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# Dr Victoria Burns BSc PhD

Senior Lecturer

**School of Sport, Exercise and Rehabilitation Sciences (/schools/sport-exercise/index.aspx)**

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## Feedback and office hours

My office hours are Mondays 1-3pm. If students need to see me outside of these hours, please contact me on Canvas.

## Qualifications

BSc, Ph.D. (University of Birmingham)

## Biography

Victoria received her undergraduate degree and PhD here in Sportex. Her PhD examined the association between psychological stress and antibody response to vaccination and she received the Faculty of Science award for this research. She was appointed as a post-doctoral research fellow in the School in 2002, became a Roberts Research Fellow in 2004, and a Senior Lecturer in 2011. She completed a Action Medical Research grant, examining exercise as a behavioural adjuvant to vaccination. More recently, she has been researching the development of groupwork skills in Higher Education using outdoor education, and the role of extracurricular activities in supporting successful transition to University.

Staff Interview with Dr Victoria (Vikki) Burns

## Teaching

Victoria was awarded a University of Birmingham Teaching Fellowship, in recognition of her work developing the generic skills training programme for postgraduate students. She provides training and advice in good teaching practice for both undergraduate and postgraduate level across the University, as well as contributing to the assessment of the Postgraduate Certificate in Teaching and Learning in Higher Education.

Along with Dr Jennifer Cumming, Victoria secured Educational Enhancement funds in 2010 from the Centre of Learning and Academic Development (CLAD) for teaching-related research into the transfer of teamwork skills learnt at the University's Raymond Priestley Outdoor Pursuits Centre to academia.

Victoria teaches Anatomy to first year undergraduates, and Exercise and Behavioural Immunology to third years. She uses technology, as well as more simple techniques, to promote interactive teaching and learning. She also supervises third year project students, and delivers lectures to the whole third year on essay and dissertation writing and examination technique.

## Postgraduate supervision

**Current postgraduate students**

Sam Cooley (2011 - 2014) Development of groupwork skills in higher education through outdoor education (PhD)

Fredrik Weibull (2010 - 2014) Exercise imagery (PhD)

Jerrald Rector (2010 – 2013) Psychosocial determinants of immunological ageing. (PhD)

Emily Novacovic (2012-2013) Extracurricular activities, transferable skills, and transition to university (MPhil)

**Former postgraduate students**

Joanna Long, PhD (2008 - 2011) Exercise and antibody response to vaccination in healthy and HIV+ populations (currently post-doctoral fellow in Sport and Exercise Sciences, University of Birmingham)

Natalie E Riddell, PhD (2006 – 2010) Adrenergic regulation of T cell function (currently post-doctoral fellow in Experimental Immunology, University College London).

Leila H Anane, PhD (2005 – 2009) Stress lymphocytosis: mechanisms and clinical relevance (currently teaching staff at Numidia Academy).

John Campbell, PhD (2006 - 2010) Behavioural adjuvants to vaccination (currently post-doctoral fellow in the College of Medical and Dental Sciences)

Anna Phillips, PhD (2002 - 2005) Psychosocial factors, reactivity, and antibody response to vaccination (currently Reader in Sport and Exercise Sciences, University of Birmingham)

Kate Edwards, PhD (2002 - 2005) Acute stress and the immune response to vaccination in humans (currently lecturer at the University of Sydney)

## Research

Victoria's current research focusses on her teaching related activities, including exploring the development of transferable skills in students to support transition to university. Along with Dr Jennifer Cumming, she started the Birmingham Evaluating Skill Transfer (BEST) project (**www.bestskills.com (http://www.bestskills.com)** ), that explores the roles of extracurricular activities in developing skills for a variety of contexts. This has been funded by the Higher Education Academy, the Centre for Learning and Academic Development, and the College of Life and Environmental Sciences.

She also retains an interest in exercise immunology, collaborating with Dr John Campbell in the School of Immunity and Infection, and Dr Jos Bosch at the Universiteit van Amsterdam. This work explores how periods of acute stress and exercise are characterised not by a generalised mobilisation of immune cells, as was previously thought, but by a highly specific and functionally relevant mobilisation of cells with immediate killing potential.

## Other activities

Victoria is Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement (QAE) for the School of Sport, Exercise and Rehabilitation Sciences, and the Director of Teaching Quality Enhancement for the College of Life and Environmental Sciences. She has been the postgraduate training lead for both the School and the College and remains a member of the University Graduate Training Group.

Victoria is also interested in communicating science to a wider audience and completed a British Association for the Advancement of Science Media Fellowship, during which she worked as a science journalist for the Irish Times. She also won first prize in the National Brain Science Writing prize for an article about research conducted in our department, which went on to be published in the Telegraph. She helps students to develop these skills in her module, with Natural Sciences students, and through a postgraduate Outreach course. She delivers lectures to school children in collaboration with the Outreach team at the University.

## Publications


Cooley SJ, Holland MJG, Cumming J, Novakovic EG, **Burns VE**. Introducing the use of a semi-structured video diary room to investigate students' learning experiences during an outdoor adventure education groupwork skills course. Higher Education 2013 Online First.

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**Burns VE**, Edwards KM, Ring C, Drayson M, Carroll D. Complement cascade activation following an acute psychological stress task. Psychosomatic Medicine 2008; 70: 387-96

Phillips A, **Burns VE**. A shot in the arm for research. The Psychologist 2008: 22(3), p202-5

Edwards KM, **Burns VE**, Adkins AE, Carroll D, Drayson M, Ring C. Meningococcal A vaccination response is enhanced by acute stress in men. Psychosom Med 2008; 70:147-51.

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