

# 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 other achievements, 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.

The employability skills consistently quoted as important by sports employers are: good communication skills; a professional attitude that delivers high standards of service and inspires confidence; being enthusiastic and knowledgeable about sport; and being an effective problem solver. 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.

Work experience, paid or unpaid, is essential. Wherever possible, be proactive: suggest solutions to problems; offer to take on more responsibility; take the initiative; and demonstrate flexibility when a situation changes. Participating 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. Try tactfully approaching people working in more specialist roles for unpaid work experience.

## Employment prospects

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 the AGCAS Special Interest booklet 'Your Degree... What Next?'

In 2006, six months after graduating, around 53% of all sports management/science graduates went directly into full-time paid work, and around 11% into part-time paid work. Only about 5% were believed to be unemployed compared with the national average for graduate unemployment of 6.2%. Of those employed, about 20% were in sports-related professional roles, and just over 13% were education professionals. 8% 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.

## Job options

Bear in mind that it's not just your degree discipline that determines your options. Get hold of the AGCAS Special Interest booklet 'Your Degree... What Next?' from your careers service. This looks more generally at the options for today's graduates and offers informed advice on career planning. Or try 'What jobs would suit me?', an online career planning tool, at [www.prospects.ac.uk/links/ppanner](http://www.prospects.ac.uk/links/ppanner).

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

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 often change jobs frequently for career progression.

## 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.
- [Lifestyle consultant](#) - usually self-employed in the private sector to devise fitness programmes and instruction to individuals. A similar role to a personal trainer.
- [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; PE teaching is available in schools and FE colleges.

## 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 as clients. Also has expert knowledge and a research base in the psychology of sport, and familiarity with the field of exercise science. (You would 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 would 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.

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

To find out more about the above options and other jobs, see AGCAS Occupational Profiles and other sources of occupational information available in careers services. Occupational Profiles are also available on [www.prospects.ac.uk/links/occupations](http://www.prospects.ac.uk/links/occupations).

## Where are the jobs?

Typical employers include: local authorities; private health and fitness clubs; national and regional sports agencies and governing bodies; sports clubs; outdoor pursuits centres; hotels and holiday companies; schools; further and higher education institutes; sports retailers; the NHS and primary health care providers; charities; armed services; police; and the media.

For useful background reading on current and future employment issues, take a look at the following sectors:

- [Education](#)
- [Health](#)
- [Sport and leisure](#)

Career management is an ongoing process, one that you'll no doubt develop all your working life. For further information on all the above employment areas, visit [www.prospects.ac.uk/links/sectorbs](http://www.prospects.ac.uk/links/sectorbs) or ask to see the AGCAS Sector Briefings at your careers service.

## Further study

In 2006, six months after graduating, 15% of graduates had gone on to further study, plus a further 9% who were continuing to study after entering employment. 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, eg the YMCA FIE personal training award.

Start researching further study early, and consider how it will progress your career plans and how you will fund it. Discussing ideas with your tutors can be helpful.

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 taking a look at the AGCAS Special Interest booklet 'Postgraduate Study and Research' or the 'Further study' section of [www.prospects.ac.uk](http://www.prospects.ac.uk). For a comprehensive list of courses, see 'Prospects Postgraduate Directory'.

Refer too to the 'Prospects Postgraduate Funding Guide', the AGCAS Special Interest booklet 'Postgraduate Study and Research' and AGCAS Vocational Course Surveys for further details relating to finance and the application process.

## Other options

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. Check out the AGCAS Special Interest booklets 'Beyond Nine to Five: Flexible Working', 'Self-employment' and 'Working Abroad', all available from your careers service.

Many careers in sport can be developed in these ways. Coaching experience is usually built through volunteering, and seasonal work abroad is available for qualified instructors. Personal trainers, lifestyle consultants, sports therapists and journalists are usually self-employed. After gaining relevant experience, graduates have established businesses and consultancies, including sports promotion and sports tourism.

## What next?

This should have started you thinking about your future. Whatever stage you are at, your careers service will be able to help you. A huge number of resources, including most of those mentioned here, plus a wide range of other services, including individual careers guidance, employer presentations and workshops on topics such as successful applications and interview techniques, are likely to be on offer.

A full list of useful resources plus case studies of graduates in this subject can also be found on [www.prospects.ac.uk/links/options](http://www.prospects.ac.uk/links/options).

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