

RESEARCH ASSOCIATE

Harnessing Opportunities for Promoting Equity in Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs): HOPE4NCDs

Full-time (37 hrs per week); Fixed-term for 24-months

Job Ref: REQ241028

As part of the University's ongoing commitment to redeployment, please note that this vacancy may be withdrawn at any stage of the recruitment process if a suitable redeployee is identified.

Internationally recognised for its contribution to the study of sport, exercise and health, the School has wide-ranging expertise, encompassing such diverse areas as biomechanics, medicine, molecular and cellular biology, nutrition, pedagogy, psychology, physiology, sociology, economics and sport management.

The School has an active and ambitious plan to grow capacity and influence through developments as part of the National Centre for Sport and Exercise Medicine, Loughborough in London, and StemLab.

The School is extremely proud to hold an [Athena Swan Silver Award](#) since 2013, recognising the commitment and work of the School in addressing gender inequalities in Science and to improving career progress for female academics. The School is committed to ensuring that female students and staff are able to achieve their full potential; and provides a flexible and open working culture to enable staff to maintain a work-life balance.

We support our Athena SWAN initiatives by investing in:

- Bespoke leadership programmes to encourage and build confidence in women to take leadership roles.
- Working lunches where needed to enable meetings to be held between 10am and 4pm (as per our Silver Action Plan).
- Monthly coffee mornings which provide opportunities for networking and developing a sense of community within the School.

Research and Innovation

Research and Innovation within the School is characterised by excellence and breadth, and its quality was recognised in the 2021 Research Excellence Framework where Loughborough University ranked top for research power (GPA x volume) in Sport and Exercise Sciences, Leisure and Tourism. Loughborough University has also placed Number 1 in the QS world ranking for sport-related subjects for six consecutive years (2017-2022, every year since the category was introduced). A broad range of social and natural sciences contribute to the School's research and innovation activity which is organised within three overlapping themes:

- **Sport performance**, understanding and supporting the enhancement of athletes' performance in competitive sport;
- **Lifestyle for health and well-being**, encompassing research across several disciplines with the common goal of facilitating healthy living and ageing across the lifespan; and
- **Sport, Business and Society**, exploring how individuals, communities and organisations engage with and facilitate sport and exercise opportunities.

The School's research themes articulate in particular with the Sport and Exercise Beacon and the Health and Wellbeing Global Challenge which are key elements of the University's [CALIBRE](#) (Collective Ambition at Loughborough for Building Research Excellence) framework.

Project Summary

Project: Harnessing Opportunities for Promoting Equity in NCDs. HOPE4NCDs

African and Caribbean communities face significant health challenges, including higher rates of early-onset obesity, type 2 diabetes, and cardiovascular disease, which severely impact life expectancy and health in later life. For example, Black Caribbean and Black African women have some of the highest rates of overweight/obesity in the UK. Despite efforts to improve health-related behaviours, such as healthy eating and physical activity (PA) campaigns, health inequalities persist. This project seeks to identify positive deviance in diet and PA behaviours within African and Caribbean communities. Positive deviance assumes solutions already exist within communities, and positive deviants succeed by demonstrating uncommon or different behaviours. The project will identify and understand these positive deviant health-related behaviours and their contextual factors using co-produced mixed-methods approaches (qualitative and quantitative secondary data analysis) within these communities. Findings will be used to develop a conceptual framework that will serve as a strategic roadmap for reducing health inequalities and improving health outcomes. We are looking for a passionate and dedicated Research Associate to work on the qualitative component of HOPE4NCDs funded by Wellcome.

Job Description

Job Family & Grade: Specialist & Supporting Academic (Research) Grade 6

Job Purpose: To support the HOPE4NCDs project. The role will involve the collection and analysis of qualitative research. The successful candidate will be based at Loughborough University

Job Duties:

- Contribute to the HOPE4NCDs project under general guidance the Principal Investigator.
- Be responsible for conducting the day to day running of the HOPE4NCDs project.
- To formulate detailed plans for the project based on broad guidance from the project team.
- Collect and analyse data collected from participants (qualitative) for reports, academic papers, and other publications.
- To write research papers suitable for publication in high quality academic journals.
- Contribute to the project's dissemination plan, specifically the publication and dissemination of publicly accessible publications (e.g. blogs)
- Travel to attend meetings and make presentations both within the project partners working group and to external stakeholders.
- To attend and contribute to conferences.
- To contribute to project promotion and public engagement events.
- To assist the academic staff in the project team with the supervision of undergraduate MSc and PhD project work and day-to-day supervision and support of other researchers.
- Present information on research progress and outcomes, as agreed with the PI.
- Maintain confidentiality at all times and ensure that intellectual property (IPR) agreements are not violated.
- Engage in training programmes in the University (or elsewhere) that are consistent with the needs and aspirations of the project and those of the School.
- Undertake other duties as may be reasonably requested and that are commensurate with the nature and grade of the post.

Teaching:

There are no specific teaching responsibilities for this position.

Points to Note:

The purpose of this job description is to indicate the general level of duties and responsibility of the post. The detailed duties may vary from time to time without changing the general character or level of responsibility entailed.

Special Conditions:

All staff have a statutory responsibility to take reasonable care of themselves, others and the environment and to prevent harm by their acts or omissions. All staff are therefore required to adhere to the University's Health, Safety and Environmental Policy & Procedures.

All staff should hold a duty and commitment to observing the University's Equity, Diversity and Inclusion policy and procedures at all times. Duties must be carried out in accordance with relevant Equity, Diversity and Inclusion legislation and University policies/procedures.

Successful completion of probation will be dependent on attendance at the University's mandatory courses which include Belonging and Inclusion and, if appropriate, Recruitment and Selection.

Organisational Responsibility:

Reports Dr Hibbah Osei-Kwasi and Professor Rebecca Hardy

Person Specification

Your application will be reviewed against the essential and desirable criteria listed below. Applicants are strongly advised to explicitly state and evidence how they meet each of the essential (and desirable) criteria in their application. Stages of assessment are as follows:

- 1 – Application
- 2 – Test/Assessment Centre/Presentation
- 3 – Interview

ESSENTIAL

Area	Criteria	Stage
Experience	A background in public health or nutrition/physical activity interventions	1,3
	Experience of undertaking qualitative research	1,2,3
	Experience of working with ethnic minority populations	1,3
	Knowledge and understanding of relevant behaviour change models and frameworks	1,2,3
	Experience of authoring original work for academic journal papers, conference papers or technical reports	1,3
	Experience of writing publications for the public and non-academic audiences	1,2,3
	Skills and abilities	Ability to effectively communicate with individuals and organisations to aid project development and recruitment
	Excellent written and oral communication skills	1,2,3
	Strong communication skills and well-developed ability to communicate research to non-experts	1,3
	Self-motivated with the ability to meet deadlines	1,3
	Excellent interpersonal and organisational skills	1,3
	Ability to write project reports and make presentations to community and academic research groups	1,2,3
	Knowledge of relevant Health & Safety issues	1,3
	Competence in data analysis packages for qualitative data	1,3
	Willingness to travel to various locations in England to undertake data collection and/or for collaboration purposes	3
Training	Demonstrate evidence of having undertaken further training	1
	Willingness to undertake appropriate further training and to adopt new procedures as and when required	3
Qualifications	PhD (or near completion) in nutrition or global health, or physical activity, or behavioural epidemiology, public health, or a related subject	1
Other	Commitment to observing the University's Equity, Diversity and Inclusion policy at all times.	3

DESIRABLE

Area	Criteria	Stage
Experience	Experience of using theories and behavioural change models	1,2,3
	Experience of data collection in community settings	1,3
	Experience of patient and public involvement and engagement	1,2,3
	Skills in community based participatory approaches	1,3
	Experience of preparing data for archiving	1,3

	Experience of developing research proposals for funding	1,3
	Experience of working in a high-quality academic research environment	1,3
	Experience of and/or publications in the development of and/or application of statistical or machine learning (incl. deep learning) models and algorithms to large datasets.	1,3
	Knowledge of positive deviance frameworks	1,2,3
	Experience of project management and/or people management skills.	1,3

Conditions of Service

This full-time post is offered on fixed-term contract for 24 months within the *Specialist & Supporting Academic (Research)* job family at Grade 6 (£34,866 and £45,163 per annum); starting salary to be confirmed on offer of appointment.

The appointment will be subject to the University's normal [Terms and Conditions of Employment](#) for staff on Grade 6 and above.

The University is committed to enabling staff to maintain a healthy work-home balance and has a number of [family-friendly policies](#).

We also offer an on-campus nursery with subsidised places, subsidised places at local holiday clubs and a childcare voucher scheme (further details are available at: [Childcare Support](#))

In addition, the University is supportive, wherever possible, of flexible working arrangements. We strive to create a culture that supports equality and celebrates diversity throughout the campus. The University holds a Bronze [Athena SWAN](#) award which recognises the importance of support for women at all stages of their academic career.

Loughborough University is committed to allowing its employees to work *dynamically* with a combination of working on campus and remotely, where possible. This has been identified as a role that could work dynamically and, if successful, your line manager will discuss these informal arrangements with you. Please note that there is a general expectation that the successful candidate will spend the majority of time working on the Loughborough campus.