

# PhD Opportunity

## Musculoskeletal Health in the Workplace: Prevention and Intervention

### **Supervisory team:**

#### **Director of Studies:**

Dr Christopher Holland

#### **Supervisors:**

Dr Darren Cooper

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

### **The PhD Opportunity:**

Musculoskeletal (MSK) issues persist as the leading cause of work-related absenteeism. These multifaceted problems encompass a wide spectrum, ranging from lifestyle-related behaviours to injuries and pre-existing diseases that individuals bring with them into the workplace. Additionally, MSK conditions can be exacerbated by poor workplace ergonomics or physical exposures inherent to specific job roles. (Crawford *et al.*, 2020). Within Great Britain, HSE statistics show that over a million workers suffer injuries or fall ill each year due to work-related factors. This not only impacts individual well-being but also places a substantial economic burden on organisations and businesses. In the fiscal year 2021/22, the estimated cost to the British economy £20.7 billion (HSE, no date). Despite their prevalence, MSK conditions within the workplace remain relatively inconspicuous on national health policy and research agendas. From a public health perspective, workplace health promotion initiatives play a pivotal role. By mitigating health risks and fostering disease prevention, these programs contribute significantly to individual well-being. The proposed PhD study should aim to address the critical gaps in workplace health by focussing on 3 main areas 1) the generation of new knowledge to improve workplace health, 2) the better integration of workplace healthcare interventions that bridges the gap between clinical expertise and practical implementation, and 3) how evidence-based best practice can be implemented to inform health policy.

### **References:**

Crawford, J. O. *et al.* (2020) 'Musculoskeletal health in the workplace', *Best Practice and Research: Clinical Rheumatology*, 34(5), p. 101558. doi: 10.1016/j.berh.2020.101558.

*HSE (no date) Statistics - Costs to Britain of workplace injuries and new cases of work-related ill health* (no date). Available at: <https://www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/cost.htm> (Accessed: 19 April 2024).

## 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) )**