

Job Title: Research Associate in Nutritional Physiology

Grade: 7

Salary: £39,906 to £46,049 per annum, pro-rata if part-time

Department: Global, Lifestyle and Metabolic Health

Hours/Contract: Full-time, or job share considered, fixed term contract for 30 months

Job Family: Teaching and Research

Reference: 12196

Role Purpose

We are looking for a talented, motivated individual to join the team at the Diabetes Research Centre (University of Leicester).

The post-holder will contribute to an investigator-led clinical trial investigating the role of novel nutritional strategies in preserving skeletal muscle mass and function and supporting metabolic health outcomes in older adults undergoing pharmacological weight loss therapy. This project is supported by a leading global provider of premium healthcare nutrition solutions and builds on the established infrastructure and expertise of the NIHR Leicester Biomedical Research Centre (BRC), including its ongoing work within the Opal Trial platform.

The unique funding structure and translational focus of this project provide an exciting opportunity for the post-holder to contribute to high-impact research with real-world relevance for progressively ageing and populations with obesity. The post-holder will have expertise in at least one of the key areas relevant to the research, such as nutritional physiology and muscle metabolism, particularly in the context of ageing and weight management. Experience in human clinical trials involving nutritional interventions is highly desirable. Applicants should have experience with anthropometric and physiological assessments, including measures of body composition, muscle function, and morphology, and some proficiency in muscle and blood biochemistry techniques. Familiarity with stable isotope tracer methods to assess metabolic rates would be an advantage.

The post-holder will play a central role in the set-up and delivery of clinical trial arms, contributing to the design, implementation, and evaluation of research activities. They will help communicate findings to academic, clinical, and public audiences, and support the development of future funding applications.

Working closely with senior researchers and collaborators, the post-holder will be involved across the full research lifecycle—from protocol development and intervention design to data analysis, interpretation and the preparation of high-quality publications and outputs that support the goals of the project, the NIHR Leicester BRC, and the Diabetes Research Centre.

Opportunities for professional development will be encouraged, including gaining experience in teaching, grant writing, and broader academic engagement.

Main Duties and Responsibilities





Research

- Lead and/or independently support the set-up, delivery, and management of clinical research trial arms. This may include (but is not limited to) the development of study protocols, obtaining regulatory approvals, training of site staff, developing/delivering/implementing interventions, supporting data collection, quality assurance processes, and contributing to overall project management.
- Provide substantial contribution to diverse research outputs, by leading and/or independently supporting both data analysis and the preparation of journal article manuscripts, conference abstracts and presentations, including those as lead author/presenter.
- Lead and/or independently support the preparation and submission of study proposals and grant funding applications.
- Contribute to the overall research programme using innovative research models, novel approaches and techniques.
- In agreement with the line manager, liaise with project funders and collaborators to progress the research.
- Assist and provide advice/support to other staff and students within own area of expertise. This may include helping in the supervision of students and other junior members of the team.
- 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.

Professional Development

- Maintain a broad knowledge of up-to-date research and scholarship in relevant fields.
- Undertake appropriate training and personal development activities to develop research skills relevant to the studies being undertaken by the group; this may include attendance of internal and external training courses if the opportunity arises.
- Engage in continuous professional development, for example through participation in relevant staff development programmes.

Impact and Knowledge Exchange

- Represent the research group at external meetings, including national and international conferences (if the opportunity arises). This may include delivering poster, oral or other presentations.
- Contribute to building and maintaining internal and external collaborations, including with industry, academic and other partners.
- Participate in workshops and conferences to support the dissemination of research findings.
- Undertake, subject to agreement of the lead researchers, external commitments which reflect well upon and enhance the reputation of the Diabetes Research Centre and the University of Leicester.
- Contribute to industry collaborations.



- Engage positively and pro-actively in research impact.

Leadership and Citizenship

- Carry out administrative duties related to the trial and the overall research programme of the group, as required by the lead researchers and/or study teams.
- 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.
- Contribute to the overall success of the research programme.
- Pro-actively build networks and collaborations.
- Providing mentoring and coaching to Early Career Researchers and research students.

Teaching

- Whilst primarily a research role, the post holder may on occasion be asked to assist with the development and/or delivery of lectures, seminars, tutorials and other classes or public presentations within their areas of expertise, in support of teaching or other education activities delivered by the Diabetes Research Centre (e.g., UoL Diabetes MSc, healthcare professional training, public education sessions etc.), as reasonably required by lead researchers or education leads.

Other

Ensure compliance with health and safety requirements in all aspects of work.

Internal and External Relationships

The post holder will be situated at the Leicester Diabetes Centre, located at Leicester General Hospital. They will sit within the Lifestyle Theme of the NIHR Leicester BRC (as part of the wider Leicester Lifestyle and Health Research Group), working directly with Professor Leigh Breen in close collaboration with Professor Tom Yates, Dr Tom Wilkinson and Professor Melanie Davies.

Within the role, the appointee will be expected to liaise and work closely with teams within the Leicester Diabetes Centre, collaborators within the Project, and other themes across the NIHR Leicester BRC. This will include working with groups across the University of Leicester, University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust, and with other local, national and international collaborative organisations as appropriate.

The Diabetes Research Centre and the NIHR Leicester BRC host bespoke clinical research facilities with capacity for detailed clinical, 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 and other key support staff to support studies utilising these facilities, as well as participants on studies conducted within them.

The research involved in this project is expected to take place at the Diabetes Research Centre, University of Leicester and may involve overseas visits to the supporting industry partner, as part of the project update and auditing activities. The post holder may be required to attend these sites during the project and ensure coordination of research methods.

Planning and Organising





- With guidance from the Principal Investigator, or equivalent, plan own work and prioritise research and project activities on a regular basis, including organising resources and co-ordinating with other individuals and teams within the Diabetes Research Centre, as well as external industry partners, to design and implement collective workplans to meet project timelines and other deadlines.
- The post-holder will be required to effectively manage their time to deliver on the priorities of the research programme with the support of their line manager.
- Attend suitable training courses or equivalent and be proactive in terms of continued professional development.

Qualifications, Knowledge and Experience

Essential

- PhD (or near completion) or equivalent expertise in a relevant discipline (for example, but not limited to, health sciences, human biology, diet/nutrition, food science, lifestyle sciences, sports nutrition/physiology) *
- Experience in conducting/coordinating experimental research programmes*
- Experience with anthropometric and physiological assessments, including at least some measures of body composition, muscle function or muscle morphology.*
- At least basic proficiency in handling and/or analysing muscle or blood samples.*
- Experience in design and analysis of studies using quantitative data*
- Evidence of involvement in high-quality research publications*
- Proficient in Microsoft Office or equivalent software, including word processing, spreadsheets, and presentations*
- Experience of collaboration or team working

Desirable

- Experience in conducting eating behaviour research*
- Experience in conducting experimental research involving lifestyle behaviours*
- Experience in human clinical trials involving nutritional interventions*
- Familiarity and/or experience with stable isotope tracer methodologies to assess metabolic rates.
- Experience of involvement in externally-funded programmes of research involving commercial partners.
- Experience in preparing/submitting regulatory approvals required to conduct clinical research within the NHS
- Experience in preparing/submitting successful grant funding applications
- Experience of working with clinical populations in a clinical setting

Skills, Abilities and Competencies

Essential

- Ability to manage and coordinate research projects*
- Ability to work at a high level of accuracy and at high analytical sensitivity*
- Ability to interpret analytical data*
- Excellent interpersonal skills and ability to work as part of a team*





- Excellent written* and oral communication skills
- Excellent IT skills
- Excellent organisational skills
- 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

- Well-developed understanding of Health and Safety regulations and procedures, particularly around clinical research.
- Demonstrable success in producing research outputs of the very highest standard.
- Proven capability in analytical, technical and/or scientific problem-solving.
- Budget management skills.
- Willingness to foster new collaborations.

*(*Criteria to be used to shortlist 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 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 and obtain appropriate clearance with the DBS for the existence and content of any criminal record in the form of an Enhanced check 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.

