities

- Define and lead the applied artificial intelligence strategy and multi-year roadmap across drug discovery research.
- Align priorities with portfolio needs, scientific opportunities, and measurable business and research impact.
- Lead multidisciplinary teams to identify, prototype, benchmark, and deploy fit-for-purpose artificial intelligence solutions.
- Govern an applied artificial intelligence portfolio with clear intake, prioritization, resourcing, delivery oversight, and success metrics.
- Establish best practices for problem framing, data readiness, benchmarking, evaluation design, and reproducible model development.
- Drive benchmarking of foundation and task-specific models, enabling transparent trade-offs and informed adoption decisions.
- Partner with engineering teams to scale solutions and embed them into day-to-day scientific decision making.
- Define rigorous evaluation metrics linking model performance to downstream decisions and experimental outcomes.
- Build a culture of scientific rigor, rapid iteration, mentorship, and practical impact across teams.
- Forge strategic academic and industry collaborations to accelerate innovation, benchmarking, and technology transfer.

Essential Requirements

- Demonstrated experience in leading core machine learning capability development initiatives across drug discovery teams and use cases.
- Proven experience with foundation model benchmarking in drug discovery applications.
- Hands-on experience applying machine learning to core drug discovery areas such as target identification or computational chemistry.
- Strong experience in large-scale model training, distributed computation, model adaptation, and deployment within machine learning operations frameworks.
- Deep curiosity and passion for biomedical sciences and therapeutic discovery, with ability to explain complex technical concepts clearly.
- Minimum of 12+ years of experience in innovation, development, deployment, and continuous support of machine learning and modeling solutions.
- Strong coding proficiency in Python and deep learning frameworks, with experience using version control systems such as Git.
- Ability to manage complexity, balance priorities, and drive outcomes effectively within matrixed environments using a proactive mindset.

Desirable Requirements

- Publications, patents, or open-source contributions demonstrating machine learning innovation and domain expertise.

- Strong curiosity for emerging technologies with pragmatic ability to apply them to real-world business challenges.

Commitment to Diversity and Inclusion

Novartis is committed to building an outstanding, inclusive work environment and diverse teams representative of the patients and communities we serve.

Accessibility and Accommodation

Novartis is committed to working with and providing reasonable accommodation to all individuals. If, because of a medical condition or disability, you need a reasonable accommodation for any part of the recruitment process, or to receive more detailed information about the essential functions of a position, please email inclusion.switzerland@novartis.com and share the nature of your request along with your contact information. Please include the job requisition number in your message.

Role Requirements

Why Novartis: Helping people with disease and their families takes more than innovative science. It takes a community of smart, passionate people like you. Collaborating, supporting and inspiring each other. Combining to achieve breakthroughs that change patients' lives. Ready to create a brighter future together? <https://www.novartis.com/about/strategy/people-and-culture>

Benefits and Rewards: Learn about all the ways we'll help you thrive personally and professionally.

[Read our handbook \(PDF 30 MB\)](#)

Division

DIV_RE

Business Unit

Information Technology

Location

LOC_CH

Site

Basel (City)

Company / Legal Entity

C028 (FCRS = CH028) Novartis Pharma AG

Functional Area

FCT_DD

Job Type

Full time

Employment Type

Regular

Shift Work

No

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