

## RESEARCH ASSOCIATE in Female Athlete Injury and Health

Job Ref: REQ260452

The **School of Sport Exercise and Health Sciences (SSEHS)** is a multi-disciplinary school committed to fostering a diverse and inclusive academic community. It upholds the highest standards of excellence in research, innovation, and pedagogy across the full spectrum of disciplines within sport, exercise, health and wellbeing.

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 is extremely proud to hold an [Athena Swan Silver Award](#) since 2012, 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.

### 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 ten consecutive years (2017-2026, 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 Research and Innovation theme** utilises several disciplines to understand how sport engages individuals, communities and organisations and supports the enhancement of athletes' performance in competitive sport.
- **Health Research and Innovation theme** brings together research from multiple disciplines with the shared goal of enhancing health, promoting healthy living, and improving wellbeing across all stages of life and all communities.

The school's research and Innovation (R&I) themes articulate with the Universities 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

This project, led by Loughborough University in partnership with Howden Group, aims to address gaps in understanding female athlete injury risk and career disruptions, and to use data collected to inform more equitable insurance models. It responds to the rapid professionalisation of women's sport, which has increased both performance demands and the likelihood of injury, while the existing evidence base remains heavily biased towards male athletes.

The research adopts a multidisciplinary, mixed-methods approach grounded in a "gendered environmental" framework, recognising that injury risk is shaped by physiological, physical, and social factors. It will combine a comprehensive literature review with analysis of injury data, qualitative focus groups with female athletes, and interviews with athlete support staff. This approach will capture not only injury prevalence and recovery but also broader influences such as menstrual health, pregnancy, dual careers, financial insecurity, and access to healthcare and facilities.

By generating robust, gender-specific evidence on athlete health and risk, the project seeks to improve understanding of female-specific conditions, enhance injury prevention and support strategies, and inform the

development of tailored insurance solutions that better meet the needs of female athletes across their careers. Outputs will include interim and final reports, academic and media publications, and stakeholder engagement to maximise impact across sport, policy, and industry

## **Job Description**

**Job Family and Grade:** Specialist and Supporting Academic (Research) at Grade 6

### **Job Purpose**

The post holder will support a multidisciplinary project on female athlete injury and health, contributing to data collection, analysis, and reporting to generate knowledge that informs athlete welfare, policy, and innovation.

### **Job Duties**

- Conduct a comprehensive literature review of sports injury epidemiology, with a focus on sex differences across team sports and elite competition settings.
- Contribute to the collation, management, and analysis of quantitative injury data, including datasets from Loughborough Sport elite teams and elite women's sport partners.
- Design, facilitate, and analyse qualitative research, including:
  - Focus groups with female athletes
  - Semi-structured interviews with athlete support staff (e.g. Clinical Leads, Medical Directors, Heads of Performance).
- Support applications for research ethics approval, ensuring adherence to university policies.
- Contribute to interim and final project reports for academic, policy, and industry audiences.
- Support development of knowledge exchange outputs, including media articles, policy briefings, and practitioner-facing summaries.
- Assist with dissemination through presentations, stakeholder engagement, and public-facing communications.
- Contribute to the writing of scientific research papers suitable for publication in high quality academic journals.
- Work closely with academic staff, practitioners, and external partners across sport, health, and industry.
- Travel to different locations might be necessary for data collection and research-related meetings.
- Uphold high ethical research standards, maintain confidentiality, and ensure that data protection requirements are met at all times.
- 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, including any training relevant to the administration of the proposed project.
- Undertake other duties as may be reasonably requested and that are commensurate with the nature and Grade of the post.

### **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 outlined in the document.

### **Organisational Responsibility**

Reports to the: Dr Laura Barrett and Professor Dominic Malcolm, Principal Investigators

## Person Specification

Your application will be assessed based on the essential and desirable criteria listed below.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to explicitly demonstrate how they meet each essential (and desirable) criteria at the application stage. The criteria that you need to demonstrate in your application will be listed as Stage 1 in the table below.

Stages of assessment are as follows:

- 1 – Criteria measured within the Application
- 2 – Criteria measured at Test/Assessment Centre/Presentation
- 3 – Criteria measured at Interview

### Essential Criteria

| Area                 | Criteria                                                                                                                               | Stage |
|----------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|
| Experience           | Experience of quantitative and/or qualitative research methods, including data collection and analysis                                 | 1,2,3 |
|                      | Experience of recruiting participants                                                                                                  | 1,3   |
|                      | Experience of analysing and interpreting quantitative data (using relevant statistical packages, e.g. SPSS, R) and/or qualitative data | 1,3   |
|                      | Experience of conducting focus groups and/or interviews                                                                                | 1,3   |
|                      | Experience with ethics applications and protocol development                                                                           | 1,3   |
|                      | Experience of preparing research for publication in scientific journals                                                                | 1,3   |
| Skills and abilities | Ability to effectively communicate with individuals and organisations for participant recruitment and data collection                  | 1,2,3 |
|                      | Good time management, organisation and interpersonal skills                                                                            | 1,3   |
|                      | Competence in IT skills including data input and data analysis packages for quantitative and/or qualitative data                       | 1,3   |
| Training             | Willingness to undertake appropriate further training and to adopt new procedures as and when required                                 | 1,3   |
| Qualifications       | PhD (or close to completion) in Sport Science, Exercise Science, Sociology of Sport, Sports Injuries or a related discipline           | 1     |
| Other                | Commitment to observing the University's Equity, Diversity and Inclusivity policy at all times                                         | 3     |
|                      | Willingness to occasionally travel for meetings and data collection                                                                    | 3     |

**Desirable Criteria:** These are skills, experience and competencies that are additional extras that may be used to narrow the pool down if we receive a high volume of applications that meet the essential criteria.

| Area                 | Criteria                                                                                         | Stage |
|----------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|
| Experience           | Experience of undertaking an injury audit                                                        | 1,3   |
|                      | Experience undertaken research related to injury in female athletes                              | 1,3   |
|                      | Experience of working collaboratively as part of a team and building collaborative relationships | 1, 3  |
| Skills and abilities | Ability to present to funders                                                                    | 1,2,3 |

## Conditions of Service

The appointment will be subject to the [University's Terms and Conditions of Employment](#) relevant to the job grade.

## Shared University Responsibilities

As a member of the Loughborough community, you are expected to:

- Take reasonable care of yourself, others and the environment, and to prevent harm by your acts or omissions. All staff are therefore required to adhere to the University's Health, Safety and Environmental Sustainability Policies & Procedures.
- Uphold and actively contribute to the [University's commitment to Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion](#), ensuring that all duties are carried out in alignment with this.

## Our Purpose, Vision, and Values

Our purpose, Vision and Values underpin all that we do and shape how we work together at Loughborough.

We're proud to promote our values: **Adventurous, Collaborative, Creative, Authentic** and **Responsible**. Our people bring these values to life every day, and they are central to the positive and supportive culture that makes Loughborough unique.

If you join us, you'll be encouraged to bring these values to life in your own work and contribute to the positive, supportive culture that makes Loughborough unique.

Read more about our [vision and values](#).

## Our Accreditations



We strive to create a culture that supports equity 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 career.



We are proud to be a [Race Equality Charter Member](#). The Charter aims to improve the representation, progression and success of all minority ethnic staff and students within higher education and address issues of racism within higher education institutions (HEIs).



We are proud to be a Disability Confident Employer and have adopted a proactive approach to employing disabled people and to creating a more diverse workforce. We ensure that our recruitment processes are inclusive and accessible. We guarantee to offer an interview to all applicants who have declared a disability, provided that the essential criteria for the role are met. We proactively anticipate and provide reasonable adjustments and support existing employees who acquire a disability or long-term condition to thrive in the workplace.



We are a real living wage employer, and our Living Wage Employer Mark shows our commitment to paying our staff according to the cost of living.



We are proud supporters of the [City of Sanctuary movement](#) and delighted to be recognised as a University of Sanctuary. This national network brings together, university staff, lecturers, academics, and students, who together work to make Higher

Education institutions places of safety, solidarity and empowerment for people seeking sanctuary.



We are committed to addressing gender inequalities in science and to improving career progression for female academics. The School of Sport, Exercise and Health Sciences holds a [Silver Athena SWAN award](#) which recognises the importance of support for women at all stages of their career.

**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.**