

Job Ref: REQ260740

## Research Associate in Human Physiology, Immunology and Long COVID

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:**

We are seeking a Research Associate to support a multidisciplinary research programme investigating the biological mechanisms of fatigue and post-exertional symptom exacerbation in Long COVID. The project combines exercise physiology, immunology, autonomic assessment, digital health monitoring, and immunometabolic profiling to understand how immune and physiological systems interact to drive symptom burden and functional limitation.

## Job Description

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

**Job Purpose:** To undertake the delivery of an interdisciplinary research programme investigating the biological mechanisms underpinning fatigue and post-exertional symptom exacerbation in Long COVID and related post-infectious conditions.

### Job Duties:

- To lead (under supervision) a programme of primary research relating to the physiological, immunological and digital health monitoring of people living with Long COVID.
- To conduct physiological exercise testing and immunological laboratory-based data collection with human volunteers
- To collect and analyse biochemical samples e.g. blood, fat, muscle; in accordance with the HTA (2004)
- To maintain accurate study databases, participant records, and data management systems.
- To contribute to the writing of research funding applications
- To write research papers suitable for publication in high-quality academic journals
- To attend and contribute to conferences
- To support related work being undertaken by PhD students
- To write and manage research ethics applications (university and NHS)
- To contribute to project promotion and public engagement events
- Contribute ideas for new research and enterprise directions
- Maintain confidentiality 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 outlined in the document.

This post involves data collection across the East Midlands; especially Nottingham (QMC Hospital) & Leicester (General Hospital), and therefore possession of a driving licence (or willingness to travel) is advantageous.

### Organisational Responsibility

Reports to: Professor Mark Faghy, Professor of Clinical Exercise Physiology

Direct Reports N/A

Budget Responsibilities: N/A

Structure Chart: N/A

## 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 |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|
| <b>Experience</b>           | Background in exercise physiology and/or immunology                                                                                                                                         | 1,3   |
|                             | Experienced in clinical research with humans                                                                                                                                                | 1,3   |
|                             | Sound knowledge of Long COVID or post-acute infection syndromes and related disease pathophysiology                                                                                         | 1,3   |
|                             | Authoring original work for academic journal papers, conference papers or technical reports                                                                                                 | 1,3   |
|                             | Experienced in the recruitment of study volunteers                                                                                                                                          | 1,3   |
|                             | Experience of preparing research funding applications                                                                                                                                       | 1     |
|                             | Experience of leading small research teams and working independently to achieve research goals                                                                                              | 1,3   |
| <b>Skills and abilities</b> | Ability to collect and store human samples e.g. serum, plasma, PBMCs and muscle tissue.                                                                                                     | 1,3   |
|                             | Experience of working with people living with Long COVID, ME/CFS, or any other chronic conditions                                                                                           | 1,3   |
|                             | Experience of physiological assessment (e.g., CPET, exercise testing, autonomic assessment)                                                                                                 | 1,3   |
|                             | Competence with SPSS, stata or R statistical packages                                                                                                                                       | 1,3   |
|                             | Ability to write and manage research ethics in accordance with relevant procedures and legislation                                                                                          | 1,3   |
|                             | Robust understanding of quantitative data analysis techniques for application to laboratory and epidemiological research                                                                    | 1,3   |
|                             | Phlebotomy trained                                                                                                                                                                          | 1     |
|                             | Excellent written and oral communication skills                                                                                                                                             | 1,3   |
|                             | Self-motivated with ability to meet deadlines                                                                                                                                               | 1,3   |
|                             | Excellent interpersonal, and organisational skills                                                                                                                                          | 1,3   |
|                             |                                                                                                                                                                                             |       |
|                             |                                                                                                                                                                                             |       |
|                             | Knowledge of relevant Health & Safety issues                                                                                                                                                | 1,3   |
|                             | <b>Training</b>                                                                                                                                                                             |       |
|                             | Demonstrate evidence of having undertaken further training                                                                                                                                  | 1     |
|                             | <b>Qualifications</b>                                                                                                                                                                       |       |
|                             | PhD in a relevant area (or at the point of completion)                                                                                                                                      | 1     |
|                             | <b>Other</b>                                                                                                                                                                                |       |
|                             | Demonstrate an ability to behave in a way that adheres to equitable and inclusive working practices, while respecting diversity of thought and supporting freedom of speech and expression. | 1,3   |

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**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 all meeting the essential criteria.

| Area              | Criteria                                                                                   | Stage |
|-------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|
| <b>Experience</b> | Experience with leading own research funding applications                                  | 1,3   |
|                   | Experience supporting research students (PhD, MSc, undergraduate)                          | 1,3   |
|                   |                                                                                            |       |
|                   |                                                                                            |       |
|                   | Ability to write project reports and make technical presentations to relevant stakeholders | 1,3   |

## 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.
- Support and contribute to the University's commitment to Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI), while carrying out all duties in a way that respects these principles and upholds the right to free expression. 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.



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.**