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University of Birmingham to get more students involved with sport

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The University of Birmingham has been awarded £65,275 in National Lottery funding by Sport England to help encourage students to get more active whilst studying at University.

'Who will you be?' is amongst 41 projects being backed by Sport England's £10million Active Universities fund to get more students playing sport, as part of the mass participation legacy from the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

The multi-sport project aims to increase participation by 15% by offering University of Birmingham students more choice in how to get active.

With the University consistently placed in the top four of the British Colleges and Universities Sports (BUCS) league, there have been some perceptions amongst students that university sport is too elitist, and only for those wanting to compete in high level competitive sport.

Through introducing a range of different programmes, UBSport is looking to challenge these perceived barriers by encouraging more informal activities, taking the focus to getting active rather that elite sport for the wider student community. The programmes include:

Run in Brum – casual group runs in and around campus led my train student leaders

Boot It – classes using outdoor gym equipment, including mapped exercise circuits

Swim buddies – student training buddies to encourage swimmers with little or no experience to get into the pool and take lessons

Try Sport – a series of casual sport activities encouraging participation in a fun and sociable way

The project will take activities away from the main sport facilities to halls of residences and open spaces across campus, and the casual nature of the activities will allow students to interact and meet new people, relax away from the pressures of academic study and gain valuable skills and experience that will enhance their employability.

University of Birmingham Director of Sport, Zena Wooldridge, said: 'The *Active Universities Who Will You Be?* bid has challenged the UBSport team to have to think well beyond our conventional routes for engaging students in sport. We don't have spare sports facility space during term-time at Birmingham, but we do have a fantastic green campus.'

She added: 'Active Universities has been the catalyst for us to use our campus more creatively to encourage more students to become more active in a more social setting.'

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- Sport England is focused on the delivery of a mass participation legacy from the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games. We invest National Lottery and Exchequer funding in organisations and projects that will grow and sustain participation in grassroots sport and create opportunities for people to excel at their chosen sport.
- Planning of the activities for *Who Will You Be?* Will begin in May 2011, with delivering of activities starting in September 2011, in line with the start of the new academic year.
- For more information about University of Birmingham Sport's *Who Will You Be?,* please contact Zena Wooldridge on 0121 4143598.
- For more information about *Active Universities* or Sport England, please contact the press office: Peter Dickinson on 020 7273 1800.

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