

Loughborough Sport

Sport Innovation Specialist

Job Ref: REQ260502

School/Department summary:

Loughborough Sport is the overarching sport and physical-activity Professional Service of Loughborough University. It covers a wide spectrum: elite performance sport, recreational sport, coaching and volunteering, facilities, student clubs, and inclusive programmes.

Job Description

Job Family and Grade: Management and Specialist (MA) grade 6

Job Purpose

An insight-led innovation role focused on the development of participation and workforce opportunities across sport and physical activity. The role will identify opportunities, facilitate new approaches, and coordinate the design, testing and evaluation of initiatives that enhance participation, inclusion, engagement and workforce pathways.

The role will use data, insight and student understanding, alongside awareness of wider sector, societal, behavioural and generational trends, to inform and help shape innovative participation and workforce offers, contributing to enhanced student experience, employability and organisational priorities.

The role will also support operational managers with the analysis and interpretation of participation and student workforce development data, including the Coach & Volunteer Academy (CVA), to identify trends, opportunities and areas for development and inform recommendations for continuous improvement.

Working collaboratively across the Participation & Workforce Development Team and with colleagues responsible for data and insight, the role will facilitate the delivery of evidence-informed, measurable innovation and development activity.

Job Duties

Innovation & Development

- Facilitate the design, development and testing of innovative initiatives that enhance participation, inclusion, engagement and workforce development pathways, within sport and physical activity.
- Support the review and evolution of participation and workforce development offers, providing insight and recommendations to inform decision-making.
- Identify emerging societal, behavioural, cultural, technological and generational trends, alongside unmet student needs, to inform development priorities.
- Facilitate and coordinate cross-functional innovation projects involving multiple teams and stakeholders.
- Ensure innovation activity is practical, scalable and capable of being embedded within operational delivery.

Insight, Research & Student Understanding

- Facilitate the design, delivery and interpretation of qualitative and quantitative insight activity to understand behaviours, barriers and unmet needs.
- Lead or support targeted research and review activity to deepen insight and inform development priorities.
- Work with colleagues to develop approaches for capturing participation and workforce insight, and shaping evaluation.
- Support the analysis and interpretation of participation and CVA data to identify trends, gaps and opportunities.
- Translate data and insight into practical recommendations to inform improvement, innovation and decision-making.

Evaluation & Impact

- Contribute to proportionate approaches to evaluating the effectiveness of initiatives and programme developments.
- Embed clear success measures and evaluation approaches within development design.
- Use evaluation findings and participation and CVA data to assess impact, user behaviour and areas for improvement.
- Contribute to reporting that demonstrates outcomes, learning and the value of innovation activity across participation, inclusion, wellbeing and workforce development.

Collaboration & Influence

- Work collaboratively with managers to ensure innovative developments are operationally feasible and scalable.
- Support operational managers by complementing performance monitoring with deeper insight and learning.
- Act as a key point of support and guidance to colleagues during the design and piloting of new initiatives.
- Support stakeholders to adopt evidence-informed approaches to development and decision-making.
- Build relationships with student leaders, academic partners and university stakeholders.

External Insight & Partnerships

- Maintain awareness of sector and societal developments influencing participation and workforce development.
- Support the identification of funding opportunities and contribute to bids and proposals through the use of participation and CVA data and insight.
- Build and maintain relationships with external organisations and partners.

Other

- Undertake duties commensurate with the grade and responsibilities of the role.

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: Head of Participation & Workforce Development

Direct Reports: N/A

Budget Responsibilities: Devolved Budget Support

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 designing, developing or improving programmes or initiatives within sport, physical activity, or comparable participation/behaviour-change environments.	1,3
	Experience using data, insight or research to inform decision-making and development activity.	1,2,3
	Experience supporting innovation, improvement or change initiatives within complex environments.	1,3
	Experience working across teams and influencing stakeholders to support improvement.	1,3
Skills and abilities	Strong creative problem-solving and ability to apply innovative approaches.	1,2,3
	Ability to use insight and evidence to shape practical, user-focused solutions.	1,2,3
	Effective project management and prioritisation skills.	1,3
	Strong communication and stakeholder management skills.	1,3
	Ability to constructively challenge existing practice and support improvement.	1,3
	Ability to work effectively within ambiguous or evolving environments.	1,3
Training	Commitment to personal and professional development.	1,3
	Willingness to undertake further training and adopt new approaches where required.	1,3
Qualifications	A degree or relevant equivalent experience	1
Other	Uphold and actively contribute to the University's commitment to Equity, Diversity and Inclusion.	1,3
	Willingness to work flexibly, including occasional evenings and weekends.	1,3
	Commitment to continuous professional development and maintaining awareness of relevant sector developments.	1,3

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 within university sport, student engagement, sport development or physical activity settings.	1,3
	Experience evaluating programmes, initiatives or projects.	1,3
	Experience contributing to or supporting funding bids or grant applications.	1,3
Skills and abilities	Understanding of participation, inclusion, sport development or behaviour change principles.	1,3
	Knowledge of participation, student engagement or workforce development systems.	1,3
	Familiarity with evaluation and impact measurement approaches.	1,3
	Awareness of wider societal, behavioural and generational trends affecting young people.	1,2,3
Qualifications	Professional qualification or postgraduate study in a relevant discipline (e.g. sport development, behavioural science, education, research, innovation, or project management).	1

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.
- Support and contribute to the University's commitment to principles of equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) while carrying out all duties, behaving in a manner that treats others with dignity and respect and upholds every persons right to lawful freedom of expression, freedom of speech and academic freedom. Further information about EDI at Loughborough and our strategic aims is available on our website.

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.

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.