

Options with sports management/science

Your skills

Over the course of your degree you develop a good mix of subject specific and technical skills as well as transferable core skills. Consider these alongside your other activities, such as paid work, volunteering, family responsibilities, sport, membership of societies, leadership roles, etc. Think about how these can be used as evidence of your skills and personal attributes. Then you can start to market and sell who you *really* are, identify what you may be lacking and consider how to improve your profile.

Sports management/science courses provide students with some very specific knowledge and skills depending on the emphasis of the course, including:

- business/technical awareness of the developments and current trends in the sports and exercise industry that will inform your career choice;
- relevant sports coaching certificates and work experience that will improve your employability;
- research and data analysis skills (particularly in sports science) that apply to the sector but are transferable to other industries.

The employability skills consistently quoted as important by sports employers are:

- good communication skills;
- professionalism and customer focus;
- enthusiasm and knowledge about sport and exercise;
- effective problem-solving ability.

Your course will teach you technical and practical skills to enable you to critically evaluate and interpret information and apply your knowledge to solve problems. You will also learn general transferable skills such as teamwork, communication, IT, time management and self-appraisal.

Acquiring work experience, paid or unpaid, is essential to success. Wherever possible, be proactive: suggest solutions to problems; offer to take on more responsibility; take the initiative; and demonstrate flexibility when a situation changes. Participation in sport also helps you develop resilience and teamwork. Look for part-time work in your university's facilities, local leisure centres or private health clubs. Vacation opportunities exist, at home and overseas, in summer camps, recreation facilities, and with holiday providers.

Job options

Bear in mind that it's not just your degree discipline that determines your options. Look at [your degree... what next?](#) for informed advice on career planning and graduate employment, or take a look at [what jobs would suit me?](#) a helpful starting point for self-analysis.

You can choose between jobs that are degree-related or those that appeal because they use other interests or elements of your degree.

Jobs directly related to your degree

- [Sports coach/instructor](#) - helps people participating in sport achieve their full potential. Often part-time or seasonal work. Qualifications are necessary.
- [Sports development officer](#) - aims to encourage greater participation in sport throughout the community. The job may involve organising and promoting activities, coaching, and advising clubs on fund-raising.
- [Personal trainer](#) - usually self-employed in the private

sector to devise fitness programmes and instruction to individuals.

- [Outdoor pursuits manager](#) - manages a centre (sometimes residential) usually offering a wide range of activities to people from many different backgrounds, e.g. children, disadvantaged groups, armed services and managers.
- [Higher education lecturer](#) - lecturing in sports management/science in universities and higher education institutions. (You will need to undertake further academic study to enter this profession.)
- [Secondary school teacher](#) (PE) - teaching one or more national curriculum subjects to classes of pupils aged 11-16 or 11-18. PE teachers are expected to teach a subsidiary subject. (You will need to take a Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) to enter this profession.)

Jobs where your degree would be useful

- [Sports psychologist](#) - applies psychological principles in sport settings through experience gained working with athletes, coaches or sports teams. They also have expert knowledge and a research base in the psychology of sport, and familiarity with the field of exercise science. (You will need to undertake further study and qualifications to enter this profession.)
- [Sports therapist](#) - helps injured athletes return to full functionality, regardless of their age and/or ability. (You will need to undertake further study and qualifications to enter this profession.)
- [Fitness centre manager](#) or [Leisure/social club manager](#) - manages all aspects of a centre, including recruiting staff, planning and organising client programmes, health and safety, and accounts.
- [Sports administrator](#) - involves planning and organising activities and events, administering funding, marketing, promotion and finance.
- [Health promotion specialist](#) - develops and promotes initiatives to encourage people to adopt a healthy lifestyle. Employed by health care providers.

Sport has not traditionally been a graduate industry and, although this is changing fast, the diverse opportunities available tend not to have established career paths. Graduates change jobs frequently for career progression and will often become self-employed. There are high levels of investment in sport ahead of the 2012 Olympics and as a result, more opportunities are likely for those graduating before then.

Although some of the jobs listed here might not be first jobs for many graduates, they are among the many realistic possibilities with your degree, provided you can demonstrate you have the attributes employers are looking for. It's also worth noting that many graduate vacancies don't specify particular degree disciplines, so don't restrict your thinking to the jobs listed here.

[Explore types of jobs](#) to find out more about the above options and related jobs.

Career areas

Every year statistics are collected to show what HE students do immediately after graduation. These can be a useful guide but, in reality, with the data being collected within just six months of graduation, many graduates are travelling, waiting to start a course, paying off debts, getting work experience or still deciding what they want to do. For further information about some of the areas of employment commonly entered by graduates of any degree discipline, check out [what do graduates do?](#) and [your degree...what next?](#)

In 2007, six months after graduating, 51% of all sports science graduates went directly into full-time paid work, and 11% into part-time paid work. Only about 5.5% were believed to be unemployed compared with the national average for graduate unemployment of 6%. Of those employed, about 20% were in sports-related professional roles, and just over 11% were education professionals. 8.5% were in management roles, and the remainder were working in a wide range of employment sectors. The figures therefore show that many graduates go directly into the sport and leisure industry. Typical first jobs include: fitness instructor; personal trainer; assistant sports development officer; and junior sports administrator. Graduate trainee schemes are beginning to appear, and teacher training is popular.

Where are the jobs?

Employment opportunities exist in the private sector with health and fitness clubs as well as with public sector providers of sports and recreation facilities. Sports councils, professional bodies and professional sports clubs employ staff in administrative, technical and research roles. There are also wider opportunities in leisure and theme parks for those interested in management roles. After gaining relevant experience, graduates have established businesses and consultancies, including sports promotion and sports tourism.

The following sectors provide an overview of the two most popular sectors for sports management/science graduates:

- [Sport and leisure](#) - this sector is made up of a wide range of sport and leisure providers, from private health and fitness clubs to local authority recreation centres. It also encompasses other recreation activities and attractions like theme parks, theatres, museums and the countryside.
- [Education](#) - this sector comprises compulsory education at primary and secondary school level. It also includes further and higher education.

Career management is an ongoing process; one that you'll no doubt develop throughout your working life. [Explore job sectors](#) for further information on all the above employment areas.

Further study

In 2007, six months after graduating, 16% of sports management/science graduates had gone on to further study, plus a further 8% were combining work with further study. Many of these chose the Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) to train as PE teachers. Graduates also study sports-related topics to diploma, masters and doctorate (PhD) level. These can qualify you for specific careers, or open up opportunities in teaching and research in higher education. Options include: pre-registration physiotherapy; nutrition; exercise physiology; journalism; and public relations. You could also take career-specific certificate courses in individual sports or personal training.

These trends show only what previous graduates in your subject did immediately upon graduating. Over the course of their career - the first few years in particular - many others will opt for some form of further study, either part time or full time. If further study interests you, start by thinking [about postgrad study](#). [Search courses and research](#) to identify your options; you can also [apply for courses online](#).

Look at [funding my further study](#) for more details relating to finance and the application process.

What next?

Don't forget there are alternatives to entering employment or postgraduate study, such as taking time out, volunteering or travelling. Longer term, you may want to consider starting your own business. For something different, check out [self-employment](#) and [flexible working](#) or explore [working and studying abroad](#).

This should have started you thinking about your future. Whether you are in the early stages of career planning, or you have

definite ideas about what you want to do, you will find further information to help you in the following sections:

- Analyse your skills, interests and motivations to find out [what jobs would suit me?](#)
- [Explore types of jobs](#) to find out about entry requirements, salaries and working conditions.
- [Explore job sectors](#) for hints on breaking into various industries.
- [Find graduate employers](#) and see what they have to offer.
- Look at the advice on [applications, CVs and interviews](#).
- Get [work experience](#) through vacation work or a work placement.
- [Find courses and research](#) and investigate postgraduate study opportunities.
- If you have already graduated, get online [interactive advice](#).
- Visit [your university careers service](#) for a wealth of advice and resources to help with your career planning.

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