Dr Mary O'Leary

Research Group website: https://medicine.exeter.ac.uk/phss/research/bioactivex/

How day-to-day research training and support is provided: The student will receive initial training in cell culture, tissue processing and associated molecular techniques from MOL and will subsequently be supported by MOL, senior PhD students, postdoctoral researchers and technical staff. MOL maintains an active role in laboratory training across the research group, ensuring high-quality, consistent instruction while providing frequent opportunities for informal interaction, troubleshooting and mentorship. Training in assisting with skeletal muscle biopsy procedures and support for the human intervention study will be provided by both MOL and TP, who are muscle biopsy practitioners. TP will lead training in the exercise physiology, athlete testing and physiological assessment components of the project, ensuring the student develops expertise across both laboratory and human research methodologies.

Supervision style: Directive support: C / Training structure: 5

How often PhD students see you in a timetabled group meeting: At least once a fortnight

Other research groups that PhD students will have the opportunity to frequently interact with: TP is affiliated with the Applied Physiology, Nutrition and Metabolism research group at Exeter, and the student will have opportunities to participate in this group's monthly lab meetings in addition to BioActivEx meetings and activities. The distinction between physiology and nutritional physiology research groups within the Department of Public Health and Sports Sciences is largely administrative, with substantial collaboration and interaction across groups. Students routinely engage with researchers from different laboratories through seminars, journal clubs and collaborative projects. Flexible office arrangements further encourage this cross-disciplinary interaction, with PhD researchers working alongside colleagues from physiology, nutrition, biomechanics, psychology and related disciplines. This provides valuable opportunities to build collaborations, share expertise and develop broad research networks throughout the PhD.

How often you meet with your PhD students 1-1 formally outside of group meetings (i.e. meetings of >30 minutes): At least once a fortnight

Meeting format: All in person

Expected working pattern (based on a full-time student): Core working hours are typically 10am to 3pm, with the remaining time managed flexibly around research and training commitments. The research environment is supportive and flexible, with students encouraged to take ownership of their workload and manage their time independently. Some elements of the human studies may occasionally require earlier starts, for example when recruiting fasted participants undergoing physiological assessments or tissue sampling procedures. Limited weekend working may occasionally be required during intensive laboratory experiments, although this can generally be minimised through careful planning and scheduling of in vitro work.

How the second supervisor supports the PhD project: The student will spend time each week engaging with the second supervisor's research group, providing additional exposure to expertise in applied physiology, performance nutrition and athlete support. The supervisory team and student will meet formally as required, typically every 3 to 4 weeks during the early stages of the project, with more frequent informal interactions occurring throughout. MOL and TP work closely together, co-leading teaching across multiple undergraduate and postgraduate modules and developing a growing programme of collaborative

research. This close working relationship will help ensure integrated supervision and clear communication across all aspects of the project.

Notice needed for feedback on work (based on a 5000 word report): 1-2 weeks

Communication: I am available via email every day and typically respond to members of my team within a few hours. I work on campus 95% of the time. I am often available to provide help in the lab at short notice, when I am not (meetings, teaching) there is usually another staff member who can be contacted. All members of my team have my mobile phone number and can contact me with urgent queries. I may contact you via email outside of working hours but I do not expect responses outside your working hours