



## PhD Opportunity

### Background

Identifying athletic talent, then fostering that talent is imperative to a sustainable pipeline of future sporting champions. Despite the rapid increases in research on talent identification and development of athletes in non-disabled sports, limited literature and knowledge exists regarding how talent is identified and developed in Paralympic contexts. This scholarship opportunity aims to enhance our understanding of talent identification and development of future Irish Paralympians.

The aims of the proposed research project are to:

1. To identify evidence-based talent identification assessments for future para-athletics athletes, and design feasible protocols for their implementation.
2. Identify the support structures required to enable future para-athletics athletes to succeed despite their physical location within Ireland.
3. Identify key health, wellness, and performance indicators for para-athletics athletes, and understand how to best monitor these.
4. Investigate the effectiveness of online coaching and support strategies through the design and implementation of a specific para-athletics athlete training programmes.

This research is a collaboration between researchers from University College Dublin (UCD) and Para-Athletics Ireland. It is supported by the **Sport Ireland** 3-year Research Grant Scheme and **UCD** match funding. The PhD candidate will be awarded a scholarship stipend of €27,000 per annum (maximum 4 years), PhD fee coverage, and a generous consumable budget to assist with research expenses.

### Project team

- Professor Kate Pumpa (University College Dublin)
- Professor Catherine Blake (University College Dublin)
- Dr Alison O’Riordan (Para-Athletics Technical Lead)
- Mr James Nolan (Head of Para-Athletics)
- Dr Eamonn Flannagan (Head of Strength and Conditioning, Sport Ireland)

### Eligibility

- Meet the admission requirements for University College Dublin.
- Not be currently enrolled in a PhD program at another university at the time of application.
- Apply as a full-time candidate.
- Have obtained the equivalent of a Master’s degree by research or 1st Class honours degree in a related field.
- Be available to start in April 2024.

The successful candidate will be located on the University College Dublin Campus and be an active team member of Para-Athletics Ireland programme, engaging with athlete testing, development and administration.

The project will be well suited to a student interested in gaining experience working with athletes and support staff in applied sporting environments, as it will involve domestic travel for data collection.



### How to apply

For an informal discussion about this opportunity please contact Professor Kate Pumpa on [Kate.Pumpa@ucd.ie](mailto:Kate.Pumpa@ucd.ie).

Prospective applicants should contact [Kate.Pumpa@ucd.ie](mailto:Kate.Pumpa@ucd.ie) to obtain the expression of interest form to complete by Sunday the 21<sup>st</sup> of January 2024.