

# PhD Opportunity

Identification of risk factors and preventative strategies for knee injuries in females

## Supervisory team

**Director of Studies:** Dr Christopher Holland

## Supervisors:

Dr Darren Cooper

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**Research Group:** [Human Performance Research Group](#)

## The PhD Opportunity

In recent years, female sport has seen an exponential rise in both professionalism and success. This has led to greater access to professional coaching, sport science and sports medicine support. However, knee injuries in females occur in disproportionate numbers when compared to their male counterparts and present a significant health problem within this group. Research suggests that females are up to 8 times more likely to suffer ACL injuries than males (Silvers-Granelli, 2021). At the 2023 World Cup, between 25 and 30 female players missed the tournament due to knee injuries. There is evidence that injury management practices can be improved by the engagement of practitioners with contemporary research (Yoong *et al.*, 2023). However, the implementation of current research is challenging, with injury management strategies in female sport, often being based on research conducted on males, due to the lack of representation of females in sports injury literature. The Women and Equalities Committee (WEC) have stated that there is a systematic gender inequality in how sports research has been conducted, which has affected participation, performance and led to increased injury rates within women's sport. The existing literature reveals a substantial research gap concerning knee injury risk factors and preventive strategies. Addressing this gap in the proposed PhD study is crucial. Moreover, it is essential that research in this area considers the practical realities of adoption, implementation, and maintenance. By doing so, we can positively impact current practices and enhance outcomes for female sport participants.

## References

Silvers-Granelli, H. (2021) 'Why female athletes injure their ACL's more frequently? What can we do to mitigate their risk?', *International Journal of Sports Physical Therapy*, 16(4), pp. 971–977. doi: 10.26603/001c.25467.

Yoong, S. L. *et al.* (2023) 'Describing the evidence-base for research engagement by health care providers and health care organisations: a scoping review', *BMC Health Services Research*, 23(1), pp. 1–20. doi: 10.1186/s12913-022-08887-2.

## Application Process

To begin the application process please go to <https://www.worc.ac.uk/research/research-degrees/applying-for-a-phd/>.

## The Interview

All successful applicants will be offered an interview with the proposed Supervisory Team. You will be contacted by a member of the Doctoral School Team to find a suitable date. Interviews can be conducted in person or over Microsoft Teams.

## Funding your PhD

For information about Doctoral Loans please visit: <https://www.worc.ac.uk/study/fees-and-finance/doctoral-loans.aspx>

During your PhD you can access the Research Conference Support Scheme to support the costs of presenting your research at an external conference.

## Research at the University of Worcester

Research is central to the University's mission to make a difference in everything that we do. We are committed to delivering excellent research which extends the boundaries of human knowledge but which also improves people's lives by enabling better health outcomes, improving food security, developing environmentally sustainable solutions for crop production and socially sustainable solutions to our ageing population, enhancing public knowledge and understanding of the past and present.

The University hence focuses its research around five high-level challenges facing society, locally, nationally and globally:

- [Human Health and Wellbeing](#)
- [Sustainable Futures](#)
- [Digital Innovation](#)
- [Culture, Identity and Social Exclusion](#)
- [Professional Education](#)

The success of our research is reflected in our continuous improvement in external research assessment processes. In the most recent Research Excellence Framework, REF 2021, the University saw a near 50% increase in the scale of its research and 12% increase in quality, building on its performance in REF 2014 when it was the UK's most improved university in terms of Research Power, a combination of scale and quality.

## Research Degrees at Worcester

Our research students are central to our overall mission for research. They are working at the cutting edge of their disciplines and driving forward the quality of our research whilst enriching our research culture. We are looking to increase our research student numbers as a strategic imperative.

Our commitment to our students is reflected in the results of the Postgraduate Research Experience Survey 2023 in which we ranked 3<sup>rd</sup> for overall research student satisfaction nationally. Key to our success in this area is the Doctoral School, a focal point for all our research students.

It provides:

- day-to-day support for our students, both administrative and practical, through our dedicated team.
- a Research Student Study Space with both PCs and laptop docking station.
- a comprehensive Researcher Development Programme for students and their supervisors.
- a programme of student-led conferences and seminars.

### **Widening Participation**

As part of its mission statement the University is committed to widening participation for its higher degrees. Although most candidates will have an undergraduate and / or a Masters degree, the University is happy to accept applications from candidates with relevant professional qualifications and work related experience.

**For further information or an informal discussion on this project, please contact Dr Christopher Holland ([c.holland@worc.ac.uk](mailto:c.holland@worc.ac.uk))**

