

University of Birmingham: an innovative Masters of Exercise and Sports Medicine in partnership with the Football Association (Continuing Professional Development series)

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INSTITUTION

School of Sport, Exercise and Rehabilitation Sciences, University of Birmingham, Birmingham, UK.

PROGRAMME

Master of Science (MSc) in Exercise and Sports Medicine (Football).

WHY?

Sports medicine within football in the UK and throughout the world remains a developing specialty. Although the medical team generally ranks poorly in the hierarchy of elite-level football teams, team success is highly influenced by injuries and player health.¹ With a particular focus on football medicine, the MSc in Exercise and Sports Medicine at the University of Birmingham enables demonstration of advanced practice in football medicine and leadership within a multidisciplinary team providing clinical management in football, and enhancing employability in this, and the wider, sports medicine setting.²

OVERVIEW

Setting itself apart from other Sports and Exercise Medicine postgraduate programmes, the MSc in Exercise and Sports Medicine (Football) is delivered in partnership with the Football Association, English football's governing body. The MSc programme has been developed for UK and international physiotherapists and medical doctors working within, or interested in moving into, football medicine.

The MSc programme offers flexible full-time and part-time study options,

with the opportunity for up to 65% of the programme to be studied through distance learning (table 1). Full-time completion can be achieved within 13 months, while a maximum of 6 years can be taken to complete part time. Being a vibrant multicultural institution, the University of Birmingham MSc programme boasts international students, from Europe, Southeast Asia, the Middle East and South America. Graduates have gained roles within medical teams of UK Premier and Lower league football, English Institute of Sport and international football leagues.

Distance learning is combined with compulsory face-to-face events during five core modules (20 credits each): (1) Research Methodology in Sport, Exercise and Rehabilitation; (2/3) Sports Medicine (Football) 1 and 2; (5) Neuromuscular Adaptation to Training; and (5) Continuing Professional Development and Mentored Practice. Additionally, students choose one option module (20 credits) to further tailor the programme to their individual needs (eg, psychology, nutrition, musculoskeletal).

Blocks of face-to-face teaching (1 week for each Sports Medicine module) consist of lectures, seminars and practical workshops. All modules are supported by an extensive online platform of resources, interaction opportunities and lecture capture. Students can apply for recognition of prior learning (certificated and experiential) towards the programme. Applicants can make a claim for exemption from a module(s) through written application.

How are clinical skills taught?

A unique feature of the programme is the delivery of two modules at the Football Association's National Football Centre, St George's Park. These modules use clinical reasoning and excellence in clinical skills to explore issues associated with assessment and evaluation of illness/injury within football. The programme integrates key issues of football medicine including clinical assessment, diagnostics and prognostics, management approaches, evaluation of outcome and strategies to reduce injury time. There is a strong focus on clinical skills practice during the Mentored Practice module, where students undertake 100 hours of experience in work-based environments. Locations are negotiated by students dependent on individual learning needs in collaboration with practice mentors and can encompass part-time and full-time modes and international opportunities.

The MSc programme culminates with a compulsory Research Dissertation module (60 credits) consisting of a novel research project. Students can select their own project or can choose from a range on offer within the School. They are supervised by an experienced researcher with expertise aligning with the research topic and/or



Figure 1 The Football Association's National Football Centre at St George's Park at Burton on Trent where specialist Sports Medicine (Football) modules are delivered.

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Education reviews

Table 1 Key facts

Admission criteria	<p>The programme welcomes home/EU and international applicants*:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ A BSc/BA Honours degree or equivalent, normally first or upper second class Honours degree for physiotherapists/MBChB for doctors. ▶ Documented evidence of post-qualification experience within a sporting context; with supporting evidence of appropriate Continuing Professional Development. ▶ Letter of support from employer. ▶ Face-to-face or conference call interview. ▶ English-language proficiency (IELTS \geq6.5). <p>Other criteria may need to be met, for example, professional registration, to enable completion of the Continuing Professional Development and Mentored Practice module (can include clinical practice in the UK, observation and supervised practice within the UK, or clinical practice outside of the UK). Please see the website for full details (www.birmingham.ac.uk/esm(football)).</p>
Cost for 2017/2018 academic year	<p>UK/EU resident: MSc £11 790; PgDip £10 106. Non-UK/EU resident: MSc £19 170; PgDip £16 432.</p>
Duration and intensity	<p>Full time: MSc minimum 13 months; PgDip minimum 10 months. Part time (UK/EU residents only): MSc maximum 6 years; PgDip maximum 4 years.</p>
Delivery method	<p>Distance and face-to-face learning (up to 65% of the programme to be studied through distance learning).</p>
Start dates	<p>September or January of each year</p>
Recommended work load	<p>Full time: 5 days per week. Part time: 1 day per week plus blocks of attendance for specialist modules. Per 20 credit module: 35–100 contact hours (dependent on module nature). Overall: 200 hours of student effort per 20 credit module.</p>
Accreditation/endorsements	<p>Accredited by the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy, UK.</p>

*All five key admission criteria need to be fulfilled prior to acceptance into the course. EU, European Union; IELTS, International English Language Testing System.

selected methodology. Students produce a written research article and poster presentation targeting an academic journal and research conference, respectively. Other assessment strategies employed throughout the programme include essays, case analysis, viva, portfolio and seminar presentation. Students have the option of completing the six 20-credit modules (without the Research Dissertation) to exit with a Postgraduate Diploma in Exercise and Sports Medicine (Football).

Led by Reader Alison Rushton and Teaching Fellow Matthew Willett, the MSc teaching staff include sports medicine world leaders; the Football Association's Head of Performance Medicine; England and Premiership football physiotherapists and doctors; English Institute of

Sports' Heads of Physiotherapy, Strength and Conditioning; and Technical leads for Olympic and Paralympic sport. It is written in line with international standards established by the International Federation of Sports Physiotherapists and Specialty Training Curriculum for Sports and Exercise Medicine.

DEADLINES

Applications are accepted any time. New intakes commence in September and January each year ([www.birmingham.ac.uk/esm\(football\)](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/esm(football))).

LOCATION

Some face-to-face blocks are delivered within the School of Sport, Exercise and Rehabilitation Sciences at the

University of Birmingham, one of the longest established sports science departments in Europe for scientific research into sport, health and rehabilitation. The Sports Medicine (Football) modules are delivered at St George's Park, the National Football Centre (figure 1). This £105 million facility, set in 330 acres of idyllic Staffordshire countryside approximately 30 miles north of Birmingham, is home to England's 24 national teams.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Programme lead: Matthew Willett
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Contributors AGC drafted and approved the final version for submission.

Competing interests None declared.

Provenance and peer review Not commissioned; internally peer reviewed.

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To cite Culvenor AG. *Br J Sports Med* Published Online First: [please include Day Month Year]. doi:10.1136/bjsports-2017-098432

Accepted 2 October 2017

Br J Sports Med 2017;0:1–2.
doi:10.1136/bjsports-2017-098432

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Br J Sports Med published online October 19, 2017

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