

## Job description

<b>Post title and post number</b>	Research Associate - 55927
<b>Organisation advertising Description</b>	School of Sport, Exercise & Rehabilitation Sciences
<b>Post number</b>	55927
<b>Full-time/Part-time</b>	Full-time
<b>Duration of post</b>	Fixed term for 24 months
<b>Post is open to:</b>	Internal and External candidates
<b>Grade</b>	6
<b>Salary</b>	Starting salary is normally in the range £25,769 to £28,143. With potential progression once in post to £31,656 a year.
<b>Terms and conditions</b>	<a href="#">Research and analogous</a>

## Job summary

To assist in research (by carrying out data collection or analyses) to create knowledge through providing research support for projects and research groups to Janice L Thompson. The person appointed to the role will assist with two funded research studies 1) the “Retirement in ACTION” (REACT) study, 2) the By-Band-Sleeve (BBS Study).

REACT is a randomised controlled trial and economic evaluation assessing the effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of a community based physical activity intervention to prevent mobility-related disability for retired older people. The basic idea is to identify people who are on a trajectory towards lower limb disability (using a battery of functional ability tests called the short physical performance battery), then give them a targeted programme of both exercise and lifestyle-related physical activity designed to prevent or reverse the deterioration of lower limb muscles, as well as to build cardiovascular fitness.

The REACT study is funded by the Public Health Research Stream of the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) and the chief investigator is Dr Afroditi Stathi from the University of Bath. The University of Birmingham is one of three sites for the delivery of this study (along with the University of Bath and University of Exeter Medical School). BBS is a randomised controlled trial, examining the effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of the three main types of bariatric surgery in the UK; gastric bypass, gastric band and sleeve gastrectomy. BBS is led by Professor Jane Blazeby at the University of Bristol, with the University of Birmingham and Professor Janice Thompson acting as Nutrition lead for the trial.

The post-holder will be responsible to Prof Janice L. Thompson (the principal investigator for REACT at the Birmingham site and the Nutrition Lead for BBS), and

will work in conjunction with equivalent research fellows based at the Universities of Birmingham, Bath and Exeter and the study investigators including Dr Janet Withal (REACT Project Manager) and Dr Afroditi Stathi (Chief Investigator) in Bath to ensure the effective implementation of the REACT study. In addition, the post-holder will work in conjunction with Professor Thompson's PhD students at Birmingham, and will liaise with members of the BBS team in Bristol, including researchers in the Clinical Trials Unit and Professor Jane Blazeby, Chief Investigator. The post will be hosted in the School of Sport, Exercise & Rehabilitation Sciences and based at the University's Edgbaston campus in Birmingham.

### **Main duties**

- Collect research data; this may be through a variety of research methods, such as scientific experimentation, literature reviews, and research interviews
- Assist with literature searches, preparation of research outputs for publication, scientific presentations, and assist with undergraduate student research dissertations.
- Analyse research data as directed
- Present research outputs, including drafting academic publications or parts thereof, for example at seminars and as posters
- Develop or adapt techniques, models and methods
- Provide guidance as required to support staff and any students who may be assisting with research
- Carry out administrative tasks related directly to the delivery of the research

### **Skills and Experience**

- First (undergraduate) degree relevant to health or behaviour change research e.g. nutrition, psychology, social science, sports/exercise science, health professional training.
- Experience of research data collection via surveys, questionnaires or face-to-face contact.
- Experience of undertaking quantitative research including management and analysis of data sets (e.g. using SPSS).
- Experience of undertaking qualitative research including analysis of in-depth interviews.
- Experience of analysing dietary intake data (e.g., 24-hr recalls).
- Experience of working as part of a multi-disciplinary team involving academics, non-academics and service providers in a health, public service or voluntary sector setting.
- Experience of conducting research and engaging with ethnically-diverse communities.
- Experience of presenting research ideas or findings to a variety of audiences.
- Ability to communicate complex information, orally, in writing and electronically.
- Ability to use research resources, equipment and facilities as appropriate and to take responsibility for conducting and implementing risk assessment procedures, reducing hazards and ensuring the health and safety of oneself and others (e.g. in relation to lone working during data collection visits).
- Ability to assist in the monitoring of research budgets as appropriate.
- Experience contributing to the planning of future research projects and assist with preparation of proposals and applications to external bodies, e.g. for funding and contractual purposes.

## **The University**

With more than 7,000 staff and 30,000 students, we were the first – and are now one of the largest - civic universities in the UK. Our heritage as the original 'redbrick', is combined with one of the most compelling and ambitious agendas in higher education. Quite simply, at Birmingham we make things happen. Home to world-class researchers - whose work in everything from developing next generation engine technologies to harnessing quantum technology to solve everyday problems makes a real difference to people's lives - we provide innovative solutions to big problems. We think, recruit and compete worldwide.

Being named the *Times and Sunday Times* University of the Year 2013-14 recognised a transformative time in our history characterised by our bold, ambitious strategy and innovative approach to the challenges facing the sector. The University is a pioneer in sector-leading initiatives, including our 'Birmingham Fellows' programme, which has so far seen around 70 of the world's best early career academics join us; and the much-emulated unconditional offers strategy for exceptional students. We have a clear vision for the future, ambitious leadership, world-leading academic strengths and a secure financial base. With an annual turnover of more than £520 million, we use our financial strength to invest in the intellectual and physical future of the University. Judicious planning has enabled us to embark on a £500 million capital development programme. Over the past three years, some £250 million has been invested in the Birmingham campus including a new library, a major sports centre, outstanding new student accommodation and a state-of-the-art student services hub. We have been encouraging bold, independent thinking and providing exceptional academic programmes that stretch and challenge for more than a century, and the new University of Birmingham School will continue this tradition; providing an outstanding academic education for the city's young people and serving as a centre of teacher education in the region.

Birmingham is a leading member of the Russell Group and a founder member of the Universitas 21 global network of research universities (<http://www.universitas21.com/>) and our Vice-Chancellor is the current Chair of both groups.

## **Exceptional Research**

The University is one of the UK's most successful institutions in terms of attracting research funding. We have a portfolio of over 2600 live projects with an award value to the University of £594 million.

Our research record speaks for itself. More than 80 per cent of all research carried out at Birmingham is rated as internationally excellent or world-leading, according to the latest UK-wide research quality survey (REF 2014). The results also showed that 87 per cent of our research activity has a global impact, confirming our position among the world's top universities for research in a broad range of areas, from History and Education to Chemical Engineering and Psychology.

Long established as a pioneer in the field of medicine, Birmingham scientists were the brains behind the first heart pacemaker, the use of aspirin and the synthesis of Vitamin C. 'Great minds, in the right location' sums up our unique combination of cutting-edge laboratory work, clinical expertise and first-class surgical facilities all housed on one vast life sciences campus. The Institute of Translational Medicine (ITM), which is scheduled to open later this year, will build on Birmingham's excellent track record in clinical trials and help to progress the very latest scientific research

findings from the University into enhanced treatments for patients across a range of major health issues including cancer and liver disease. Bringing together the University, the University Hospitals Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust, and Birmingham Children's Hospital, it will increase capacity and enable more patients to be co-located alongside clinicians and researchers. It will also make it easier for firms to engage with clinicians and academics, bringing additional investment into the city. This vision is reflected in Birmingham's ambitious project to create a four hectare science park specifically for the life sciences adjacent to the University and Hospital to attract cutting edge health and pharmaceutical research firms into the city, driving economic growth alongside medical and scientific innovation.

These investments reinforce the University's position today as a world leader in, for example, the development of new treatments for cancer, heart, and liver disease, as well as innovative transplant technologies and new drugs to combat antibiotic resistance.

This strength in life sciences is reflected throughout our College of Life and Environmental Sciences which is home to one of the best stand-alone Psychology schools in the country as well as one of the top three centres for research into Sport, Exercise and Rehabilitation Science. Supported by a major gift from a philanthropist, the University is developing a unique institute for forest research which will investigate the effect of rapid climate change on tree canopy development and pathogens.

The University's arts and humanities researchers are among the very best in the UK, highlighting our world-class research programme. Philosophy, History, Classics, Theology and Religion, and West African Studies are amongst the top ranked departments in the country and recognised for bringing significant benefits to society.

In the Physical Sciences we boast outstanding academic and research credentials, including in Chemical Engineering, in which we were recognised with a Queen's Anniversary Prize in the Jubilee year, and in Physics, where we have just received investment of £80 million to develop Quantum Technologies. Our substantive links with industry include receiving a £60 million investment from Rolls-Royce and the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) for the world-leading High Temperature Research Centre.

In the Social Sciences we have developed a broad range of initiatives, focused on enhancing, supporting and developing public sector services across the city and nationally. The Public Service Academy (PSA) brings together the University's teaching, research, consultancy and knowledge transfer expertise in public services. Working with a range of key public service partners, including Birmingham City Council, our work is focused on key themes including cohesion, health and wellbeing and localisation. Our Health Services Management Centre provides a combination of research, teaching, professional development and consultancy to health and social care agencies and has established a unique reputation as a 'critical friend' of the healthcare community. The Institute of Local Government Studies (INLOGOV) is the leading UK centre for the study of local public service management, policy and governance. With more than 40 years of experience working within local government and the public sector, it shapes the very latest thinking for public servants.

Our research helps to shape the national political agenda too. The ground-breaking Birmingham Policy Commissions bring together key figures from the public, private and third sectors with our academics to generate new thinking on contemporary

issues of global, national and civic concern. Commissions to date have included reports on the shape and nature of local public services in a 'big society', the future of nuclear energy in the UK and the security impact of drones.

### **Outstanding Students**

At Birmingham we encourage bold, independent thinking and provide exceptional academic programmes that stretch and challenge. We understand that every student is an individual with a unique learning style and have invested in the latest learning facilities and technologies. As a result we attract students with the finest academic credentials and year on year applications for our undergraduate places are growing rapidly and more impressively than they are nationally or for comparable universities. This year we will welcome approximately 8,000 undergraduate and postgraduate students. We are committed to delivering a first-class experience for our students in every aspect of their university life. This is also why the University was ranked 11th in the Times Higher Education Student Experience Survey 2013 and 17th out of 123 UK universities in The Complete University Guide for 2015 and in The Guardian University Guide 2015. These latest league table results further strengthen Birmingham's position as a Top 20 university and reflect our recent performance in other highly-regarded league tables, such as the The Times and Sunday Times Good University Guide 2014, which ranked the University in 16th place overall.

### **Global Outlook**

Rated 64th in the QS World University Rankings 2014-15, the University has a significant international presence. The breadth of our research in China, and particularly in the Guangzhou region, is testament to the success of our collaboration with the local government and universities there. In Brazil, the Universities of Birmingham and Nottingham are working together in a unique collaboration to develop a network of strategic partnerships with Brazilian universities, as well as the oil and gas industry. In North America, the University has a major collaboration with the University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign underpinned by a flourishing network of faculty-faculty relationships. Our partnerships in India continue to develop and have been strengthened by our Chancellor, Indian-born entrepreneur and Cross-Bench Peer Lord Bilimoria of Chelsea. We also have partnership agreements with many of the world's leading universities; an office in New Delhi and a presence in Brussels. More information about our strategic global engagements and international research focus can be found on our website (<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/International/global-engagement/index.aspx>)

### **Cultural Assets**

The University's many cultural assets take in the Shakespeare Institute at Stratford-upon-Avon, which has direct working links with the Royal Shakespeare Company; the Ironbridge Institute in Shropshire, and the Barber Institute of Fine Arts - our own art gallery that houses works by many of the greatest artists in the western tradition. The Edgbaston campus also includes Winterbourne House and Garden, a unique Edwardian heritage attraction that is home to more than 6,000 plant species from around the world. Our cultural profile was significantly enhanced with the opening of the Bramall Music Building in 2013. This houses the Elgar Concert Hall, named after our first Professor of Music, Sir Edward Elgar, and is a striking venue that complements our global reputation in music, attracting some of the most talented musicians from across the world to study here.

## **Sport**

Sport is integral to life at Birmingham and we are ranked third in the UK for the quality of student sport. Our new sports development, also due to open early next year, will include the city of Birmingham's first 50-metre swimming pool – an asset not only for our students and staff but for the wider community.

## **Future Investment**

Our plans for the future are underpinned by long-established financial probity. We contribute £1 billion a year to our region's economy. Our surpluses and substantial philanthropic support are re-invested into the intellectual and physical fabric of the institution, enabling us to plan with confidence for the future and to continue to invest in the facilities and services that are required for high-quality research, and an outstanding student learning experience.

Led by our Vice-Chancellor, Professor Sir David Eastwood, the University is structured for swift decision-making, enabling us to capitalise on our academic range and financial strength as well as the opportunities that emerge in the fast-changing global HE environment.

## **The City of Birmingham**

Birmingham is the UK's second city and a major European centre as well as being the only place in the UK listed in the *Rough Guide's* Top 10 places in the world to visit in 2015. It is a city of historical interest and contemporary vision and has a rich and diverse community that creates a vibrant, multicultural and exciting place to live and work. In the recent Sunday Times/Zoopla report 'Best Places to live in Britain' three areas of Birmingham, Harborne, the Jewellery Quarter and Moseley all made the top 50 best places to live in Britain with Moseley being voted the overall winner.

It is home to the internationally renowned Birmingham Royal Ballet and one of the world's greatest concert venues, the Symphony Hall. The City Museum and Art Gallery houses the world's finest collection of Pre-Raphaelite paintings, alongside a major collection of Old Masters, Modern and Contemporary pictures, while the iconic Bullring is one of the largest dedicated shopping facilities in Europe. Sports and recreation are also well served; the city offers international Test cricket, top-flight football, international championship golf and top-class rugby. As a multicultural city, Birmingham is also renowned for the breadth of its cuisine and has more Michelin starred restaurants than any other English city outside London.

Birmingham is within an hour's drive of Stratford-upon-Avon and the Cotswolds. From Birmingham International Airport, more than 50 different airlines operate scheduled services to 100 destinations worldwide. The University has its own dedicated railway station, while 50 million passengers a year use Birmingham New Street Station, which will be at the centre of the proposed high-speed rail network. London is 80 minutes away by shuttle service, with trains every 20 minutes.