SportBusiness

PostGraduate Rankings 2026

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Sthefânia Vieira de Lacerda

SUPERVISOR OF THE BRAZILIAN WOMEN'S NATIONAL TEAM AT THE BRAZILIAN FOOTBALL CONFEDERATION (CONFEDERAÇÃO BRASILEIRA DE FUTEBOL, CBF)

FIFA MASTER ALUMNA

What does your current role involve?

My career in sport has been built through over a decade of experience working at major international competitions and events, collaborating with organisations such as FIFA and CONMEBOL, starting as a volunteer. I have had the opportunity to contribute to a wide range of tournaments, including FIFA World Cups, youth competitions, futsal events and continental championships. Throughout this journey, I have worked across different functional areas such as competition, venue management, team services, media operations and broadcast coordination, which has given me a comprehensive understanding of the operational complexity behind delivering world-class sporting events.

Currently, I am living a great experience to be Supervisor of the Brazilian Women's National Team at the Brazilian Football Confederation (CBF). In this role, I am responsible for executing all operational and logistical aspects of the team's activities including tournaments, friendly matches and training camps. My responsibilities include managing travel logistics, accommodation, training sites, stadium requirements and coordination of equipment and delegation needs. I also play a role in the preparation process for the upcoming FIFA Women's World Cup 2027 in Brazil, contributing to planning and operational readiness. Working closely with a multidisciplinary team, I focus on ensuring seamless execution and delivering high standards in all team operations, as well as overseeing post-event reporting and financial processes.

Which aspects of the FIFA Master course have helped you most in your career?

The global network of the FIFA Master has been one of the most valuable assets in my professional journey. Being part of such a strong and diverse alumni community has allowed me to build meaningful connections across the sports industry, opening doors and creating opportunities worldwide. Even today, I continue to collaborate and exchange experiences with fellow alumni in different organisations and countries.

Another key aspect was the multicultural teaching environment. My class was composed of twenty-eight students from twenty-one nationalities, which created a unique and enriching experience for me. Living and studying in Leicester, Milan and Neuchâtel exposed me to different academic systems and cultural perspectives, which significantly shaped my adaptability and way of working in international contexts.

On a personal level, the FIFA Master was also a journey of resilience. Coming from the interior of Brazil, it was my first experience studying abroad and I faced challenges related to language, academic methods and different evaluation systems. I still remember struggling with my first exam, which was very different from what I was used to. However, the support I received from the programme and the understanding of diverse backgrounds helped me grow, adapt and ultimately succeed. This experience taught me confidence and perseverance, which I carry with me to this day.

What advice would you give to future students?

Do not let your background define your limits. Dare to dream big and embrace challenges, even when they seem intimidating. Growth comes from stepping outside of your comfort zone and learning from mistakes. The FIFA Master is a unique opportunity, and those who make the most of it are the ones who stay resilient, open-minded and willing to evolve both personally and professionally.

Is a postgraduate degree in sport worth doing?

Given the cost of completing a postgraduate degree, and the demands it'll make on your time, you have to consider if it's actually worth it. Particularly in a world where higher education is under increased scrutiny and the world of work is evolving rapidly.

One of the underlying reasons to complete any postgraduate degree is to give yourself the best possible chance to stand out in a crowded job marketplace. And plenty of people are looking to work in sport.

But there are other, potentially underrated, reasons why a postgrad is the right choice. Here members of our advisory panel offer their take on the unique things it can provide.

1 BUILD THE SKILLSET NEEDED FOR A COMPLEX INDUSTRY

"The sport industry is more sophisticated, more commercial and more data-driven than ever before. Whether we're talking about media rights strategy in football, private equity investment in leagues, or governance reform across federations, the decision-making environment is complex.

An undergraduate degree may get you into the conversation, but a postgraduate qualification allows you to operate at a higher level within it. It signals specialism, advanced capability and seriousness of intent.

For example, someone entering sport finance today is not just reviewing budgets. They may be analysing sustainability regulations, modelling multi-club ownership structures, or interrogating valuation assumptions. Similarly, in sport marketing, it is no longer about social posts and sponsorship decks, it is about data capture, fan lifetime value, digital ecosystems and global brand positioning.

A strong postgraduate degree accelerates professional maturity. Done properly, it develops critical thinking, commercial awareness and applied decision-making alongside enhanced subject knowledge. It helps individuals move from operational contribution to strategic contribution more quickly."
Professor Rob Wilson, professor of applied sport finance and head of executive education at UCFB

"The main benefit is gaining the specialised business skills needed to enter an increasingly complex and global industry.

The global sports industry is now worth over $500bn and continues to grow rapidly, driven by media rights, sponsorship, sports technology and global events. Passion for sport alone is no longer enough – organisation's increasingly need professionals who understand strategy, marketing, data and fan engagement.

At European Sport Business School (ESBS), we see many students arriving with a strong passion for sport, and the postgraduate experience helps them transform that passion into professional expertise."
Carmen Ruano, academic director at European Sport Business School

2 THE DEVELOPMENT – AND APPLICATION – OF CRITICAL THINKING

"One huge benefit is practical experience and the opportunity of failing and taking risks in a controlled and safe environment. Through a learning-by-doing approach at ESBS, students will be continuously facing real life situations in controlled environments. That gives them the skills that typically take years to learn through experience alone."
Carmen Ruano

"You are required to interrogate ideas, challenge assumptions and binary thinking, and defend your position with evidence. That might mean critically evaluating the financial sustainability of a league model, assessing the governance implications of state-backed ownership, or analysing the long-term viability of a women's sport franchise.

That level of structured critical engagement is difficult to replicate through short courses or purely workplace-based learning. Your experience must be driven and applied."
Prof. Rob Wilson

"One huge benefit is practical experience – and taking risks in a controlled environment"

3 TIME AND SPACE TO SEE THE BIGGER PICTURE

"In a world that always feels the pressure to accelerate, postgrad education is an antidote. It's like what slow food did to society, making us stop, think about what we consume, how it's produced, and what real value is. Sport needs a similar counterbalance.

With sport facing the change spurred by technological evolution, geopolitical upheaval, and commercial transformation of the like we have maybe never seen before, a postgraduate degree offers you the time to think about sport.

Given the explosion of technology, particularly AI, the real question is how to adjust when the tools and environment are moving faster than you are. Like all major revolutions in human history, humans seek how to master new technology rather than be made to serve it.

Top sports degrees allow for that, slowing down the bustle of your surroundings and sharpening your vision, all of which amplifies knowledge acquisition across industry sectors in a condensed way that you couldn't achieve if you had to gain the same through personal experience working in each area. There is an exponential effect through the intense mix of classroom and visit, theory and practice."
Dr. Kevin Tallec Marston, honorary visiting research fellow at DeMontfort University

"The sport industry moves quickly and is often reactive. A postgraduate programme gives you time to step back and understand the macro forces shaping the sector: things like regulation, globalisation, technology, geopolitics, investment flows.

For example, rather than just observing that a club has breached financial rules, you can explore the systemic design of those rules and whether they achieve their intended outcomes. You understand them at a deep conceptual and rigorously applied level."
Prof. Rob Wilson

4 INDUSTRY ACCESS

"Sport remains a highly network-driven industry. A strong postgraduate programme, with real professionals as teachers, connects students with clubs, leagues, agencies and event organisers, providing opportunities that are difficult to access independently."
Carmen Ruano

"If the course is designed well, the strongest programmes embed live consultancy projects, guest speakers from senior leadership roles, site visits, and structured placements (and not at a tokenistic level).

A student might work on a live commercial strategy for a professional club, build a governance audit for a national governing body, or develop a fan engagement strategy for a rights holder. That applied theoretical model - where theory and practice operate together - is what makes postgraduate education transformative."
Prof. Rob Wilson

AND WHEN IT ISN'T THE RIGHT THING TO DO

A postgraduate degree is not the right decision for everyone, and it is worth being honest about that. As Wilson puts it, the qualification "works best when it is purposeful and linked to a clear direction" – and for some people, that direction is better served by a different route.

Those already well-established in the industry are one example. If you have significant experience, a strong network and genuine upward momentum, the returns on a full postgraduate degree may be marginal compared to targeted executive development or a specific technical qualification.

Wilson is direct: a performance analyst with five years of elite experience may benefit more from advanced coding or data science certification than from a broad Master's.

Similarly, those with a very narrow, clearly defined specialism – the rare candidate who already knows exactly where they are headed – may not need the breadth that most sport degrees offer. As Marston observes, individuals like this "probably do not need the full-time postgrad degree phase in life, though many will benefit from ongoing, part-time, or executive education."

There are also practical considerations. A degree should be a strategic investment, not a decision taken under acute financial pressure. And for those whose ambitions lie in the technical and performance side of sport — coaching, sports science — a postgraduate in sport management is likely the wrong fit entirely. As Ruano says, it is most valuable for those who want to work on "the business and strategic side of the sports industry."

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How to choose the right postgraduate course in sport

WITH AN INCREASING NUMBER OF COURSES THAT ALL PROMISE THE WORLD, THIS TAKES SOME THOUGHT.

There are more postgraduate programmes in sport than ever before. That's obviously a positive if you're a prospective student looking to enrol, but it also makes the decision on finding the right course for you that much harder.

Marketing materials tend to look very similar, with the promises the various universities make – industry access, practical experience, first-class teaching – often the same. The differences that matter are rarely visible on a cursory glance.

Here, members of the SportBusiness Postgraduate Rankings advisory board set out what to look for – and how to really evaluate the course to know if it's the right fit.

What to look for

1 REAL INDUSTRY INTEGRATION

An essential aspect to confirm is whether true industry engagement is ingrained in the course. As Rob Wilson, director of applied sport finance at University Campus of Football Business (UCFB), puts it: "Is engagement embedded from day one, or bolted on at the end? Are there live projects, consultancy briefs, real clients? Is the university aligned with partnerships with major organisations within the sector?"

The distinction matters. A programme that embeds real client interaction from the outset develops industry-ready graduates; one that offers a single placement at the end does not. "If students are not building tangible outputs – consultancy reports, strategy documents, financial models, governance reviews – then the link to industry readiness is weak."

Carmen Ruano, academic director at European Sport Business School, echoes this point: "Look for a university with tight industry relations that offers an internship or working placement as part of your studies. It ensures that you can apply your knowledge and gives you an entry point in the field."

2 TEACHING QUALITY AND CURRICULUM

A strong programme requires staff who are both research-active and genuinely industry-engaged, not one or the other. For Wilson, the benchmark should be academics who "publish, advise, comment and shape debate."

Milena Parent, professor in sport governance at the University of Ottawa, adds that class size matters, and that different programmes carry different networks. Pro sport, Olympic, community and international networks are not interchangeable — so where you want to work should shape which programme you choose.

And, of course, a curriculum that is current – and clearly evolving – is critical. Goran Yordanov, director of enrolment at Sommet Education warns, "The worst thing is to sit in a class and learn outdated concepts that have no real-life application. Surprisingly, a lot of courses still have this approach."

3 GRADUATE OUTCOMES

Where alumni end up in the industry is the clearest signal a programme can give. "Look closely at where graduates actually end up working," says Ruano. "If alumni are building careers in clubs, leagues, agencies or major sporting events, that is often the best indicator of the programme's relevance and industry credibility."

Wilson agrees – and adds that the quality of those roles is also important. "Where do alumni actually go? Are they in meaningful roles across clubs, agencies, governing bodies, broadcasters or rights holders?"

4 COHORT AND LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Two factors that rarely appear on a course brochure but consistently shape the experience are the quality of your peer group and the overall environment you're studying in.

On cohort, Wilson is unambiguous: "Your peer group shapes your experience enormously. A strong cohort becomes part of your long-term professional network. Ten years later, those classmates may be working across clubs, federations, agencies and governing bodies."

Yordanov makes the broader environment point: "Small classes, student clubs, active student life: all these things contribute to a motivated and driven candidate." He adds, "students tend to focus a lot on programme content and career outcomes, which are important, but if you are not happy during the programme, you tend to miss the benefits that come with studying at a particular university."

AND FACTORS YOU MIGHT HAVE OVERLOOKED

Beyond the headline criteria, three things consistently catch prospective students off guard.

LOCATION

A basic thing, but simply being close to industry ecosystems can be a huge benefit. As Wilson notes, “being close to clubs, leagues, media organisations will create incidental opportunities that are difficult to replicate remotely.” Yordanov adds a simpler test: “Look at the location – is it somewhere you want to live for a year or more?”

SPORT CREDENTIALS

Does the institution have clear sporting credentials, or is sport just one small part of a much broader portfolio? Wilson argues that specialist institutions “often build deeper industry relationships, sharper curriculum alignment and clearer identity.”

FINANCIAL PREPARATION

Kevin Tallec Marston, research fellow and academic project manager at CIES, flags this as chronically underestimated: “Too many candidates have not yet done their homework or planned how they will manage this. Courses, even when scholarship support is offered, can be expensive. Not thinking this through in advance is all too common.”

HOW TO EVALUATE THE COURSE

Knowing what to look for is one thing. Finding out whether a programme actually delivers it requires going beyond the prospectus.

Wilson's starting point is direct conversations. "Speak to current students. Speak to recent graduates. Ask what surprised them. Ask what they would change. Ask how many industry professionals they have actually interacted with in the past month." Ruano agrees: "Speaking with recent graduates or current students can provide a much more realistic view of the programme than any brochure."

Wilson also suggests putting institutions on the spot with a single question: "What does industry involvement look like in week three? If the answer is vague, that tells you something. If the answer includes named organisations, live briefs and structured engagement, that tells you something else."

Marston's approach is to work backwards from where you want to end up: "Look at the people in the industry whose jobs you would like to have in 20 years. Find out what they studied, what choices they made. That may help you better understand a course through the lens of someone in whose footsteps you wish to follow."

Parent frames the final test as one of personal fit: "When you explore the ensemble of factors – rhythm, location, alumni career trajectories, capacity for innovation – think about how they match you. If you have found a course that appears just made for you, then you've probably found your match."

How to make the most of your postgraduate course

Enrolment onto a postgraduate course is one big step. But beyond following the syllabus, the 12 months – or longer – that you're on the course is time that needs to be used wisely.

The aim is to squeeze everything you can out of the environment you find yourself in, and the opportunities that present themselves. And, naturally, to put yourself in the best possible position for employment on the other side.

Naturally the dreaded 'networking' is going to play a big part in it, but there are a few other things to think about too. Here, three of the professors on the PGR advisory board give their input.

Treat it like a job, not a course

The shift in mindset needs to start early. Rather than approaching the year or 18 months as simply a student consuming content, the most successful postgraduates are proactive about turning interactions and touchpoints with the course into opportunities to demonstrate their capabilities.

Rob Wilson, professor of applied sport finance at UCFB, is direct on this point: "Treat it like a 12-month job interview. Do not be a passive consumer of content. Volunteer for live consultancy projects. Take leadership roles in group work. Build relationships with guest speakers and follow up professionally. Seek feedback relentlessly and act on it."

The application of that mindset extends beyond the classroom. "If you are studying sport finance, build financial models beyond the assessment brief. If you are studying sport marketing, run a live campaign for a small club or community organisation. If you are studying governance, publish a short thought piece on a current regulatory issue."

The goal, Wilson argues, is to arrive at graduation already industry-ready: "The qualification matters, but the network, reputation and visible evidence of capability you build during the year are what truly differentiate you."

Invest in people, not just connections

Networking – a word that may send shivers down your spine – is only part of the picture. The relationships that tend to matter most over a career are not the transactional ones, but the ones built through genuine investment in other people.

Kevin Tallec Marston, a research fellow and academic project manager at CIES, says "Invest yourself. If you take one year to complete a course, time flies. In that experience, you have time and talent to both give and receive. Relationships are key, so you should invest in people."

That means looking beyond the obvious targets. "Listen, share, build bridges with your teachers, your fellow classmates, and industry speakers, and not just in a transactional way. After more than 20 years with our programme, it never ceases to amaze me how many unexpected connections surprise alumni years down the road."

Your cohort, in particular, is an underrated asset. The people sitting alongside you are your future industry peers: future colleagues, collaborators, referrers. "Having been a good classmate and friend, giving a bit of yourself when the cost apparently brought nothing often pays back, or forward, in manifold ways later in life."

Be visible before you graduate

Technical knowledge and strong relationships will take you a long way. But in a sector where opportunities rarely arrive through formal applications alone, visibility matters too.

Carmen Ruano, academic director at European Sport Business School (ESBS) is clear on where the competitive edge is won and lost: "Treat your postgraduate year as the start of your career, not just a year of study. The global sports sector supports millions of jobs worldwide and continues to grow, but it is also highly competitive."

The students who break through, she argues, are those who are already operating inside the industry before they finish. "Students who succeed are those who network actively, attend industry events, volunteer in competitions and build relationships with professionals while studying. In sport, opportunities rarely come from sending CVs alone — they come from being visible and proactive within the industry."

Leave with more than a certificate

A postgraduate course in sport will give you knowledge. The question is what else you leave with.

The most prepared graduates finish with friends and peers they have genuinely invested in, a body of work that demonstrates capability beyond their grades, and enough industry presence that they are not starting from zero when they begin applying for roles. That does not happen by accident. It requires treating the course as the beginning of a career, not a prelude to one.

The FIFA Master: 26 years at the top

Professor Thomas Probst, president of the scientific committee of the FIFA Master, discusses the programme's enduring strengths, the realities of student recruitment and the distinctive value of an education that moves across three countries and three institutional cultures.

How many applications do you receive each year?

Over the last ten years the numbers have somewhat varied, but we regularly receive around 500 gross applications.

How many of those applications are successful? What is an average class intake?

Each year we interview between 65–75 candidates, and we deliberately limit places to a maximum of 30. Our priority is to ensure high-quality interaction of the class with our teaching staff as well as among the students themselves. We appreciate candidates who reapply, after a first (unsuccessful) application, and eventually obtain a place on the course. Some candidates prepare for several years in advance.

What do you look for in applicants? Is academic achievement the sole criterion?

Evidently, a strong academic record is non-negotiable. Because our programme focuses on sport at the global level, we expect candidates to be open-minded, curious, intellectually sharp and internationally oriented. We look for well-rounded applicants who are eager to learn and ask questions. Prior professional experience in sport is an advantage while being a genuine team player is essential since a large part of the curriculum is built around group work.

Alumni of the 26th edition

What is the background of your students?

Our students come from every continent and have highly diverse academic backgrounds – indeed, interdisciplinary learning sits at the core of the programme. The typical age range is 25–32, with a few younger students, who have already demonstrated maturity, and a handful of more experienced professionals returning to study for a year.

What kind of grants or stipends are available?

The FIFA Master course offers several scholarships each year which are awarded by the Scientific Committee on the basis of academic merit and financial need. We tend to divide financial support in order to ensure that as many students as possible receive some form of assistance. In the early years, we had only two scholarships; today we support roughly half the students with at least partial funding, and we continue to seek additional resources.

Where do you stand out in terms of teaching strength?

Our partner universities and their teaching staff have long been leaders in the field of humanities, management and law. Examples include Olympic history and football diplomacy at De Montfort, leadership and managerial culture through SDA Bocconi's Sport Knowledge Center, and anti-doping and arbitration at the University of Neuchâtel. The topics of women's sport history, women in sport and female leadership are addressed throughout the academic year. Theory and practice remain tightly connected and a focus on critical thinking in the age of AI is key.

Is there a particular unique selling point?

Two features define our programme. First, a genuinely international approach:

Graduation ceremony of the FIFA Master

the student body, the curriculum and the teaching staff all conceive and treat sport as a global phenomenon. Secondly, the programme structure itself. Many programmes offer international partnerships or short visits abroad; very few require students to spend an entire year studying at three different universities in three different countries and cultures while working with a truly global cohort. That combination of academic depth, cultural immersion and sustained interdisciplinary learning remains distinctive.

How would you assess the diversity of the FIFA Master?

Diversity and interdisciplinarity go hand in hand in our programme. They are the hallmarks of our brand as exemplified each year by the colourful graduation ceremony. Diversity of students, of alumni, of teachers, of guest speakers and of the course content, to name but a few, are key factors that have contributed to our strong reputation, both academically and within the sports industry. To be named, for the fourteenth time, as no.1 Postgraduate Sport Management course in Europe in the new 2026 *SportBusiness* rankings, is an incredible achievement inspired by diversity and interdisciplinarity.

Where do graduates usually go on to work?

Today, around 90% of our alumni work in the international sports industry. Many spend several years abroad before returning home to take on leadership roles in national sport. The majority are employed in international or national sport organisations, clubs, teams and agencies, with a particularly strong presence in the international federation and global events sector.

Nearly eighty alumni currently work at FIFA. We are also seeing a growing number of entrepreneurs who have founded businesses across different parts of the industry. Since the first edition of the FIFA Master, over 230 female students from around the world have graduated from our programme and currently work in the global sports industry.

How do you support alumni and how strong is the network?

We prefer to speak of a “community” rather than a simple network. A network is a set of links; a community is a living entity. CIES communications staff work closely with the FIFA Master Alumni Association. Vibrant regional WhatsApp and messaging groups exist, alongside specialised subgroups. The community gathers most often around major sporting events – the most recent took place in Mexico during the 2026 FIFA World Cup – to discuss association business, share job opportunities and renew friendships. The President of the alumni association holds a seat in the Master’s Executive Board and many graduates actively contribute to university activities.

What is a key skill of the FIFA Master?

Staying personally connected and supporting each other long after graduation has never been more important. The power of people and the ability to relate to one another, to show empathy, and to demonstrate emotional intelligence, remain vital in an increasingly AI driven world. Our course aims to equip graduates with the necessary skills and knowledge required to have an impact on the sporting reality of today rather than to conjure futuristic dreams.

Looking back, what stands out in terms of the programme’s evolution?

Looking back across the last 26 editions, one must emphasise the continuity of purpose. The programme has remained student-focused and innovative, regularly refreshing content in response to industry needs.

The partnership among the three universities, CIES and FIFA has matured into a durable collaborative platform. Scholarship provision has expanded dramatically. And the global character of each cohort – typically 25 or more nationalities in a class of around thirty students – continues to shape both the classroom experience and the worldwide alumni community of 750+ graduates from 120+ nationalities. We are very pleased to announce that for the 27th edition (2026/27) our FIFA Master class will be composed of fourteen women and fourteen men from 22 different nationalities.

Global Postgraduate Rankings 1-30

Rank	University	Programme	Region	Class size 2023	2023 Gradu-ates	Class size 2025/26	Re-sponse rate	Course duration (months)	Average age	Accept-ance rate	Female students	Female staff	Int de
1	UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS AMHERST	University of Massachusetts Amherst, Mark H. McCormack Department of Sport Management MBA/MS Sport Management and MS Sport Management	North America	23	18	20	94%	12	23	19%	50%	47%	
2	THE INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR SPORT STUDIES (CIES)	International Master (MA) in Management, Law, and Humanities of Sport	Europe	27	26	27	73%	10	29	14%	26%	26%	
3	DEAKIN UNIVERSITY (ONLINE)	Master of Business (Sport Management) - Online	Asia	16	16	18	38%	24	27	100%	44%	44%	
4	UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA	DeVos Sport Business Management MBA/MS	North America	19	19	35	89%	16	25	36%	51%	33%	
5	UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA	Vinik Sport & Entertainment Management Program, MBA/MS	North America	27	27	26	56%	21	24	26%	69%	40%	
6	OHIO UNIVERSITY	MBA/MSA Dual Degree Program	North America	35	35	33	60%	21	22	32%	39%	20%	
7	FLORIDA ATLANTIC UNIVERSITY	MBA in Sport Management	North America	18	14	37	36%	23	23	21%	43%	41%	
8	UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA	Master of Sport and Entertainment Management	North America	29	29	55	55%	15	25	31%	42%	30%	
9	UNIVERSITY OF NEW HAVEN	Master of Science in Sport Management	North America	24	22	23	59%	18	23	18%	35%	29%	
10	DEAKIN UNIVERSITY	Master of Business (Sport Management)	Asia	42	42	45	26%	24	26	52%	29%	44%	
11	OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY	MS in Kinesiology (Sport Management)	North America	29	29	23	55%	12	23	21%	48%	60%	
12	UNIVERSITY OF VIGO (SPAIN)	Master in Business Administration of Sport	Europe	25	25	25	94%	9	25	56%	20%	43%	
13	JOHAN CRUYFF INSTITUTE (ONLINE)	Master in Sport Management Online	Europe	29	25	27	36%	13	27	93%	15%	29%	
14	GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY	Sport Management Masters	North America	26	25	30	40%	21	25	26%	47%	67%	
15	OHIO UNIVERSITY (ONLINE)	Online Master of Sports Administration (Previously Professional Master of Sports Administration)	North America	19	19	16	32%	21	28	53%	31%	25%	
16	UNIVERSITY OF MODENA E REGGIO EMILIA & UNIVERSITY OF SAN MARINO	masterSport - Master in management dello Sport System	Europe	20	20	20	65%	12	25	36%	0%	25%	
17	UNIVERSITY OF OREGON	Oregon MBA – Specialization in Sports Business	North America	24	24	19	50%	20	29	37%	32%	23%	
18	UNIVERSITY OF BAYREUTH	MBA Sport Management	Europe	25	36	23	28%	24	29	27%	35%	33%	
19	TEMPLE UNIVERSITY	BLD Julius R40	North America	45	45	81	27%	21	26	55%	40%	48%	
20	FLORIDA ATLANTIC UNIVERSITY (ONLINE)	MBA in Sport Management (Online)	North America	18	14	31	36%	23	25	24%	26%	41%	
21	UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT CHAPEL HILL	Masters in Sport Administration	North America	12	12	12	92%	22	22	12%	83%	44%	
22	VIRGINIA COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY	VCU Center for Sport Leadership	North America	39	39	38	44%	12	24	34%	53%	50%	
23	UNIVERSITAT DE VIC	Master in Sport Management and Marketing	Europe	10	9	12	67%	10	24	100%	42%	11%	
24	SEATTLE UNIVERSITY	MBA in Sport and Entertainment Management	North America	30	26	29	50%	21	25	47%	52%	50%	
25	THE FOOTBALL BUSINESS ACADEMY (ONLINE)	Professional Master in Football Business (PMiFB)	Europe	55	49	45	35%	12	23	27%	24%	33%	
26	UNIVERSITY OF SAN FRANCISCO	Master of Science in Sport Management	North America	99	93	107	39%	23	25	19%	36%	29%	
27	UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS (ONLINE)	MBA Sport Entertainment Management (Online)	North America	12	11	31	55%	24	29	53%	58%	40%	
28	BALL STATE UNIVERSITY	Master of Arts (MA)/Master of Science (MS) in Sport Administration	North America	19	17	20	41%	22	24	49%	30%	0%	
29	HAMED BIN KHALIFA UNIVERSITY	Master of Science in Sport and Entertainment Management	Asia	10	10	12	80%	24	26	21%	75%	50%	
30	ST JOHN'S UNIVERSITY	Master of Professional Studies in Sport Management	North America	69	41	27	37%	16	25	24%	26%	25%	

tl stu-ents	Intl staff	Salary ($)	Employ-ment at 12 months	Current employ-ment	Quality of faculty	Quality of curricu-lum	Job support	Extracur-ricular initiatives	Alumni network	Industry network	Return on Invest-ment (ROI)	Diversity, Equity and Inclu-sion	Profes-sional mentor-ship	Career advance-ment	Skills applica-bility	Skills fre-quency	Peer review	Total
20%	18%	100,549	88.24	91.76	97.65	95.29	84.71	82.50	94.12	95.29	91.76	83.53	90.59	87.06	90.59	78.43	100.00	88.92
100%	34%	109,514	97.89	100.00	90.53	87.37	84.21	91.58	96.84	95.79	81.05	87.37	87.37	87.37	83.16	68.52	60.00	86.30
0%	33%	135,825	100.00	100.00	100.00	96.67	90.00	90.00	96.67	96.67	93.33	93.33	96.67	93.33	86.67	80.00	50.00	85.72
11%	17%	76,794	95.29	97.65	91.76	87.06	90.59	95.29	88.24	95.29	90.59	97.65	89.41	90.00	96.25	84.38	40.00	85.61
12%	20%	78,393	97.33	94.67	88.00	92.00	89.33	100.00	96.00	94.67	88.00	94.67	90.67	92.00	93.33	78.89	70.00	85.16
21%	30%	89,155	96.19	96.19	84.76	80.00	87.62	94.29	97.14	98.10	85.71	80.00	87.62	83.81	87.62	79.37	90.00	85.16
19%	13%	79,172	88.00	92.00	100.00	96.00	100.00	100.00	92.00	96.00	96.00	100.00	100.00	92.00	92.00	76.67	20.00	84.29
29%	27%	95,336	92.50	88.75	95.00	88.75	82.50	85.00	76.25	87.50	80.00	85.33	90.00	77.50	83.75	83.33	80.00	82.93
35%	43%	88,509	98.46	95.38	92.31	92.31	87.69	87.69	89.23	92.31	89.23	87.69	96.92	90.77	89.23	80.77	0.00	82.87
73%	33%	66,185	98.18	96.36	92.73	90.91	89.09	89.09	89.09	92.73	89.09	89.09	90.91	90.91	90.91	84.85	50.00	82.25
4%	0%	93,688	91.25	81.25	98.75	92.50	87.50	91.25	86.25	93.75	92.50	91.25	96.25	90.00	90.00	83.33	40.00	82.19
52%	7%	66,127	92.94	97.65	91.76	94.12	87.06	88.24	90.59	90.59	94.12	89.41	94.12	95.29	92.94	82.35	20.00	82.06
93%	29%	98,919	97.78	95.56	88.89	95.56	86.67	86.67	82.22	88.89	84.44	88.89	91.11	88.89	91.11	85.42	80.00	81.85
27%	33%	79,287	100.00	100.00	92.00	90.00	88.00	88.00	92.00	92.00	84.00	78.00	86.00	88.00	86.00	81.67	10.00	81.67
0%	13%	113,667	100.00	90.00	83.33	86.67	80.00	80.00	90.00	93.33	86.67	86.67	83.33	73.33	80.00	75.00	100.00	80.90
5%	8%	63,699	100.00	100.00	96.92	95.38	96.92	96.92	95.38	93.85	93.85	96.92	95.38	98.46	96.92	94.87	20.00	80.78
26%	23%	124,016	93.33	90.00	81.67	83.33	78.33	86.67	90.00	90.00	78.33	78.33	78.33	85.00	81.67	69.44	60.00	80.40
22%	20%	118,605	100.00	96.00	86.00	88.00	80.00	86.00	98.00	90.00	82.00	90.00	88.00	84.00	80.00	75.00	0.00	80.34
5%	17%	68,455	98.33	100.00	90.00	93.33	86.67	90.00	88.33	90.00	85.00	93.33	93.33	90.00	83.33	79.17	50.00	80.14
0%	13%	88,000	92.00	92.00	96.00	96.00	80.00	88.00	80.00	96.00	92.00	84.00	88.00	80.00	96.00	93.33	40.00	79.99
8%	0%	74,912	94.55	92.73	89.09	87.27	85.45	83.64	83.64	87.27	89.09	74.55	83.64	86.00	88.00	80.00	40.00	79.33
16%	25%	63,383	95.29	83.53	96.47	87.06	89.41	87.50	97.65	96.47	89.41	92.94	92.94	89.41	91.76	79.17	0.00	78.81
0%	11%	61,053	96.67	100.00	93.33	93.33	96.67	86.67	90.00	93.33	93.33	93.33	96.67	83.33	86.67	86.11	0.00	78.15
3%	5%	124,926	90.77	93.85	83.08	80.00	86.15	73.85	78.46	90.77	81.54	95.38	84.62	81.54	81.54	79.49	10.00	77.72
96%	92%	94,179	94.12	97.65	82.35	76.47	75.29	83.53	83.53	87.06	75.29	80.00	80.00	84.71	78.82	69.79	0.00	77.50
7%	8%	84,748	90.00	83.89	93.33	90.00	86.67	84.44	86.67	88.89	82.78	86.86	91.67	86.67	89.71	82.86	30.00	77.31
0%	40%	77,333	63.33	83.33	93.33	90.00	86.67	90.00	83.33	96.67	83.33	83.33	93.33	90.00	93.33	72.22	50.00	77.13
5%	25%	61,111	100.00	94.29	85.71	93.33	88.57	88.57	85.71	85.71	85.71	85.71	91.43	88.57	94.29	90.48	20.00	76.54
75%	100%	107,376	80.00	82.50	90.00	90.00	72.50	75.00	77.50	72.50	70.00	80.00	82.50	80.00	85.00	83.33	0.00	76.40
7%	8%	70,385	92.00	89.33	90.67	92.00	88.00	94.67	92.86	93.33	82.67	89.33	89.33	84.00	84.00	78.89	0.00	75.89

Global Postgraduate Rankings 30-48

Rank	University	Programme	Region	Class size 2023	2023 Gradu-ates	Class size 2025/26	Re-sponse rate	Course duration (months)	Average age	Accept-ance rate	Female students	Female staff	Int de
31	BOSTON COLLEGE	Masters in Science, Sports Administration	North America	87	57	105	46%	18	23	49%	43%	29%	
32	JOHAN CRUYFF INSTITUTE	Master in Sport Management	Europe	26	24	31	29%	10	25	94%	35%	16%	
33	UNIVERSITY OF LIVERPOOL MANAGEMENT SCHOOL - FOOTBALL INDUSTRIES MBA	MBA Football Industries	Europe	24	24	8	46%	12	34	10%	25%	23%	
34	UNIVERSITY OF WINDSOR	Master of Sport Management and Leadership	North America	7	10	13	70%	16	23	28%	15%	43%	
35	GEORGIA STATE UNIVERSITY	Sport Administration Master of Science (MS) Program	North America	39	38	34	53%	24	24	30%	56%	75%	
36	UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE	Sport Management Master's Program	North America	29	25	39	68%	20	23	20%	62%	29%	
37	INDIANA STATE UNIVERSITY (ONLINE)	MS - Sport Management	North America	19	18	28	44%	12	24	76%	31%	40%	
38	ESBS EUROPEAN SPORT BUSINESS SCHOOL	Master in International Sports Management	Europe	112	109	147	26%	9	26	36%	22%	23%	
39	CA' FOSCARI UNIVERSITY - VENICE	Master Universitario di I Livello in Strategie per il Business dello Sport	Europe	29	29	36	31%	12	25	82%	28%	30%	
40	TREVISAN ESCOLA DE NEGOCIOS (ONLINE)	MBA in Sports Management and Marketing	South America	43	35	35	50%	22	29	88%	29%	16%	
41	TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY	Master of Science (M.S.) in Sport Management	North America	16	13	20	46%	24	22	26%	50%	42%	
42	LOUGHBOROUGH UNIVERSITY	MSc Sport Management (Loughborough campus)	Europe	131	120	90	29%	12	23	15%	33%	30%	
43	UNIVERSITY OF STIRLING	MSc Sport Management	Europe	78	68	48	15%	14	24	20%	23%	17%	
44	UNIVERSITY COLLEGE DUBLIN	MSc in Sport Management	Europe	26	31	28	45%	12	25	21%	30%	36%	
45	UNIVERSITY OF LIVERPOOL MANAGEMENT SCHOOL - MSC SPORTS BUSINESS AND MANAGEMENT	MSc Sports Business and Management	Europe	145	125	58	14%	12	24	14%	19%	11%	
46	UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS	MBA Sports Entertainment Management	North America	12	12	30	50%	17	25	32%	47%	38%	
47	SHEFFIELD HALLAM UNIVERSITY	MSc International Sport Business Management	Europe	82	82	18	19%	12		49%	22%	14%	
48	VRIJE UNIVERSITEIT BRUSSEL / UNIVERSITY OF BRUSSELS	Postgraduate Sports Management	Europe	52	52	54	19%	8	23	90%	13%	9%	
	*GLOBAL INSTITUTE OF SPORT (ONLINE)	MSc International Sport Management	Europe	8	6	26	50%	12	29	21%	38%	50%	
	*GLOBAL INSTITUTE OF SPORT (ONLINE)	MSc Football Business	Europe	17	13	22	31%	12	30	30%	27%	50%	
	*LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY (ONLINE)	MS Sport Management	North America	42	40	69	15%	18	24	35%	55%	40%	

**Insufficient response rate. Programmes are required to have a minimum of five graduates complete the alumni survey, and the lower of either 20% of 2023 class or 10 graduates complete the alumni survey.*

tl stu-ents	Intl staff	Salary ($)	Employ-ment at 12 months	Current employ-ment	Quality of faculty	Quality of curricu-lum	Job support	Extracur-ricular initiatives	Alumni network	Industry network	Return on Invest-ment (ROI)	Diversity, Equity and Inclu-sion	Profes-sional mentor-ship	Career advance-ment	Skills applica-bility	Skills fre-quency	Peer review	Total
4%	3%	77,673	90.77	94.62	90.77	87.69	86.15	86.15	80.00	87.69	83.85	85.38	88.46	76.92	82.31	73.72	10.00	75.63
68%	22%	56,924	88.57	91.43	93.33	86.67	90.00	83.33	83.33	96.67	86.67	86.67	90.00	85.71	80.00	80.95	30.00	75.20
75%	23%	89,384	87.27	87.27	85.45	80.00	63.64	74.55	85.45	87.27	69.09	81.82	76.36	72.73	70.91	68.18	40.00	74.61
23%	0%	77,635	91.43	80.00	91.43	91.43	82.86	82.86	77.14	77.14	80.00	85.71	82.86	65.71	77.14	69.05	20.00	74.59
12%	0%	70,941	96.00	82.00	89.00	84.00	79.00	76.00	77.00	83.00	76.00	84.00	83.00	80.00	82.00	70.00	10.00	74.16
3%	29%	64,544	90.59	92.94	85.88	84.71	75.29	78.82	76.47	72.94	77.65	81.18	89.41	83.53	78.82	66.67	20.00	73.11
0%	0%	73,750	82.50	87.50	87.50	87.50	85.00	77.14	80.00	80.00	82.50	90.00	92.50	77.50	82.50	83.33	30.00	72.48
90%	8%	62,744	82.14	96.43	88.57	86.43	72.86	82.14	79.29	87.86	79.29	82.14	83.57	87.14	77.14	69.05	0.00	72.21
0%	4%	48,200	93.33	93.33	88.89	86.67	91.11	88.89	86.67	93.33	84.44	88.89	84.44	91.11	86.67	70.37	0.00	71.33
0%	16%	58,270	87.69	92.31	92.31	92.31	83.08	72.31	80.00	80.00	80.00	78.46	88.33	89.23	84.62	73.08	30.00	70.97
15%	21%	79,503	100.00	96.67	83.33	76.67	53.33	63.33	50.00	63.33	66.67	56.67	63.33	83.33	66.67	66.67	40.00	70.43
91%	38%	56,884	85.14	90.29	85.14	78.82	60.00	81.14	74.71	70.86	60.59	78.29	77.14	73.71	72.00	56.67	40.00	70.36
77%	33%	53,810	74.00	78.00	96.00	90.00	76.00	82.00	74.00	68.00	74.00	92.00	86.00	88.00	82.00	78.33	20.00	70.35
61%	45%	58,831	88.57	90.00	86.15	77.14	62.86	80.00	74.29	68.57	71.43	71.43	71.43	78.57	77.14	61.90	10.00	69.49
81%	22%	56,328	89.41	83.75	91.25	82.50	61.25	76.25	68.75	72.50	63.75	75.00	80.00	76.47	80.00	72.92	30.00	69.08
7%	50%	62,010	76.67	73.33	90.00	80.00	76.67	80.00	73.33	83.33	63.33	63.33	80.00	70.00	72.00	61.11	10.00	67.08
56%	14%	46,642	62.00	67.27	74.55	74.00	65.45	69.09	58.18	61.82	58.18	63.64	70.91	65.45	63.64	48.33	0.00	56.51
0%	2%	60,261	64.44	68.00	80.00	72.00	62.00	78.00	70.00	86.00	60.00	74.00	78.00	36.00	54.00	40.00	30.00	56.15
42%	100%	92,857	100.00	100.00	93.33	93.33	86.67	86.67	80.00	86.67	93.33	86.67	100.00	86.67	86.67	50.00	70.00	87.28
41%	100%	102,324	100.00	100.00	100.00	85.00	85.00	73.33	90.00	100.00	85.00	85.00	95.00	80.00	90.00	75.00	70.00	86.52
10%	10%	70,352	83.33	83.33	93.33	96.67	60.00	63.33	53.33	43.33	70.00	93.33	90.00	73.33	80.00	72.22	40.00	70.85

CATEGORY
OVERALL

COUNTRY
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NAME

University of Massachusetts Amherst

COURSE
MCCORMACK DEPARTMENT OF SPORT MANAGEMENT MBA/ MS SPORT MANAGEMENT AND MS SPORT MANAGEMENT

CITY
AMHERST

ATTENDANCE
30,000+ (IN-PERSON AND ONLINE)

The University of Massachusetts Amherst's Mark H. McCormack Department of Sport Management MBA/MS Sport Management and MS Sport Management programme reclaimed top spot in the 2026 edition of the SportBusiness Postgraduate Course Rankings, bouncing back after slipping to third in 2025.

The programme, housed within the Isenberg School of Management at UMass Amherst, has a typical cohort size of 22 to 30, with applicant rates normally reaching 125.

The number of full-time faculty working across the department now stands at 16, following the addition of three new hires – Anne Dietrich, Ajhanai Keaton and Calvin Nite – in autumn 2024. The department remains under the leadership of graduate programme director Will Norton, who has held the role since the 2021-22 academic year.

A fixture of the Postgraduate Rankings top three in recent years and now the 2019, 2022, 2023, 2024 and 2026 winner – the programme's 2026 result ends Ohio University's one-year reign – the programme received full marks in the peer review category, one of only two programmes to do so and the only one in the top ten.

RANKINGS AT A GLANCE:

- #1 globally, total score 88.9 – the top-ranked program in the table.
- Perfect 100/100 peer review – the only in-person program in the ranking to score full marks from industry/academic peers.
- ~$100,500 average graduate salary off a 12-month course, with 92% employed at time of survey and a highly selective 18.5% acceptance rate – fastest route to a six-figure outcome among campus programs.

UNIVERSITY	PROGRAMME	PEER REVIEW
University of Massachusetts Amherst	Mark H. McCormack Department of Sport Management MBA/MS Sport Management and MS Sport Management	100
The International Centre for Sport Studies (CIES)	International Master (MA) in Management, Law, and Humanities of Sport	60
Deakin University (Online)	Master of Business (Sport Management) - Online	50

CATEGORY
OVERALL

COUNTRY
SWITZERLAND

NAME

The International Centre for Sport Studies (CIES)

COURSE
INTERNATIONAL MASTER (MA) IN MANAGEMENT, LAW AND HUMANITIES OF SPORT

CITY
NEUCHÂTEL

ATTENDANCE
650+

The FIFA Master, operated by the International Centre for Sport Studies (CIES), has once again been named as the number one ranked course in Europe.

CIES is based in Switzerland, but the FIFA Master course, established in 2000, sees a maximum cohort of 32 students study at De Montfort University in Leicester, SDA Bocconi School of Management in Milan and the University of Neuchâtel in Switzerland during their year on the programme.

Today, close to 90% of the more than 700 alumni from over 120 countries, are working within the international sports industry.

The Pan-European course was also top in Europe in 2022, 2023, 2024, and 2025, and has now held this title in 14 of the 15 editions of the Postgraduate Rankings. In 2026, finishing second only to UMass overall represents the best finish for CIES for several years – though the programme is always strong and consistently finishes in the top 5 globally.

The FIFA Master has now been running for 27 years; a testament to the enduring quality and evolution of the course.

RANKINGS AT A GLANCE:

- The top-placed European course for the 14th time in 15 years.
- 100% current employment and 97.9% employed at 12 months, paired with a $109,514 average salary – the highest of any European programme.
- Combined with a 14.1% acceptance rate (2nd most selective after UNC Chapel Hill), it's a small, highly selective programme with elite placement.

UNIVERSITY	PROGRAMME	CURRENT EMPLOYMENT
The International Centre for Sport Studies (CIES)	International Master (MA) in Management, Law, and Humanities of Sport	100%
Deakin University (Online)	Master of Business (Sport Management) - Online	100%
University of Massachusetts Amherst	Mark H. McCormack Department of Sport Management MBA/MS Sport Management and MS Sport Management	91.76%

CATEGORY
OVERALL

NAME

Deakin University (Online)

COURSE
MASTER OF BUSINESS (SPORT MANAGEMENT) - ONLINE

ATTENDANCE
61,700 (44,880 DOMESTIC AND 16,860 INTERNATIONAL, WITH JUST UNDER 16,700 STUDYING FULLY ONLINE).

Deakin University's online Master of Business (Sport Management) takes third place globally in the 2026 edition of the *SportBusiness* Postgraduate Course Rankings – its best-ever finish, and the first time the programme has topped the dedicated online category outright.

The online programme is delivered through Deakin Business School, within the Faculty of Business and Law, alongside the Sport Innovation and Technology (SIT) Lab, an affiliated research unit directed by Professor Adam Karg. The programme has a typical cohort size of 19, up from a class of 16 in 2022, with an acceptance rate of 95%; raw applicant numbers per intake are not disclosed in the rankings data.

The course is led by Joshua McLeod, senior lecturer and course director, who oversees the content, assessments and workload for both the online and on-campus cohorts – delivered by the same academics, with no difference between the two formats.

Third overall and first online breaks the duck for Deakin's programme, which finished runner-up in the online rankings in 2025, scoring 83.78 points behind Ohio University's online Master of Sports Administration (84.10). Deakin posted full marks that year for quality of faculty, quality of curriculum, professional mentorship and job support.

RANKINGS AT A GLANCE:

- Rank 3 overall (85.72) and the top-ranked online programme – ahead of Johan Cruyff Online (13th, 81.85) and Ohio's Online MSA (15th, 80.90).
- It's also the only online programme in the top 10.
- Best salary in the entire rankings table: $135,825. Paired with 100% employment at 12 months and 100% current employment.

UNIVERSITY	PROGRAMME	SALARY
Deakin University (Online)	Master of Business (Sport Management) - Online	$135,825
The International Centre for Sport Studies (CIES)	International Master (MA) in Management, Law, and Humanities of Sport	$109,514
University of Massachusetts Amherst	Mark H. McCormack Department of Sport Management MBA/MS Sport Management and MS Sport Management	$100,549

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SPORT MANAGEMENT

HIGHER EDUCATION PARTNER OF NEW YORK METS

University *of* New Haven
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"My time at New Haven was instrumental in preparing me for a successful career in sports. The program provided invaluable hands-on experience, allowing me to develop real-world skills while building meaningful connections through its strong and supportive alumni network. It served as a true launching pad for my career!"

Eddie Whitman '21 M.S.
Senior Account Executive • **New York Jets**

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"As an international student, adapting to a new culture, educational system, and job market was a significant challenge. The sport management program was instrumental in my professional journey, providing the industry knowledge, meaningful alumni and industry network, and exceptional faculty mentorship that transformed those challenges into career opportunities and prepared me for success in the sport industry."

Karishma Sharma '23 M.S.
Licenses Acquisitions Manager - NBA/WNBA • **Panini America**

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Additional data
Online-based courses

Rank	University	Programme	Region	Class size 2023	2023 Gradu-ates	Class size 2025/26	Re-sponse rate	Course duration (months)	Average age	Accept-ance rate	Female students	Female staff	Int de
1	DEAKIN UNIVERSITY	Master of Business (Sport Management) - Online	Asia	16	16	18	38%	24	27	100%	44%	44%	
2	JOHAN CRUYFF INSTITUTE - ONLINE	Master in Sport Management Online	Europe	29	25	27	36%	13	27	93%	15%	29%	
3	OHIO UNIVERSITY	Online Master of Sports Administration (Previously Professional Master of Sports Administration)	North America	19	19	16	32%	21	28	53%	31%	25%	
4	FLORIDA ATLANTIC UNIVERSITY	MBA in Sport Management (Online)	North America	18	14	31	36%	23	25	24%	26%	41%	
5	THE FOOTBALL BUSINESS ACADEMY	Professional Master in Football Business (PMiFB)	Europe	55	49	45	35%	12	23	27%	24%	33%	
6	UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS	MBA Sport Entertainment Management (Online)	North America	12	11	31	55%	24	29	53%	58%	40%	
7	INDIANA STATE UNIVERSITY	MS - Sport Management	North America	19	18	28	44%	12	24	76%	31%	40%	
8	TREVISAN ESCOLA DE NEGOCIOS	MBA in Sports Management and Marketing	South America	43	35	35	50%	22	29	88%	29%	16%	
	*GLOBAL INSTITUTE OF SPORT	MSc International Sport Management	Europe	8	6	26	50%	12	29	21%	38%	50%	
	*GLOBAL INSTITUTE OF SPORT	MSc Football Business	Europe	17	13	22	31%	12	30	30%	27%	50%	
	*LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY	MS Sport Management	North America	42	40	69	15%	18	24	35%	55%	40%	

tl stu-ents	Intl staff	Salary ($)	Employ-ment at 12 months	Current employ-ment	Quality of faculty	Quality of curricu-lum	Job support	Extracur-ricular initiatives	Alumni network	Industry network	Return on Invest-ment (ROI)	Diversity, Equity and Inclu-sion	Profes-sional mentor-ship	Career advance-ment	Skills applica-bility	Skills fre-quency	Peer review	Total
0%	33%	135,825	100.00	100.00	100.00	96.67	90.00	90.00	96.67	96.67	93.33	93.33	96.67	93.33	86.67	80.00	50.00	85.72
93%	29%	98,919	97.78	95.56	88.89	95.56	86.67	86.67	82.22	88.89	84.44	88.89	91.11	88.89	91.11	85.42	80.00	81.85
0%	13%	113,667	100.00	90.00	83.33	86.67	80.00	80.00	90.00	93.33	86.67	86.67	83.33	73.33	80.00	75.00	100.00	80.90
0%	13%	88,000	92.00	92.00	96.00	96.00	80.00	88.00	80.00	96.00	92.00	84.00	88.00	80.00	96.00	93.33	40.00	79.99
96%	92%	94,179	94.12	97.65	82.35	76.47	75.29	83.53	83.53	87.06	75.29	80.00	80.00	84.71	78.82	69.79	0.00	77.50
0%	40%	77,333	63.33	83.33	93.33	90.00	86.67	90.00	83.33	96.67	83.33	83.33	93.33	90.00	93.33	72.22	50.00	77.13
0%	0%	73,750	82.50	87.50	87.50	87.50	85.00	77.14	80.00	80.00	82.50	90.00	92.50	77.50	82.50	83.33	30.00	72.48
0%	16%	58,270	87.69	92.31	92.31	92.31	83.08	72.31	80.00	80.00	80.00	78.46	88.33	89.23	84.62	73.08	30.00	70.97
42%	100%	92,857	100.00	100.00	93.33	93.33	86.67	86.67	80.00	86.67	93.33	86.67	100.00	86.67	86.67	50.00	70.00	87.28
41%	100%	102,324	100.00	100.00	100.00	85.00	85.00	73.33	90.00	100.00	85.00	85.00	95.00	80.00	90.00	75.00	70.00	86.52
10%	10%	70,352	83.33	83.33	93.33	96.67	60.00	63.33	53.33	43.33	70.00	93.33	90.00	73.33	80.00	72.22	40.00	70.85

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The power of applied sport education

Rob Wilson, of UCFB, explains why higher education in sport matters more than ever.

The British higher education sector stands at a critical inflection point. Financial fragility, intensifying political scrutiny and culture-war skirmishes over the purpose of universities have combined to create a climate of profound uncertainty in both the student recruitment market and more broadly in industry.

The post-92 university sector faces acute pressure, manifested via squeezed tuition fee income, rising operational costs and mounting questions about the value proposition offered to students. For many families, the question is no longer whether higher education is desirable, but whether it is economically rational.

In this context, universities, including ours, are vulnerable. Public confidence has wavered, graduate outcomes data is interrogated with forensic intensity and headlines pervade the newspapers questioning whether degrees are 'worth it'. Yet within this turbulence lies an opportunity. A moment to re-assert what higher education is truly for, specifically in the context of UCFB, and how it must evolve.

The traditional university model focused on three years of largely classroom-based study culminating in a certificate is under strain. The modern student is rightly more demanding. They want relevance, connection and a clear line of sight to employment or in other words, a return on their sizeable investment. They seek education that is not only intellectually rigorous but professionally transformative.

This is where specialised challenger institutions such as UCFB demonstrate a genuine point of difference. Our distinguishing feature is simple but powerful as it provides our students with a genuine foot in the industry camp. Not an occasional guest lecture. Not a tokenistic employability workshop in the final semester. Rather an embedded, applied theoretical apprenticeship model that integrates academic study with live industry engagement from day one. This is our point of difference.

In the sport sector which contributes billions to the UK economy and which is forecast to grow significantly over the coming decade, relevance is everything. The industry is dynamic, global and commercially sophisticated. It demands graduates who understand governance and finance, media and marketing, talent pathways and performance analytics, but also those who can also operate confidently within real organisational environments. Such relevance that goes back to the very origins of the UCFB philosophy.

Our partnerships with organisations such as Sky, Rising Ballers, and professional clubs across the Premier League and English Football League ecosystem provide structured, meaningful industry exposure. These are not symbolic affiliations. They are operational relationships that should shape curriculum design, inform assessment models and create tangible pathways into employment. They connect UCFB students to the sector employment opportunities that exist.

The result is a graduate who is not merely qualified, but work-ready. A 'ready-made employee' in the truest sense. They understand industry language, have navigated real projects, and have built networks before they graduate. In a labour market that prizes experience as much as academic attainment, this integration is decisive.

Critics of higher education often argue that universities have become detached from the real economy. Applied sport education at UCFB can refute that claim. It demonstrates that theory and practice are not opposites, but partners. Intellectual depth enhances professional competence and strategic thinking elevates operational delivery.

Moreover, specialised institutions like ours provide clarity of mission. In an era where some large multi-faculty universities struggle to articulate a coherent identity amid financial retrenchment, we can align resources, staff expertise and industry networks around a single sector. That strategic concentration strengthens our value proposition and is where we leverage opportunity.

The crisis within parts of the post-92 landscape inadvertently validates this approach. When funding models are stretched and broad portfolios become harder to sustain, depth can trump breadth. Specialisation, when executed with academic rigour and industry integration, is not narrow, it is a purposeful journey that leads our students to enhanced outcomes.

Sport is not a peripheral industry. It is a global economic powerhouse, spanning media rights, sponsorship, events, technology, data analytics and community development. It drives soft power, civic pride and international investment. As the sector grows, it requires leaders who combine critical thinking with commercial acumen; who understand both balance sheets and dressing rooms; who can navigate governance reforms as confidently as digital transformation.

It also supports social mobility and diversity within the industry. By embedding students within professional networks early, barriers to entry are lowered. Access is widened and talent from a broader range of backgrounds can see, and seize, opportunity. A more diverse talent pipeline strengthens the sector as a whole and we have the graduate stories to prove it.

At a time when scepticism about the value of degrees grows louder, institutions like ours, that can demonstrate tangible, measurable outcomes will define the next era of British higher education. By integrating classroom excellence with authentic industry partnership, specialised sport institutions exemplify how universities can remain economically relevant, culturally significant and socially transformative.

The power of applied sport education starts at UCFB.

Inside the Olympics: George Washington University students experience the games up close

GW Sport Management students shared what the opportunity to work behind the scenes at the Milano Cortina 2026 Winter Olympics meant to them.

As the Milano Cortina 2026 Winter Olympics came to a close, a group of George Washington University students made their way back to Washington, D.C., energised by the once-in-a-lifetime experience.

Since 1992, Lisa Delpy Neirotti, the director of the M.S. in Sport Management Program at GW Business and an associate professor of sport management, has been taking GW students to the Olympic Games, along with other immersive trips to the World Cup and the Super Bowl. The program gives students a rare glimpse into how a major international sporting event is organised.

While in Italy, the GW students volunteered with the Milano Cortina Olympic Organizing Committee (MiCo) and gained experience in event management and hospitality. They assisted at events including ice hockey, figure skating, and speed skating, helping prepare athlete locker rooms, access control to field of play, ticketing and supporting guests.

Students also conducted surveys to collect spectator data, which will be shared with the International Olympic Committee, and met with Olympic officials, athletes and GW alumni. Read their reflections below and on their blog.

CLAUDIA SANZ, M.S. SPORT MANAGEMENT

"I had the opportunity to volunteer at the 2026 Winter Olympic Games alongside fellow George Washington University students. During my two weeks in Milan, I served as a timing volunteer for multiple women's and men's ice hockey games at Rho Arena, where I was responsible for recording time on ice and tracking line changes. Being entrusted with such an important role — one that requires precision and focus — at the Olympic level is something I will cherish forever.

Sitting at the stats bench with the rest of the team, knowing the accuracy and meticulousness of our work truly mattered, was exhilarating, albeit incredibly stressful. As my bench manager often reminded us, 'Timing in hockey is not just a background role. It is part of the game.'

I also had the chance to work alongside an incredible timing team, all of whom share a passion for ice hockey. It was especially meaningful to meet the women on my team, whose experiences ranged from former national team players to NCAA Division I athletes to current high school players. Many came from countries such as Italy, France and Japan — places where ice hockey, particularly women's hockey, is not as well established as it is in Canada or the United States.

After each game, the arena DJ played Stompin' Tom Connors' 1973 hit, 'The Hockey Song.' As the arena sang along, I am not ashamed to admit I teared up more than once. At Rho, there was a genuine sense of community, even among rival countries, and I began to fully understand the meaning of the Olympic spirit.

It was also inspiring to see thousands of fans from competing nations show up day after day to support their women's teams. Witnessing that support made me hopeful for the continued growth of ice hockey for women and girls around the world. It was a powerful example of how the Olympic Games bring people together through sport.

Many of us also volunteered at the Winter House, the closed hospitality venue for the USA figure skating, speed skating and ice hockey federations, which hosted athletes, their families, friends and sponsors. There, I assisted with guest check-in and credential verification. I also had the opportunity to meet several of my ice hockey heroes, including Ellen Weinberg-Hughes, Kendall Coyne, Mike Eruzione and Dave Christian. I am incredibly grateful for these experiences with the Winter Olympic Games, the IIHF and the broader ice hockey community, and I will treasure these memories for years to come."

ZOE JAGHER, B.S. MARKETING

"We started the day at the Duomo, exploring inside before climbing the stairs to the rooftop. The views over Milan were incredible. From the top, we could see NBC set up on a nearby rooftop overlooking the Duomo, and we watched them interview Madison Chock and Evan Bates. Because it was a free day, we spent the afternoon getting lunch and doing some shopping around Milan.

That night was easily one of the best experiences of the trip. After months of searching, I found 'obstructed view' tickets for 30 euros to the USA vs. Latvia men's hockey game earlier in the week. Somehow, the seats ended up being in the first row, directly behind the USA bench. Hearing the players, watching line changes up close, and feeling the energy from that spot made it one of the best sporting events I've ever attended.

The next day, I returned to short track speed skating. My role was opening the gate onto the ice during practice, which meant standing just feet away from the athletes as they trained. Later in the week, during my final shift, I worked a medal event and saw the Netherlands win the 1,500 meters. My role for that shift was to ensure no fans entered the noncompeting athlete section of the stands.

It was amazing to see athletes watching and cheering on their teammates. We also visited the Alibaba showcase and experienced its AI and VR activation. It is always interesting to see the creative ways sponsors activate on the ground in Milan. From cathedral rooftops to front-row hockey to medal moments on the field of play, this stretch of days perfectly captured how special the Olympics truly are."

DAVID ZINNEMAN, M.S. SPORTS MANAGEMENT

"As the program comes to an end, it is hard to fully put into words what this experience has meant to me. The past days have been filled with moments that felt surreal, exciting, educational and, at times, overwhelming in the best possible way. From walking through the Duomo during the Opening Ceremony to working ice hockey at Santa Giulia, from exploring hospitality houses to listening to Olympic executives speak about future Games, every day offered something new.

What stands out most is how layered the Olympic Games truly are. On the surface, they are about sport and competition. But being here showed me how much more there is. The sponsorship activations, transportation planning, athlete services operations, volunteer coordination, hospitality strategy and global branding all work together to create what the world sees on television.

Watching it unfold in real time made everything we study feel tangible and alive. Volunteering was especially meaningful. Being in athlete services and seeing how much preparation goes into supporting teams gave me a new appreciation for the behind-the-scenes work that makes competition possible. The athletes may be the stars, but thousands of people work quietly to ensure everything runs smoothly.

Beyond the professional insight, this experience was personal. Watching the Super Bowl in Milan, meeting fellow New Jersey natives halfway across the world, trying new foods and having conversations with people from different countries reminded me how powerful global events can be.

The Olympics truly shrink the world. You realise quickly how connected we all are. If there is one takeaway from this program, it is that the Olympic Games are not just an event. They are a platform: a platform for sport, for culture, for business, for diplomacy and for personal growth. I arrived excited and curious. I leave inspired and even more motivated to be part of this industry in the future. This trip was more than I expected, and it is one I will carry with me for a long time."

SAM TAYLOR, M.S. SPORTS MANAGEMENT

"I am currently sitting in the Milan airport, reflecting on the incredible experience I just had and trying to organise my thoughts, so I don't miss highlighting anything. I've loved the Olympics growing up, and it was surreal not only to experience one firsthand but also to work behind the scenes and see all the logistical pieces that come with it. I met people from around the world who share my love of sport and competition.

I was lucky enough to get direct access to the speed skaters, witnessing how much training, skill and precision go into their sport. I also heard from renowned speakers Professor Neirotti organised, who highlighted many different aspects of the Olympics and the sports industry. Every day brought something new, and while it felt like a whirlwind at times, I wouldn't change a second of it.

Having never been to Italy, the country exceeded my expectations. I ate better than I ever have (something my bank account might not have appreciated, but hey, I'm only at the Italian Olympics once, right?) and was able to experience much of what Milan had to offer. I would come back to Italy in a second and visit as many of its cities as I could. I have nothing but good things to say about the country."

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