



Applications are invited from suitably qualified candidates for the following studentship:

PhD Studentship in School of Health and Human Performance.

4 Years in duration

Background:

In Census 2016 Profile 9 of Census on Health, Disability and Carers states the two most common difficulties experienced by people who are blind or vision impaired were participating in leisure and other activities, affecting 23,710 persons (43.3% of 54,810 overall population), and having difficulty going outside the home, affecting 23,099 people (42.1%). This represents more than two in every five people with vision impairment in Ireland.

Vision Sports Ireland is Ireland's national governing body for sport for people who are blind and vision impaired. Founded in 1988, Vision Sports Ireland is a non-for-profit organisation and registered charity, and in 2020, joined the NCBI Group to further their purpose of increasing access to sport and recreation for all people who are blind or vision impaired.

Vision Sports Ireland promotes and facilitates participation and opportunities in both adapted and mainstream sports and activities, both online and within local communities, including athletics, golf, football, judo, rugby, swimming, tandem cycling, tennis, triathlon, walking and water-skiing. Vision Sports facilitates all ages, levels of fitness and ability.

This study aims to obtain the necessary evidence-based data to enable Vision Sports Ireland, NCBI and its partners to best support children and adults who are blind or vision impaired to participate in the sports and leisure activities of their choice. By identifying the barriers to accessing and participating in meaningful sport and leisure opportunities across the lifecycle, Vision Sports Ireland believes it can greatly increase levels of participation by those who may also be socially, economically and educationally disadvantaged or marginalised.

This ambitious project aims to carry out a first of its kind cross sectional baseline investigation into the physical activity, sports participation, and wellbeing children and adults who are blind or vision impaired across Ireland.

A further objective will investigate the key barriers and enablers of sport and physical activity with the intention of developing a future targeted intervention. It is envisioned that the findings produced from this research study will identify key recommendations for future education development and policy in this area.

School of Health and Human Performance:

Research at the School of Health and Human Performance provides an environment devoted to learning, developing, understanding and advancing in the areas of sport, physical activity and health science. Our focus is on using the knowledge gained from

our learnings to challenge and address the series of health issues which impact modern society in conjunction with evolving our knowledge associated with the factors critical to sporting performance.

With the academic proficiency and expertise existing within our school, underpinned by our strong multicultural partnerships, international research, and societal engagement, our research:

- Influences public policy
- Contributes to successful sporting performance and maintenance
- Promotes the importance of healthy lifestyle management and adaptation
- Increases awareness over communicable disease prevention and control
- Creates leaders for future generations

The school boasts specialists in a wide range of areas such as physical activity and public health, sport psychology, cardiology, coaching, physiotherapy, athletic rehabilitation exercise physiology, cellular biology, biomechanics and motor control. Each of our research clusters and centres is the spearhead in its own domain. As visionaries in progression, governance, policy development and application, from a sporting and physical activity field, our school cultivates the leaders of the future and the present.

Essential Criteria

- Honours degree with minimum upper second class honour in Physical Education, Sport Sciences or a cognate area.
- Experience working with young people.
- Experience carrying out either qualitative and/or quantitative research
- Have excellent IT, analytical, presentational and report writing skills.
- Be motivated and able to work independently as well as part of a team.

Desirable Criteria (*advantageous, but not essential*)

- Experience collecting both quantitative and qualitative data.
- Experience in analysing quantitative and qualitative data.
- Experience working with blind or vision impaired people, or people with additional needs
- Have a full clean driver's licence.

Stipend:

This is a 4 year fully funded structured PhD position covering a stipend of €18,500 per year (tax-free), and full fees (€5,505).

Closing date: Monday 2nd August

Informal Enquiries in relation to this role should be directed to:

Dr Sarahjane Belton, Head of School of Health and Human Performance

Email: sarahjane.belton@dcu.ie , and

Dr Stephen Behan, Lecturer in Elite Sports Performance,

Email: stephen.behan@dcu.ie

Application process

- Applicants must submit a cover letter (max 2 pages, indicating interest in, and experience and suitability for this post), along with CV.
- Submit by email to stephen.behan@dcu.ie by not later than 5pm on Monday 2nd August