

Title: Doctoral Studentship (PhD)

Application Closing Date: 6 July 2026

Location: Hartpury University, Gloucestershire.

Funding: Fees paid only (max. 5 years)

Contract Type: Part-time over a minimum of 4 years

Area of Research: Sport and Exercise Neurorehabilitation / Brain Health in Sport

From Head Impact to Classroom: Developing and Evaluating an Integrated Return-to-Learn Framework for Student-Athletes.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Concussion and repetitive head impacts remain a significant welfare concern in contact and collision sports, particularly within educational contexts where individuals must balance both academic and athletic demands. While Return-to-Sport protocols are well established, Return-to-Learn processes are underdeveloped, particularly in UK higher education and academy sport environments. Current approaches are largely symptom-based and lack objective sensorimotor measures such as cervical proprioception and postural control. This study addresses these gaps through an integrated investigation of biomechanical, physiological, and behavioural dimensions of concussion recovery within an applied setting.

The aim is to develop and evaluate an integrated, stakeholder-informed model of concussion assessment and Return-to-Learn. Objectives include quantifying sensorimotor changes following head impact exposure, examining relationships with symptom and academic outcomes, developing an applied Return-to-Learn framework, exploring lived experiences, and examining neurodivergence in recovery trajectories.

For more information and for an initial discussion please contact Dr Sam Oxford
sam.oxford@hartpury.ac.uk

This is a unique and exciting opportunity to become part of vibrant postgraduate community in an idyllic rural setting, with world leading facilities and undertaking impactful cutting-edge research. The University of the West of England is the awarding body for this degree. Studentships comprise of tuition fees and research project allocation.

PhD Studentship Selection Criteria:

Please demonstrate the following criteria in your CV and/or covering letter:

- Essential: Undergraduate degree or MSc in a field relating to the project.
- Essential: Strong communication, relationship-building, qualitative research and analytical skills.
- Desirable: Experience of working with others in research setting and / or practical experience of sports & exercise science / health sector / sports therapy / physiotherapy.

Candidates should also be aware of the following:

The normal expectation is that applicants will hold a 1st or a Masters qualification from a UK university or a degree of comparable standing from a university outside the UK. The candidate's degree relevant to the studentship should demonstrate their potential for practice-led research or alternative evidence of research aptitude.

Applicants whose first language is not English require a recognised English language qualification. The minimum entry requirement is GCSE English at grade C or above or IELTS score 7.0 or TOEFL score 600 (or demonstrable equivalent).

Applying for a PhD studentship

To apply for a PhD studentship, you must send the following documents
RKE.Administrator@hartpury.ac.uk:

- A curriculum vitae (maximum 3 pages)
- Copies of academic transcripts
- A covering letter outlining your suitability for the studentship
- Your undergraduate or postgraduate dissertation or another relevant piece of research you have completed or contributed to.
- If English is not your first language, certification of English language qualification

Applications that do not arrive by Midnight (UK time) on **6 July 2026** will not be considered.

If your application is selected, you will be invited for interview on **Thursday 23 July 2026**. All applicants must ensure their availability on this date.

Key Dates:

6 July 2026: Deadline for submission of applications
w/c 13 July 2026: Interview invitations sent to shortlisted candidates*
23 July 2026: Interviews at Hartpury*
24 August 2026: Deadline for accepting studentship
September 2026: Studentship begins

*Please note that by submitting an application you are confirming your availability to attend an interview on **Thursday 23 July 2026**.

We are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expect all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. We will ensure that all our recruitment and selection practices reflect this commitment. All successful candidates will be subject to Disclosure and Barring Service checks along with other relevant employment checks.

Hartpury values a diverse workforce and welcomes applications from all sections of the community.

