

The University Strategy for Sport

Background

The Active Anglia Strategy was Anglia Ruskin's first strategy for sport. Facilitated by consultants in 2011 it sought to achieve a joined-up approach to the provision of sport and physical activity for our staff and students. Five years on we can consider it to have been a success, with a number of key achievements in that period:

- *We have now created a team of sports professionals to deliver this area of work;*
- *We have engaged with a lot of students - more than 3,000 individuals participated in some form of sports activity in 2016-17;*
- *We have progressed through the British Universities and Colleges Sport rankings at a fast pace, moving from 87th in 2012 to 70th in 2017;*
- *We have set up a number of excellent partnerships that benefit our students with sports facility providers and community sports clubs;*
- *We have helped to foster a sense of community on campus, in which students and staff are working together as a team.*

Ambitions

The substantial progress that we have made in the last 5 years demonstrates that we have the student demand, organisational structures and local opportunities to provide a truly outstanding university sports programme. Therefore, we should be ambitious in our long-term goals.

Looking to the next 20 years, we believe that we can:

- *Challenge at the highest level of student competition in several sports, winning events and trophies;*
- *Continue to rise up the BUCS rankings, reaching the top 40;*
- *Increase the number of staff and students who are physically active.*

This strategy will look at the next phase of this journey – our core business and the key priorities that will help to shape our programme for the next 5 years.

Core Business

To realise these ambitions we will continue to develop the four cornerstones of our sports programme:

1. *Supporting student sports clubs*
2. *Encouraging staff and students to take part in social sports activities*
3. *Supporting talented students through the provision of a high performance sports programme*
4. *Providing access to a range of high-quality sports facilities for staff and students*

These four strands of our work are the foundations to our University sports programme and will help us to achieve against our headline milestones:

<i>Milestone A</i> <i>Our position in the British Universities and Colleges Sport (BUCS) Rankings.</i>					
<i>2016-17</i>	<i>2017-18</i>	<i>2018-19</i>	<i>2019-20</i>	<i>2020-2021</i>	<i>2021-2022</i>
<i>70th</i>	<i>70th</i>	<i>66th</i>	<i>63rd</i>	<i>60th</i>	<i>57th</i>

<i>Milestone B</i> <i>The number of different, individual students that participate in at least one part of the sports programme per academic year.</i>					
<i>2016-17</i>	<i>2017-18</i>	<i>2018-19</i>	<i>2019-20</i>	<i>2020-2021</i>	<i>2021-2022</i>
<i>3,040</i>	<i>3,100</i>	<i>3,150</i>	<i>3,200</i>	<i>3,250</i>	<i>3,300</i>

<i>Milestone C</i> <i>The number of different, individual staff members that participate in at least one part of the sports programme per academic year.</i>					
<i>2016-17</i>	<i>2017-18</i>	<i>2018-19</i>	<i>2019-20</i>	<i>2020-2021</i>	<i>2021-2022</i>
<i>416</i>	<i>420</i>	<i>440</i>	<i>460</i>	<i>480</i>	<i>500</i>

<i>Milestone D</i> <i>Total attendances on our sports programme per academic year.</i>					
<i>2016-17</i>	<i>2017-18</i>	<i>2018-19</i>	<i>2019-20</i>	<i>2020-2021</i>	<i>2021-2022</i>
<i>78,292</i>	<i>79,300</i>	<i>80,300</i>	<i>81,300</i>	<i>82,300</i>	<i>83,300</i>

2017-22 Key Priorities

In addition to our core business we will place greater emphasis on delivering against some key priorities that will help us to develop the sports experience at ARU and achieve our ambitious long-term goals. Achievement of these goals will help to develop unique character, making Anglia Ruskin's sports programme distinct from our competitors. These 8 priorities are detailed below, in no particular order:

- 1. We will increasingly use sport to enhance the employability of our students.*

We currently contribute to student employability in several ways through our existing sports programme. We employ many students as Sports Coaches, Sports Activators and gym staff. We also work closely with colleagues in the Faculty of Science and Technology to facilitate sports coaching placements for our students with local sports clubs, schools and other partners with whom we have a good working relationship – much of this is coordinated via our Coach Academy which was launched in 2014, to provide students with coach education and development courses whilst they are studying with us.

Moving forwards we will:

- a) Develop a programme of graduate traineeships that enable our own students to join the university sports staff team once they graduate, to gain valuable, paid work experiences and to help us ensure that our sports programme remains current.*
- b) Work with colleagues in the Centre for Sports and Exercise Science (CSES) to expand our Coach Academy, so that we are using more students in the delivery of our own student sports programme as both assistant coaches and officials.*

- c) *Support colleagues in CSES to offer more work placements for students on our academic sports programmes, by building this into our partnership agreements with schools, clubs and facilities.*

<i>Milestone 1a: The number of students recruited onto our full-time graduate traineeship programme per academic year.</i>					
<i>2016-17</i>	<i>2017-18</i>	<i>2018-19</i>	<i>2019-20</i>	<i>2020-2021</i>	<i>2021-2022</i>
<i>2</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>Milestone 1b: The number of students supported through our Coach Academy per academic year.</i>					
<i>2016-17</i>	<i>2017-18</i>	<i>2018-19</i>	<i>2019-20</i>	<i>2020-2021</i>	<i>2021-2022</i>
<i>6</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>16</i>

2. *We will encourage greater participation by female students in competitive sport*

Our female students have enjoyed some of our biggest achievements in sport over the last 5 years. Despite this, we still have less female students participating in competitive sports than males, which is not reflective of our student population at Anglia Ruskin. Whilst this isn't unusual across the sector, we want to redress this balance and take advantage of the opportunities that exist following the recent growth of women's sport nationally.

Specifically, we intend to:

- a) Increase the number of sports teams available for female students in Cambridge and Chelmsford.*
- b) Work with partners such as Essex County Cricket Club, Cambridge City Hockey Club and Cambridge United Football Club to develop women and girls sport in East Anglia.*
- c) Attract more talented female athletes via our Sports Scholarships Scheme.*
- d) Work with colleagues in CSES to support female coaches and officials through their Coach Development Network and the Coach Academy.*

<i>Milestone 2a: The number of female students who are sports club members per academic year.</i>					
<i>2016-17</i>	<i>2017-18</i>	<i>2018-19</i>	<i>2019-20</i>	<i>2020-2021</i>	<i>2021-2022</i>
<i>340</i>	<i>350</i>	<i>370</i>	<i>400</i>	<i>440</i>	<i>490</i>
<i>Milestone 2b: The proportion of total sports club members who are female, per academic year.</i>					
<i>2016-17</i>	<i>2017-18</i>	<i>2018-19</i>	<i>2019-20</i>	<i>2020-2021</i>	<i>2021-2022</i>
<i>38%</i>	<i>39%</i>	<i>40%</i>	<i>41%</i>	<i>42%</i>	<i>43%</i>
<i>Milestone 2c: The number of female Sports Scholars supported per academic year.</i>					
<i>2016-17</i>	<i>2017-18</i>	<i>2018-19</i>	<i>2019-20</i>	<i>2020-2021</i>	<i>2021-2022</i>
<i>13</i>	<i>18</i>	<i>21</i>	<i>24</i>	<i>27</i>	<i>30</i>

<i>Milestone 2d: The number of female students supported through the Coach Academy per academic year.</i>					
<i>2016-17</i>	<i>2017-18</i>	<i>2018-19</i>	<i>2019-20</i>	<i>2020-2021</i>	<i>2021-2022</i>
3	4	5	6	7	8

3. We will improve our high performance sport programme so that we are more competitive in our focus sports.

We have achieved some notable successes in recent years, including a student winning our first gold medal at the European University Games and our women’s basketball team reaching the Division One play-offs of the National League. These programmes take longer to establish themselves than social sports activities but despite this we feel it is important to accelerate our efforts in this part of our programme. We know that a strong high performance sport programme can lead to direct student recruitment and so improving this package for students should benefit the organisation greatly. We are also aware that the achievements of these students create a real ‘feel good’ factor on campus for staff and students alike.

To make us more competitive we will:

- a) Offer a number of Fees Scholarships for highly talented athletes that we can proactively promote to prospective students.
- b) Realign our existing resources to ensure that our High Performance Sports of Judo, Cricket, Basketball and Volleyball are getting the support they require to compete at the highest levels.
- c) Work more closely with colleagues in CSES to ensure that student athletes, their coaches and supporting staff access the facilities and services available at Compass House.
- d) Provide new talent camps in our focus sports, to encourage more school pupils and college students to select us as their first choice university.
- e) Develop further our links with the National Governing Bodies of our focus sports so that we become an integral part of their performance pathways.

<i>Milestone 3a: The number of new students awarded Fee Scholarships per year.</i>					
<i>2016-17</i>	<i>2017-18</i>	<i>2018-19</i>	<i>2019-20</i>	<i>2020-2021</i>	<i>2021-2022</i>
1	1	3	5	7	9

<i>Milestone 3b: The number of teams competing in BUCS Premier or BUCS Tier 1 divisions per academic year.</i>					
<i>2016-17</i>	<i>2017-18</i>	<i>2018-19</i>	<i>2019-20</i>	<i>2020-2021</i>	<i>2021-2022</i>
1	1	2	3	4	5

4. We will strive to further improve the access that staff and students have to sports facilities.

Over the past 5 years we have been very successful at forming partnerships to provide access to local sports facilities. Whilst working in partnership has many benefits, not owning more substantial sports facilities ourselves is our single biggest limiting factor – it means that our programme does not have long-term security, we have to pay substantial hire charges (currently c £180,000 per year) and we

may not be able to get prime slots. Our academic colleagues in CSES also struggle to find suitable sports hall slots for students on sports courses, as most of the local facilities in Cambridge are on schools sites and are therefore unavailable during the day. We also miss out on the added value that owning our own sports facilities would bring in terms of generating income for the University and creating a hub for student activity.

We are very conscious of the financial and other constraints that we are operating under. Nevertheless, in order to achieve the aims of this strategy we must strive to continue to improve our portfolio of sports facilities. This will involve:

- a) Delivering a high-quality sports facility on the Howes Close site.
- b) Working with colleagues in Estates and CSES to develop a specific Sports Facilities Strategy, ensuring that our students' needs for sports facilities are included in the master plans for each campus, and then working together to identify the means by which those needs can be met.
- c) Specifically, seeking to improve the facilities at Mildmay in Chelmsford, especially in the light of the medical school development.
- d) Continuously seeking creative and innovative partnerships that provide our staff and students with access to high-quality sports facilities, until we are in a position to develop our own.

Milestone 4:					
<i>We will deliver a high quality sports facility at Howes Close Sports Ground</i>					
2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-2021	2021-2022
			Facility open and used by students, staff and the community.		

5. We will support and encourage our sports club members to become role models and champions of positive behaviour across our University.

Our student sports club members can have a large influence over the culture we experience on campus. This group includes approximately 1,000 very engaged students, most of whom will feel a lot of pride for our University and who collectively represent all corners of the organisation. By working closely with this group and with the support of the Students' Union, we feel we could have a positive influence on the student body by encouraging good citizenship, tackling sexual harassment and raising awareness of mental health issues.

To achieve this we will:

- a) Work with colleagues in the Students' Union and Student Services to design and implement an annual programme of training and development for our sports club members on key topics related to good citizenship.
- b) Actively encourage more sports club members to participate in the Students' Union's campaigns and volunteering projects including National Student Volunteering Week and R.A.G. activities.
- c) Provide support and training to sports club committee members to ensure that their clubs are accessible to all and are providing a good duty of care to their members.
- d) Encourage all of our sports clubs to sign-up to the BUCS 'Take a Stand' Charter, to demonstrate their commitment to inclusivity.
- e) Further develop our Sports Awards night to recognise and celebrate student achievement.

<i>Milestone 5: We will provide new training and development for sports club members.</i>					
<i>2016-17</i>	<i>2017-18</i>	<i>2018-19</i>	<i>2019-20</i>	<i>2020-2021</i>	<i>2021-2022</i>
	<i>An annual programme of training opportunities provided to sports club committee members with topics that are relevant, topical and help to enhance our students' employability skills.</i>				

6. We will enhance our sports offer in Chelmsford

Historically we have had fewer students engaged in competitive sport in Chelmsford than Cambridge. There are many contributing factors for this including student demographics and the types of courses we offer, which often do not lend themselves to playing weekly competitive sports. In the last 5 years we have made good progress by encouraging staff and students to participate in social sports activities but participation in competitive sports clubs remains lower.

We will seek to address this difference by:

- a) Researching sports programmes in Medical Schools to establish which activities are popular, identifying best practice for engaging students on these academic programmes and then amending our own sports offer accordingly.*
- b) Increasing the number of competitive sports clubs available for students in Chelmsford, and identifying creative ways to sustain those clubs whilst students go on work placements.*
- c) Working with colleagues in Estates to improve the sports facilities available to students at Mildmay Sports Centre.*
- d) Developing partnerships with other sports organisations in Essex in order to expand our sports offer for students.*

<i>Milestone 6: The number of student sports club members in Chelmsford per academic year.</i>					
<i>2016-17</i>	<i>2017-18</i>	<i>2018-19</i>	<i>2019-20</i>	<i>2020-2021</i>	<i>2021-2022</i>
<i>147</i>	<i>160</i>	<i>180</i>	<i>210</i>	<i>250</i>	<i>300</i>

7. We will work with colleagues including our Students' Union to strengthen ties with our alumni through sport.

Our main focus for the last 5 years has been to build a programme of high-quality sports activities for our current students and staff. However, as our sports programme matures we are increasingly able to offer students broader experiences than simply taking part in physical activity – events like the Sports Awards and The Challenge Cup provide memories that students are likely to cherish for the rest of their lives. We are now creating a much stronger sense of pride and belonging amongst our students, and there is an opportunity to tap into their sense of attachment for 'The Rhinos' after they have graduated, to the benefit of our University. Students graduating now have spent their time in sports clubs organised through Active Anglia and therefore would expect us to play a role in organising Alumni events.

We will:

- a) Work with colleagues in the Students' Union and Corporate Marketing to devise an annual, social sports festival for Alumni and their families to participate in.*

- b) Working with the SU and student sports club members, re-evaluate the existing 'Old Boys' activities, to see if we can add value to them and utilise these traditional events to benefit our University more directly.
- c) Work with colleagues in the Lord Ashcroft International Business School, Corporate Marketing and Finance to explore ways in which we can encourage alumni and local businesses to sponsor our most talented athletes.

Milestone 7a: Develop an annual social sports event for alumni.					
2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-2021	2021-2022
		Event launched by end of 2018-19 and then repeated annually.			
Milestone 7b: Launch a scheme that encourages local businesses and alumni to sponsor our most talented student athletes.					
2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-2021	2021-2022
		Scheme launched by end of 2018-19.			

- 8. We will increase participation in sport and physical activity by staff.

Many staff have participated in our sports programme over the past 5 years. The existing opportunities for staff include becoming a member of our gyms, taking part in weekly activities such as health walks or exercise classes, and working towards bigger challenges such as the Cambridge Half Marathon. The feedback we have received indicates that staff are keen to take part in more activities that enable them to socialise with colleagues whilst keeping fit and healthy. We think that by expanding our offer for staff we can help to make Anglia Ruskin an even more attractive employer and also help to reduce the levels of stress experienced amongst our existing employees.

Specifically we will:

- a) Introduce new activities for staff to participate in, such as corporate activity days and wellbeing challenges.
- b) Expand our programme of exercise classes, especially in Cambridge where current provision is more limited.
- c) Facilitate more opportunities for staff to enter external events and activities as part of an 'Anglia Ruskin' team.
- d) Strengthen the links between the Health and Wellbeing Champions scheme led by colleagues in Human Resources and our sports programme to encourage a more holistic approach to staff wellbeing.
- e) Devise a scheme to support and celebrate individual staff members who embark on personal challenges (such as running the London Marathon or climbing Ben Nevis).

Milestone C The number of different, individual staff members that participate in at least one part of the sports programme per academic year.					
2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-2021	2021-2022
416	420	440	460	480	500

Scope and Ambition

We have devised this strategy based on a level of resourcing that we think is realistic, given the number of competing demands within the University for funding and in the context of an unstable external environment within the sector. Most of our priorities therefore require a reallocation of existing funds, be that within Sport or the wider University (for example, scholarship funding).

It is worth highlighting that any injection of more significant funding during the 5 year period would enable us to reassess our targets and be more ambitious in what we are hoping to achieve. This is especially the case if we are able to secure capital funding to increase the portfolio of sports facilities that we own. Many universities are now using their sports facilities to generate large amounts of income by providing access for the local community. Should this ever become a possibility at Anglia Ruskin, there is an opportunity to think more commercially about sport whilst also prioritising the delivery of a high quality service for students.

We have also based our targets on the assumption that student numbers will remain stable or increase during the next 5 year period. Should this not be the case we may need to reconsider some of our targets relating to student engagement to ensure that they remain realistic as well as ambitious. The same is true if there is a significant change to the way in which we offer our undergraduate courses in the future.

Martin Beaver
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