Research focus

We are proud that every member of our academic staff is actively involved in research in some capacity. This research informs our teaching and helps to ensure that we remain at the cutting edge of sports and exercise science, with a number of students volunteering as participants for this work. Read about one of our recent research highlights below.

DSES Professor recognised as leader in science

Professor Joanna Scurr has reached the final three candidates from a field of more than 200 nominees for the Women in Science and Engineering Lifetime Achievement Award. The next stage is an interview later this month. The award celebrates a woman who excels in engineering, manufacturing, technology or science, inspires other women and has made a significant contribution to her field.

DSES researchers work with Mini

A team of scientists from DSES have recently examined the psycho-physiological responses of a group of journalists during high-speed driving as part of a Knowledge Transfer Project with Mini. The journalists were driven once around the track in the new John Cooper Works Mini by professional stunt driver, Niki Faulkner of John Cooper Works Mini by professional stunt driver, Niki Faulkner of...
Student wins prize at international conference

DSES PhD Student Matt Moley had a few very busy days over the summer. First, Matt successfully defended his PhD thesis, which examined why particular ethnic groups experience an increased susceptibility to cold injuries, including non-freezing cold injury. However, there was no time for celebration as the following morning he co-chaired a session on ‘Cold’ at the International Conference on Environmental Ergonomics, before presenting his own work on ‘Skin blood flow responses to locally applied acetylcholine in Caucasian and African descent individuals with and without cyclo-oxygenase inhibition’. Matt then won a prize from the conference committee for the quality of his presentation.

Staff profile

Name: Jo Corbett
Title: Principal Lecturer in Exercise Physiology

What’s your background? I was a keen athlete at school. To increase my understanding of the best ways to train I read Astrand and Rodahl’s classic ‘Textbook of Work Physiology’. From then on I hooked on exercise physiology and, as I was good at science, pursuing a career in exercise physiology seemed a logical choice and so I studied these topics to PhD level.

What are your teaching duties? I teach on and coordinate Introduction to Sport and Exercise Physiology, Physiological Approaches to Training and Assessment, and Applied Sports Physiology. I also supervise two PhD students.

What are your research interests? Unsurprisingly, given my background, I retain an interest in all things related to endurance exercise. More recently I have moved into the environmental physiology sector which is enjoying a resurgence with the realisation that the responses of fit and healthy individuals to extreme environmental stress can provide insights into other pathological conditions.

What advice would you give students to help prepare for a career in sports science? Have a genuine interest in the discipline, get a good grounding in the basic sciences, read as much as you can and be prepared to work hard!

What’s the best thing about DSES? The variety. On any day I could be teaching anyone from school to PhD level, working with recreational athletes or Olympic champions, or collecting data for studies that could benefit anyone from an elite athlete to someone with a serious medical condition.

New staff to join DSES

We will soon be welcoming Dr Tim Exell to the Department of Sport and Exercise Science from Cardiff Metropolitan University. Tim, who will lecture in the area of rehabilitation science, completed his PhD investigating biomechanical asymmetry in sprint running. He has also worked as a research fellow at the University of Southampton investigating novel technologies in stroke rehabilitation. His current research interests build on his PhD work, as well as covering biomechanical asymmetry in gymnastics, training transfer in sprint running and the development of methods including marker-less motion capture technologies.

Alumni update

The Department of Sport and Exercise Science at the University of Portsmouth has a strong employment record and we are proud of the successes of our ex-students. In this regular feature we catch up with one of our alumni to find out what they have done since leaving the University of Portsmouth.

Name: Graham Keen

Courses Studied: BSc (Hons) Sports Development
Job: Community Sport Relationship Manager, Sport England

Typical day: There is no typical day! The diversity of the relationships I manage leads to a lot of variety in the nature of my work. Trying to grow sports participation with differing priorities and agendas is a challenge and, to do it effectively, you need to understand the system you work in (e.g. national governing bodies, local authorities), but also the thing that changes, which in our case is people’s behaviour towards sport and physical activity.

Best thing about your job: The opportunity to innovate and be creative. Sports partners don’t often go on cycles, but every now and then there are great ideas that break the mould. This year we launched the successful ‘This Girl Can’ campaign. We also launched ‘City of Football’ to get more people playing the game so that we can share best practice across the nation and unlock the demand for football that is at the heart of many communities.

How did you get to where you are now? I started by working for a County Sports Partnership (CSP) in Hertfordshire. I then spent six to seven years moving between different CSPs and progressing into a new role which exposed me to new areas of work and building a wider network of relationships (county, regional and national). I have been given the opportunity to spend a large amount of time for celebration as the following morning he co-chaired a session on ‘Cold’ at the International Conference on Environmental Ergonomics, which was a great opportunity to meet some of the leaders in this field. It has been hard work, but it is rewarding if you’re willing to put the work in.

What do you hope to do when you finish your studies? The research I have been involved in has had a profound effect on my enthusiasm. When I graduate I am hoping to go on and do a research Masters in environmental physiology and would love to continue working in this area.

NSS and league table success

According to the results from the National Student Survey 2015, 100 per cent of the BSc (Hons) Sport and Exercise Science students and 100 per cent of BSc (Hons) Sports Development students in the DSES at the University of Portsmouth were satisfied with their course. This result means that DSES leads the UK for student satisfaction in the sports science area.

The high-quality educational experiences offered by the DSES is further emphasised in the latest Guardian University Guide league tables where the DSES is ranked the sixth best sport and exercise science department in the UK, and the Times Good University Guide, where it is ranked the ninth best sport and exercise science department in the UK. Head of Department Richard Thewel commented: ‘These excellent results clearly show that the University of Portsmouth is one of the best places to study sports-related courses in the UK, and are a clear reflection of the high-quality educational experience that we deliver and the fantastic achievements of our students.’

Professional Doctorates

The Department of Sport and Exercise Science has recently introduced a new Professional Doctorate qualification which is an alternative pathway to a doctorate qualification. It consists of a rigorous programme of advanced study and research, designed specifically to meet the needs of commerce, industry and professional groups and is the professionally oriented counterpart to the more theoretical PhD. It enables the study of a subject in much greater depth as PhD students, whilst applying the learning to your professional practice, and is ideal to do whilst in full-time work. Across many organisations such as professional bodies for sport, exercise and health, a Professional Doctorate is now viewed as a necessary academic qualification for attaining higher-level posts. If you are interested in finding out more about the Professional Doctorate, please contact science.admissions@port.ac.uk.

Coaching opportunities

If you are a DSES student who is interested in coaching and volunteering opportunities, you might be interested in Sport and Recreation’s Sports Development programmes, which deliver activities to both the University community and young people in local schools, colleges and community sports clubs. Street dance, football and disability coaching are just a few of the opportunities on offer. The Football Referees Hub trains and mentors new officials and Activator roles are available if you want to work with students and engage them in physical activity. If you would like to receive information and opportunities please join Sports Volunteering Hub at sportsvolunteers.port.ac.uk and if you have any queries, please contact Zoe_MONK@port.ac.uk.

Sandwich courses

The DSES is now offering sandwich courses for students on the BSc (Hons) Exercise and Fitness Management, BSc (Hons) Sports Development and BSc (Hons) Sport and Exercise Science. These new sandwich courses provide students the option of spending a year gaining industry experience or studying abroad between the second and third year of their studies. If you are a DSES alumni who is working in a relevant industry and would be able to accommodate a sandwich year student, please contact mich.lomas@port.ac.uk.