

Job Title: Research Associate in Physical Activity and Sedentary Behaviour Interventions
Grade: £39,906 to £46,049 per annum, pro-rata if part-time
Salary: 7
Department: Diabetes Research Centre
Hours/Contract: Full-time, part-time (minimum 0.8FTE, 30 hours per week), or job share considered, fixed term contract for 24 months
Job Family: Teaching and Research
Reference: 12195

Role Purpose

We are looking for a motivated and talented Research Associate to contribute to our innovative programme of research focused on behaviour change interventions targeting sedentary behaviour and physical activity.

Our multidisciplinary team within the [Leicester Diabetes Centre](#) (LDC) develops and evaluates evidence-based interventions designed to increase physical activity and reduce sedentary time across a variety of populations and settings. Current projects include work with office workers, young people, lorry drivers, and adults at risk of or living with long-term conditions. Increasingly, our interventions are being digitally delivered, offering scalable and cost-effective solutions to support sustainable behaviour change.

We are now expanding our research to reach additional groups who spend large portions of their day sitting and are typically less active—such as university students, older adults, and construction plant operators. We are also looking to apply novel study designs to evaluate our interventions such as micro randomization trials, factorial randomized controlled trials, and sequential multiple assignment randomization trials. The appointed individual will support this expanded programme of work as well as contributing new research ideas.

This is an exciting opportunity to work at the intersection of physical activity, sedentary behaviour, behavioural science, and implementation science, and to contribute to a research programme with real-world impact.

The Leicester Lifestyle and Health Research Group (LLHRG)

The LLHRG are part of the Diabetes Research Centre (DRC), [Leicester Diabetes Centre \(LDC\)](#), and [NIHR Leicester Biomedical Research Centre](#) with a diverse research portfolio that investigates how 24-hour lifestyle behaviours, including physical activity, sedentary behaviour, sleep and nutrition can be optimised to prevent and manage obesity and long-term conditions, such type 2 diabetes, in multi-ethnic populations.

LLHRG are one of the most prestigious Lifestyle as Medicine research groups in the UK, ranking second overall in the Sport and Exercise Sciences unit of assessment (UoA24) within the Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2021. LLHRG's track record of research excellence has contributed to £14 million in new funding from Research England to expand, including recruiting new academic posts from early career researchers on a strong upward trajectory to senior academics with a proven track record and international profile.

The post holder will work closely with senior researchers to support the portfolio of research conducted within the LLHRG. This will include contributing to and where appropriate leading on all



aspects of the research process (e.g. funding acquisition, study set-up, delivery, analysis and dissemination) to deliver existing research plans and contribute to new research ideas and income generation. The post may also contribute to under-graduate and post-graduate teaching activities in the fields of Lifestyle Medicine and Diabetes.

Main Duties and Responsibilities

Research

- In collaboration with the behavioural science and implementation science teams within the DRC and LDC, develop behaviour change interventions (face-to-face and/or digital) designed to increase physical activity and reduce sedentary time across a variety of populations and settings. This may include measuring behaviour, gathering data on barriers and facilitators to behaviour change, understanding the context in which the behaviour occurs, and reviewing existing evidence.
- Apply novel study designs to evaluate interventions such as micro randomization trials, factorial randomized controlled trials, sequential multiple assignment randomization trials.
- Conduct literature searches and potentially systematic reviews.
- Deliver collaborative research, supporting significant contributions to journal papers and international conference presentations that are internationally recognised and world-leading in terms of originality, significance and rigour.
- Work with senior academics to develop research proposals and funding applications in related areas to attract additional research funding.
- Support the supervision of research students and provide advice and guidance to other members of the wider research team (both research staff and students).
- Lead on the planning and organisation of new and ongoing projects, including required governance approvals.
- Oversee data governance, quality and analytical outputs from the research programme as appropriate.
- Participate in research management and administration processes.
- Actively seek opportunities to carry out multi-disciplinary research with other research groups at the University, or stakeholders external to the University.
- Ensure compliance with health and safety requirements in all aspects of work.

Teaching

- Support under-graduate and post-graduate teaching activities in the fields of Lifestyle Medicine and Diabetes.
- Help develop new Lifestyle Medicine teaching content under guidance of senior colleagues.
- Act as dissertation co-supervisor for taught student research projects.
- Undertake marking of assignments under the guidance of senior colleagues.





Professional Development

- Maintain a broad knowledge of up-to-date research and scholarship in relevant fields.
- Identify and undertake appropriate training and personal development activities to develop research skills relevant to the studies being undertaken by the research group.
- Engage in work and opportunities that support your own professional development, including for example through participation in relevant staff development programmes.
- Develop an external profile and reputation in own field of research.
- Work towards formal teaching qualifications as required.

Impact and Knowledge Exchange

- Disseminate and share expertise through communication and public engagement activities.
- Represent the research team at external meetings and workshops so as to improve the reputation of the group and that of the role holder.
- Contribute to innovation and impact within the LLHRG and Diabetes Research Centre, to increase external profile as a leader in translational lifestyle research.
- Engage in external knowledge transfer, enterprise and engagement activities which increase the external profile of the research within the LLHRG, Leicester BRC, Diabetes Research Centre and University of Leicester.

Leadership and Citizenship

- Design and develop the work-plan required to meet deadlines related to the principal responsibilities above, including planning and prioritising personal work load several months ahead and coordinating with other teams and individuals, whilst also adapting to accommodate new developments or research directions.
- Contribute to the overall department by attending meetings and seminars as appropriate.
- Undertake other departmental roles as may be reasonably required by the lead researchers
- Represent the LLHRG, Diabetes Research Centre and University of Leicester through membership of internal and external committees and groups.
- Be involved in the recruitment, management and development of staff and act as a mentor to colleagues.
- Support outreach activities beyond the University.

Internal and External Relationships

The post holder will be situated at the Diabetes Research Centre (located at Leicester General Hospital).

Within the role, the appointee will be expected to liaise and work closely with all of the teams within the Diabetes Research Centre, external research groups that are part of the BRC Lifestyle Theme, and the other research themes across the BRC as well as significant collaborations with research staff across the University of Leicester College of Life Sciences. This may include working



with groups across sites at the University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust, and with other collaborative organisations as appropriate.

The post holder will be expected to proactively build networks and collaborations across the NIHR Leicester BRC, the Diabetes Research Centre, the College of Life Sciences and the wider University of Leicester, including participation in seminar programmes/networking events to stimulate dissemination of information and collaboration. They will also be expected to seek to establish and maintain related collaborations nationally and internationally, including through regular attendance and presentation at major national and international conferences in the research area.

The Diabetes Research Centre and NIHR Leicester BRC host bespoke clinical research facilities with capacity for detailed anthropometric, physiological and cardiometabolic testing, as well as a state-of-the-art exercise testing and training laboratory, in-person and remote clinical consultation areas, and analytical biochemistry laboratories. The post holder will work closely with the clinical staff, research scientists, laboratory technicians, PhD students, and other key support staff to support studies utilising these facilities.

The post holder will also have contact with participants and their families involved in the research studies conducted by the group.

Planning and Organising

The post holder will be required to manage their time effectively to deliver on the priorities of the various projects with which they are involved, designing and implementing collective workplans to meet project timelines and other deadlines. This will include project management of relevant research activity, supervision of junior members of the research team (staff and students), and co-ordination with other individuals and teams within and external to the Diabetes Research Centre.

They will also contribute to shaping the strategic direction of lifestyle research conducted within the LLHRG, NIHR Leicester BRC Lifestyle Theme and the Diabetes Research Centre, developing clear long-term plans for sustaining and enhancing the research programme. They may also participate in the departmental operational planning process, supporting the strategic direction of the Department and College.

When using facilities across the University, the sites of the Hospital Trust or the NIHR Leicester BRC, the post holder will have to plan well in advance to ensure all their requirements will be available for the work to be done.

Qualifications, Knowledge and Experience

Essential

- PhD (or very near completion) in a relevant discipline*
- Expertise in physical activity and/or sedentary behaviour interventions*
- Potential to produce research outputs that are internationally recognised and of a quality that is aspiring to be world-leading in terms of originality, significance and rigour in time for the next REF cycle (2029)*
- Experience of running research programmes to time and target*
- Significant research experience and skills in the research area*
- Proficient in Microsoft Office or equivalent software, including word processing, spreadsheets, and presentations*
- Experience of successful collaboration and liaison with external partners





- Quantitative and/or qualitative research skills*

Desirable

- Experience of quantitative AND qualitative research skills
- Experience of developing, delivering and managing research partnerships
- Experience of research supervision at undergraduate and postgraduate level
- Experience in preparing/submitting regulatory approvals
- Experience in preparing/submitting successful grant funding applications Involvement in relevant internal and external committees and groups
- Experience of working with clinical populations
- Experience of teaching at postgraduate or undergraduate level

(*Criteria to be used to shortlist candidates for interview)

Skills, Abilities and Competencies

Essential

- Ability to manage and coordinate research projects*
- Ability to undertake research and administrative activities, including management and coordination of research projects and programmes*
- Ability to communicate effectively
- Ability to work at a high level of accuracy and at high analytical sensitivity
- Proven analytical/technical problem-solving capability and ability to interpret analytical data
- Excellent interpersonal skills, to develop and maintain networks and collaborations, and work effectively as part of a team
- Excellent written* and oral communication skills
- Effective presentation skills
- Commitment to Personal Professional Development in subject expertise
- A commitment to the delivery of high-quality supervisory service to students
- Ability to assess resource requirements, secure and organise resources effectively
- Ability to prioritise workload in order to meet deadlines
- Highly motivated
- Willingness to undertake necessary training and personal development
- Willingness to undertake necessary travel

Desirable

- Ability to work with senior staff, and to negotiate and influence where required
- Skills in coaching, mentoring and developing others, including students, early career researchers and colleagues
- Skills in pastoral care and motivation of students
- Well-developed understanding of Health and Safety regulations and procedures

***Criteria to be used in shortlisting candidates for interview**

Reason for Fixed Term Contract



The reason for the fixed term contract is stated in section 1.9 in the summary of contractual terms in your contract of employment.

Criminal Declaration and Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)

If you become an employee, you must inform your manager immediately, in writing, if you are the subject of any current or future police investigations/legal proceedings, which could result in a criminal offence, conviction, caution, bind-over or charges, or warnings.

This post is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 because the appointee will have substantial access to young people and/or vulnerable adults. Therefore, an appointment to this post will be subject to checking and appropriate clearance through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). The successful applicant for this post will, therefore, be required to give consent for the University to check with the DBS for the existence and content of any criminal record in the form of an Enhanced Disclosure with Child and Adult Barred List.

Information received from the DBS and the police will be kept in strict confidence and will be destroyed once the University is satisfied in this regard.

NHS Research Governance

Where it is determined that the duties of this post for the purposes of research involve work with the NHS, it is necessary to ensure that the performance of the duties attached to the post are covered by NHS research governance arrangements and the appointee must comply with all such arrangements, which may include occupational health clearance and DBS clearance.

Supporting University Activities

As a University of Leicester citizen, you are expected to support key university activities such as clearing, graduation ceremonies, student registration and recruitment open days. We expect all staff as citizens to work flexibly across the University if required.

University Values

Inclusive - We are diverse in our makeup and united in ambition. Our diversity is our strength and makes our community stronger.

Inspiring - We are passionate about inspiring individuals to succeed and realise their ambitions. We challenge our community to think differently, to get involved, and to constantly embrace new ideas.

Impactful - As Citizens of Change we will generate new ideas which deliver impact and empower our community

Equity and Diversity

We believe that equity, diversity and inclusion is integral to a successful modern workplace. By developing and implementing policies and systems that challenge stereotypes across all aspects of our work, we have a culture that recognises and values the diverse contributions of our staff which





benefits everyone. Our strong values of inclusivity and equity support our efforts to attract a diverse range of high quality staff and students, and identify our University as a progressive and innovative workplace that mainstreams equity, diversity and inclusion.

