

RESEARCH ASSOCIATE in Professional Football Psychology

Arsenal Football Club Psychology Project

Part-time (0.4 FTE, 14.8 hours per week); Fixed-term for 6 months

Job Ref: REQ250978

As part of the University's ongoing commitment to redeployment, please note that this vacancy may be withdrawn at any stage of the recruitment process if a suitable redeployee is identified.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 nine consecutive years (2017-2025, 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 and Innovation (R&I) themes articulate with the University's core strategic themes: Sport, Health and Wellbeing; Vibrant and Inclusive Communities; and Climate Change and Net Zero [Strategic themes | Creating Better Futures. Together | Loughborough University](#)

Project Summary

Project: Arsenal Football Club Psychology Project

This project involves the development of a performance psychology framework to support football players' development into professional athletes. Integrating the best available research with service expertise in the professional football context, the framework will guide psychologists' and coaches' support of talented players' psychosocial and performance development. The vision being to develop players' critical awareness and know-how to enable them to apply their mind, skills, techniques, strategies, and tactics to the same high standard every time they perform – in other words, to acquire and maintain a 'champion mentality'. The Research Associate will be an integral member of the research team: David Fletcher (Professor of Human Performance and Health, Loughborough University), Perry Stewart (Head of Academy Performance, Arsenal Football Club), Sapna Sharma (Academy Psychologist, Arsenal Football Club), Adam Bracey (Academy Psychologist, Arsenal Football Club), and MSc Student (Loughborough University).

Job Description

Job Family & Grade: Specialist & Supporting Academic Grade 6

Job Purpose: To support the Arsenal Football Club Psychology Project. The role will involve the development of a performance psychology framework to support football players. The successful candidate will be based primarily at Loughborough University and partially at Arsenal Football Club.

Job Duties:

- To systematically review the research to identify the best available evidence to inform the development of the framework.
- To ensure that service expertise in the professional football context informs the development of the framework.
- For each psychosocial component within the framework, to produce (a) a definition and description, (b) developmental approaches and strategies, and (c) its assessment and monitoring.
- To evaluate the framework's utility in guiding psychologists' and coaches' support of talented players' psychosocial and performance development.
- To identify potential future opportunities for Loughborough University and Arsenal Football Club collaboration and partnership.
- Be responsible for conducting the day to day running of the project.
- To formulate detailed plans for the project based on broad guidance from the project team.
- To feed back to the project team on progress, to make recommendations for next steps.
- Write up regular progress reports and present outcomes to all Investigators and Collaborators.
- To write research papers suitable for publication in high quality academic journals.
- Travel to attend meetings and make presentations to project partners and to external stakeholders. To attend and contribute to conferences.
- Contribute ideas for new research and enterprise directions.
- Maintain confidentiality at all times and ensure that intellectual property (IPR) agreements are not violated.
- To assist the academic staff in the project team with the supervision of MSc project work
- 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 to Professor David Fletcher

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	Background in performance sport-related research and practice	1,3
	Experience of systematically reviewing research to identify the best available evidence	1,2,3
	Experience of working with sport psychologists and coaches	1,3
	Knowledge and understanding of psychological frameworks, theories, and concepts	1,2,3
	Experience of authoring original work for academic journal papers, conference papers or technical reports	1,3
Skills and abilities	Ability to effectively communicate with individuals and organisations to aid project development	1,3
	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
	Willingness and ability to travel independently	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 sport and/or psychology 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 evaluating psychology frameworks and/or interventions	1,2,3
	Experience of assessing and/or monitoring psychosocial phenomena	
	Experience of developing research proposals for funding	1,3
	Experience of working in a high-quality academic research environment	1,3
	Experience of project management and/or people management skills.	1,3
Qualifications	CASES Accreditation and/or BPS Qualification in sport and exercise psychology	1

	HCPC Registered in sport and exercise psychology	1
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Conditions of Service

This part-time post is offered on fixed-term contract for 6 months within the *Specialist & Supporting Academic job* family at Grade 6 (from £35,608 per annum pro rata); 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.