

# PhD Opportunity

Basketball footwear, is it a case of style over substance?

## Supervisory team:

### Director of Studies:

Dr Darren Cooper

### Supervisors:

Dr Christopher Holland

Dr Alejandro Vaquera

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

## The PhD Opportunity

The purpose of Basketball footwear is multifactorial, the underlying substance that encompasses functionality, support and comfort which directly influences a player's performance is potentially now of less importance due to the stylistic trends that have been established due to 'signature shoes' which are associated with successful players.

The origins of the modern training shoe and the success of certain shoes by key brands are well documented both in text and on screen. Many active basketball players can also be referred to as 'Sneakerheads', who are defined as individuals who collect, trade and/or admire sneakers (Matthews, Cryer-Coupet and Degirmencioglu, 2021). These individuals potentially purchase Basketball footwear not for performance or injury prevention purposes, but because they are fashionable or are from a brand that they have an allegiance too. As such, should the emphasis on footwear selection return to performance and injury prevention purposes as outlined in papers such as Brauner, Zwinzsch and Sterzing (2011), to avoid the potential of a player's talent and performance being suppressed (Demirl and Yalcin, 2020).

The scope of the opportunity is considerable, and any methodological approach would be supported be that quantitative, qualitative or mixed methods, the latter is recommended, however.

## References

Brauner, T., Zwinzsch, M. and Sterzing, T. (2011) 'Basketball shoes: What players wear and what they demand', *Footwear Science*, 3(SUPPL.1). Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/19424280.2011.575845>.

Demirel, S. and Yalcin, Y.G. (2020) 'Basketball Sports Shoes Selection and Features', *The Online Journal of Recreation and Sport*, Volume 9(Volume 9 Issue 4), pp. 1–7. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.22282/ojrs.2020.72>.

Matthews, D., Cryer-Coupet, Q. and Degirmencioglu, N. (2021) 'I wear, therefore I am: investigating sneakerhead culture, social identity, and brand preference among men', *Fashion and Textiles*, 8(1). Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40691-020-00228-3>.

### **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))**