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**Danny Morrison** | professor of practice and past president of the Carolina Panthers

**Susan O'Malley** | senior instructor and first female president of a professional sport franchise

**Natasha Brison** | associate professor and Sport Marketing Association Lough Award winner

**Stephen Shapiro** | professor and former editor of Sport Marketing Quarterly

**Bill Sutton** | executive in residence, industry consultant and former NBA executive

**Khalid Ballouli** | associate professor and past president of the Sport Marketing Association

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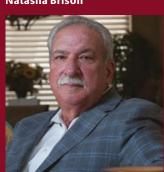
### LEARN FROM LEADERS



**Danny Morrison** 



Natasha Brison



**Bill Sutton** 



Susan O'Mallev



Stephen Shapiro



**Khalid Ballouli** 

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### **SECTION**



Advantage America:
Why US-based courses
consistently come out on top

Decisions, decisions...
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when choosing your course

# Welcome... to the 2024 SportBusiness Postgraduate course Rankings

The end of summer heralds new beginnings across sport and academia. As the NFL and European football leagues spark into life, the fresh academic year brings new opportunities for students around the world. As ever, the SportBusiness Postgraduate Rankings are the only guide you need to the best sports business courses on offer in 2024-25.

Alongside this, a brief overview of each of these courses is included. There is movement across both the global and European top three and it does not stop there – with online courses making big gains in the overall results. Away from covering some of the top ranked courses, we have several feature articles covering the sports management education space with an article built around advice for prospective students debating which programme(s) to apply for and another which takes a look at the question of why these rankings have traditionally been dominated by US-based courses across the now thirteen editions. We also hear about some of the emerging trends in academic research, options for funding postgraduate studies, and options for applying to a course.

As ever, the data tables that provide the framework for the rankings are also included below for readers perusal, allowing the opportunity for

forensic data analysis of the specific measures that are most important to any individual who may be considering whether to take the path offered by one of the many courses which take part in the rankings.

#### METHODOLOGY OVERVIEW::

Our rankings are based on two surveys, completed by course leaders and alumni who graduated three years prior to publication – meaning the 2023 edition is based on responses from the classes of 2020. Each course is ultimately given a score out of 100 based on a weighted average of results from both the graduate and course leader.

### **Global Postgraduate Rankings 1-30**

2024 Rank	University	Program	Region	Class size 2020/21	2021 Gradu- ates	Class size 2023/24	Re- sponse rate	Course duration	Average age	Accept- ance rate	Female students	Female staff	Intl students
1	UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS AMHERST	Mark H. McCormack Department of Sport Management MBA/MS Sport Management and MS Sport Management	North America	23	23	22	65%	12	26	26%	55%	47%	27%
2	UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT CHAPEL HILL	Masters in Sport Administration	North America	10	10	11	100%	22	23	9%	55%	33%	27%
3	OHIO UNIVERSITY	Dual MBA/MSA Program	North America	33	33	37	91%	22	23	44%	49%	27%	14%
4	UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA	Vinik Sport and Entertainment Management Program	North America	25	25	30	60%	18	24	30%	50%	40%	17%
5	CIES (INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR SPORT STUDIES)	International Master (MA) in Management, Law and Humanities of Sport - FIFA Master	Europe	25	25	26	68%	10	30	17%	42%	28%	100%
6	UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA	Master of Science in Sport and Entertainment Management	North America	25	25	43	60%	15	25	46%	37%	21%	16%
7	UNIVERSITY OF MODENA E REGGIO EMILIA & UNIVERSITY OF SAN MARINO	MasterSport - Master in Management dello Sport System	Europe	20	20	20	60%	12	26	42%	85%	25%	5%
8	VIRGINIA COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY	VCU Center for Sport Leadership	North America	36	36	37	61%	12	24	35%	30%	40%	16%
9	UNIVERSITY OF NEW HAVEN	Master of Science in Sport Management	North America	23	20	16	25%	12	23	12%	31%	33%	31%
10	UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS (ONLINE)	Online MBA Sport Entertainment Management	North America	12	10	44	80%	12	30	85%	59%	30%	0%
11	GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY	Masters in Sport Management	North America	30	25	30	52%	21	25	29%	40%	67%	37%
12	UNIVERSITY OF SAN FRANCISCO	Master of Science in Sport Management	North America	106	99	104	25%	23	25	21%	32%	40%	15%
13	JOHAN CRUYFF INSTITUTE (ONLINE)	Master in Sport Management - Online	Europe	28	26	29	50%	13	30	78%	34%	30%	79%
14	UNIVERSITY COLLEGE DUBLIN	MSc in Sport Management	Europe	27	24	22	29%	12	29	30%	18%	50%	32%
15	OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY	MS in Kinesiology (Sport Management)	North America	35	35	39	43%	12	23	31%	64%	67%	13%
16	OHIO UNIVERSITY PMSA (HYBRID)	Professional Master of Sports Administration	North America	24	21	22	33%	21	29	69%	41%	43%	0%
17	DEAKIN UNIVERSITY	Master of Business (Sport Management)	APAC	72	75	62	21%	24	26	69%	23%	30%	73%
18	ESBS EUROPEAN SPORT BUSINESS SCHOOL CHOOL	Master in International Sports Management	Europe	98	95	117	19%	9	27	24%	21%	20%	77%
19	FLORIDA ATLANTIC UNIVERSITY	MBA in Sport Management	North America	28	26	81	42%	23	24	24%	22%	43%	11%
20	UNIVERSITY OF LIVERPOOL (FOOTBALL MBA)	MBA Football Industries	Europe	18	13	14	38%	12	32	16%	14%	27%	64%
21	BOSTON COLLEGE	Masters in Sports Administration	North America	51	51	166	27%	18	23	52%	46%	41%	13%
22	GEORGIA STATE UNIVERSITY	Master of Science in Sport Business	North America	42	40	31	58%	24	24	28%	58%	100%	19%
23	UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS	MBA Sport Entertainment Management	North America	29	27	17	63%	17	25	38%	41%	50%	6%
24	TEMPLE UNIVERSITY	Master of Science in Sport Business	North America	41	39	46	46%	21	25	43%	28%	48%	30%
25	UNIVERSITY OF VIGO	Master in Business Administration of Sport	Europe	20	20	25	85%	9	25	71%	65%	40%	40%
26	WEST VIRGINIA UNIVERSITY	MSc. in Sport Management	North America	104	100	85	30%	18	25	65%	34%	29%	11%
27	LOUGHBOROUGH UNIVERSITY	MSc Sport Management	Europe	91	91	120	44%	12	23	17%	20%	21%	87%
28	UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE	Sport Management	North America	35	31	31	58%	20	23	39%	42%	27%	3%
29	ST. JOHN'S UNIVERSITY	Master of Professional Studies in Sport Management	North America	35	31	35	23%	20	25	47%	20%	13%	43%
30	UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA	DeVos MBA/MS Sport Business Management	North America	22	22	20	55%	18	24	34%	45%	20%	30%

Intl staff	Work Place- ment	Mentor- ship	Salary	Employ- ment at 12 months	Current employ- ment	Qual- ity of faculty	Quality of curric- ulum	Job support	Extracur- ricular initia- tives	Alumni network	Industry network	Return on Invest- ment (ROI)	Diver- sity, Equity and Inclusion	Profes- sional mentor- ship	Career ad- vance- ment	Skills applica- bility	Skills frequen- cy	Peer review	Total
5%	Yes	1	82.670	96,00	92,00	98,67	96,00	96,00	96,00	98,67	98,67	94,67	97,33	96,00	86,67	90,67	81,11	100,00	91,45
11%	Yes	1	93.147	90,00	98,00	100,00	98,00	90,00	92,00	96,00	98,00	96,00	92,00	98,00	86,00	86,00	88,33	50,00	89,97
18%	Yes	1	87.207	95,33	98,67	91,33	89,33	86,67	94,67	98,00	98,67	90,00	90,67	92,00	86,67	87,33	86,67	90,00	88,46
20%	Yes	1	84.286	89,33	86,67	93,33	93,33	85,33	88,00	94,67	96,00	84,00	96,00	93,33	84,00	92,00	82,22	70,00	86,17
43%	Yes	1	125.610	95,29	89,41	88,24	81,18	71,76	71,76	94,12	87,06	87,06	83,53	82,35	91,76	89,41	70,59	80,00	86,12
25%	Yes	1	81.565	93,33	93,33	97,33	96,00	94,67	86,67	86,67	94,67	89,33	85,33	98,67	84,00	92,00	85,71	50,00	84,78
25%	Yes	1	56.314	96,67	100,00	98,33	100,00	100,00	96,67	98,33	100,00	95,00	98,33	100,00	98,33	98,33	100,00	20,00	84,37
20%	Yes	1	63.864	96,36	92,73	94,55	95,45	96,36	93,64	99,09	96,36	90,91	92,73	98,18	90,00	94,55	85,61	20,00	84,20
67%	Yes	1	77.400	100,00	100,00	92,00	84,00	92,00	88,00	88,00	92,00	84,00	80,00	96,00	88,00	88,00	83,33	0,00	83,58
50%	Yes	1	136.875	90,00	85,00	97,50	97,50	97,50	92,50	97,50	97,50	92,50	95,00	95,00	87,50	92,50	83,33	0,00	83,38
33%	Yes	1	117.444	83,08	86,15	90,77	86,15	87,69	84,62	89,23	93,85	90,77	84,62	89,23	93,85	87,69	80,77	10,00	83,19
15%	Yes	1	89.440	95,20	93,60	93,60	92,80	91,20	81,60	96,00	92,80	86,40	85,83	94,40	84,00	87,20	76,00	10,00	83,10
30%	Yes	1	114.279	96,92	93,85	92,31	92,31	83,08	86,67	86,15	83,08	84,62	87,69	92,31	84,62	84,62	78,21	0,00	81,76
30%	Yes	1	62.490	100,00	100,00	91,43	88,57	80,00	80,00	85,71	88,57	88,57	82,86	94,29	88,57	88,57	83,33	20,00	81,56
0%	Yes	1	66.923	94,67	86,67	94,67	93,33	85,33	86,67	89,33	94,67	85,33	85,33	94,67	85,33	85,33	78,89	60,00	81,52
14%	No	0	122.857	94,29	94,29	94,29	94,29	88,57	94,29	85,71	88,57	88,57	82,86	88,57	82,86	91,43	76,19	0,00	79,74
50%	Yes	1	57.434	97,50	97,50	87,50	90,00	76,25	81,25	80,00	78,75	78,75	76,25	82,50	87,50	88,75	83,33	70,00	79,53
15%	Yes	1	80.721	91,11	92,22	82,22	83,33	74,44	78,89	84,44	90,00	84,44	82,22	85,56	85,56	82,22	69,44	20,00	78,98
18%	Yes	1	85.364	100,00	100,00	89,09	85,45	80,00	80,00	76,36	81,82	74,55	80,00	85,45	74,55	83,64	75,76	0,00	78,90
67%	Yes	1	110.282	96,00	100,00	84,00	84,00	80,00	64,00	76,00	76,00	76,00	72,00	76,00	80,00	84,00	50,00	30,00	78,63
5%	Yes	1	69.286	87,14	97,14	92,86	90,00	94,29	81,43	88,57	82,86	81,43	85,71	92,86	82,86	87,14	75,00	0,00	78,59
0%	Yes	1	73.481	90,43	91,30	87,83	87,83	83,48	83,64	83,48	89,57	81,74	82,61	84,35	87,83	82,61	75,76	0,00	78,27
50%	Yes	1	77.500	91,76	87,06	95,29	89,41	85,88	75,29	80,00	90,59	72,94	83,53	91,76	75,29	80,00	77,45	0,00	77,76
17%	Yes	1	79.561	88,89	91,11	86,67	80,00	76,67	77,78	80,00	85,56	70,00	82,22	81,11	66,67	74,44	66,67	70,00	77,69
1%	Yes	1	68.006	78,82	88,24	88,24	91,76	88,24	76,47	85,88	81,18	88,24	84,71	89,41	85,88	88,24	75,49	20,00	77,45
14%	Yes	1	75.870	86,67	86,00	94,00	93,33	87,33	87,59	82,00	84,14	85,33	86,90	91,33	83,33	80,00	71,67	0,00	76,25
62%	Yes	1	52.818	82,11	87,00	86,50	83,00	74,50	83,50	81,50	75,90	73,00	84,00	84,50	78,00	74,50	59,83	70,00	75,91
18%	Yes	1	65.343	92,22	94,44	88,89	85,56	82,22	87,78	82,22	81,11	80,00	75,56	91,11	78,89	80,00	64,71	0,00	75,66
13%	Yes	1	86.000	80,00	85,71	88,57	85,71	80,00	74,29	68,57	82,86	68,57	80,00	91,43	82,86	85,71	80,95	10,00	75,57
0%	Yes	1	78.667	83,33	78,33	81,82	76,36	83,64	94,55	94,55	94,55	83,64	94,55	89,09	70,91	81,82	71,21	20,00	75,42

### **Global Postgraduate Rankings 31-47**

2024 Rank	University	Program	Region	Class size 2020/21	2021 Gradu- ates	Class size 2023/24	Re- sponse rate	Course duration	Average age	Accept- ance rate	Female students	Female staff	Intl stu- dents
31	UNIVERSITY OF LIVERPOOL (MSC SPORTS MANAGEMENT AND BUSINESS)	MSc Sport Business and Management	Europe	70	59	99	41%	12	24	15%	26%	33%	83%
32	UNIVERSITY OF OTTAWA	Masters of Human Kinetics (Sport Management)	North America	15	15	23	33%	12	24	30%	57%	50%	9%
33	COVENTRY UNIVERSITY	MSc Sport Management	Europe	29	29	24	21%	12	25	5%	17%	50%	96%
34	BALL STATE	Master of Arts (MA)/Master of Science (MS) in Sport Administration	North America	15	14	14	64%	22	23	37%	57%	0%	7%
35	GLOBAL INSTITUTE OF SPORT (ONLINE)	MSc International Sport Management	Europe	35	31	35	26%	14	30	37%	20%	50%	29%
36	UNIVERSITY OF BAYREUTH	MBA Sportmanagement	Europe	28	16	26	44%	24	28	30%	31%	19%	15%
37	UNIVERSITY OF WINDSOR	Master of Sport Management & Leadership	North America	11	7	11	86%	16	24	24%	36%	43%	0%
38	SOUTHERN METHODIST UNIVERSITY	Master of Science in Sport Management	North America	33	32	36	16%	12	24	34%	31%	20%	6%
39	CA' FOSCARI UNIVERSITY OF VENICE	Master SBS - Sport Business Strategies	Europe	34	34	30	35%	12	24	67%	27%	74%	0%
40	UNISPORT MANAGEMENT SCHOOL (ONLINE)	MBA Sports Management	Europe	45	45	60	13%	12	30	n/a	29%	25%	30%
41	SHEFFIELD HALLAM UNIVERSITY	MSc Sport Business Management	Europe	46	46	27	35%	12	22	10%	33%	38%	63%
42	NEW YORK UNIVERSITY	MS in Sports Business	North America	51	40	83	28%	12	25	42%	28%	26%	49%
43	JOHAN CRUYFF INSTITUTE	Master in Sport Management	Europe	24	24	27	58%	10	26	47%	29%	16%	74%
44	NEW YORK UNIVERSITY (ONLINE)	MS in Global Sport	North America	9	9	18	56%	12	29	60%	44%	36%	28%
45	UNIVERSITY OF CINCINNATI (ONLINE)	Master of Science in Sport Administration - Online	North America	57	48	114	58%	12	28	63%	32%	25%	4%
46	TREVISAN - ESCOLA DE NEGOIOS	MBA in Sport Management and Marketing	South America	21	14	35	64%	22	27	42%	22%	17%	11%
47	VRIJE UNIVERSITEIT BRUSSEL	Postgraduate Course in Sports Management	Europe	60	58	60	22%	8	23	86%	17%	67%	3%

Intl staff	Work Place- ment	Mentor- ship	Salary	Employ- ment at 12 months	Current employ- ment	Qual- ity of faculty	Quality of curric- ulum	Job support	Extracur- ricular initia- tives	Alumni network	Industry network	Return on Invest- ment (ROI)	Diver- sity, Equity and Inclusion	Profes- sional mentor- ship	Career ad- vance- ment	Skills applica- bility	Skills frequen- cy	Peer review	Total
25%	Yes	1	51.822	86,96	89,57	88,70	86,96	75,65	71,30	76,52	75,65	79,13	81,74	87,83	83,48	86,09	76,09	20,00	75,11
25%	Yes	1	57.377	100,00	100,00	92,00	88,00	80,00	76,00	64,00	72,00	84,00	72,00	80,00	88,00	88,00	63,33	0,00	75,08
30%	Yes	1	61.480	80,00	90,00	93,33	90,00	66,67	70,00	73,33	63,33	66,67	90,00	86,67	76,67	80,00	61,11	20,00	73,88
25%	Yes	1	49.375	97,78	91,11	91,11	88,89	82,22	77,78	73,33	73,33	86,67	82,22	84,44	88,89	86,67	79,63	0,00	73,84
17%	Yes	1	51.149	100,00	95,00	87,50	80,00	75,00	70,00	77,50	80,00	72,50	70,00	87,50	75,00	77,50	58,33	0,00	72,98
9%	Yes	0	102.857	88,57	80,00	88,57	80,00	71,43	77,14	85,71	80,00	68,57	82,86	85,71	74,29	74,29	59,52	0,00	72,84
0%	Yes	1	63.183	73,33	73,33	96,67	96,67	70,00	83,33	66,67	73,33	76,67	86,67	96,67	80,00	93,33	75,00	10,00	71,65
0%	Yes	1	81.250	88,00	100,00	92,00	84,00	68,00	52,00	60,00	80,00	60,00	68,00	76,00	88,00	84,00	68,00	0,00	71,38
13%	Yes	1	42.420	78,33	96,67	88,33	90,00	85,00	81,67	81,67	83,33	78,33	80,00	83,33	88,33	80,00	81,94	0,00	70,81
25%	Yes	1	50.333	100,00	100,00	76,67	80,00	73,33	70,00	70,00	73,33	80,00	76,67	70,00	76,67	73,33	72,22	0,00	70,67
13%	Yes	1	55.329	83,75	85,00	81,25	76,25	67,50	76,25	65,00	67,50	72,50	83,75	83,75	83,75	77,50	65,63	0,00	70,41
3%	Yes	1	95.798	69,09	70,91	81,82	83,64	60,00	70,91	76,36	65,45	60,00	72,73	80,00	67,27	76,36	68,33	40,00	70,01
19%	Yes	1	97.809	78,57	81,43	74,29	68,57	54,29	64,29	74,29	65,71	64,29	68,57	74,29	65,71	68,57	53,57	40,00	68,48
18%	Yes	1	88.750	68,00	76,00	84,00	84,00	52,00	50,00	76,00	76,00	56,00	84,00	80,00	68,00	84,00	54,17	0,00	67,39
0%	Yes	1	66.184	75,00	81,43	93,57	88,57	72,14	71,54	71,85	67,41	70,71	80,77	88,57	70,00	69,29	60,71	0,00	66,78
17%	No	1	68.376	95,56	91,11	77,78	75,56	64,44	64,44	68,89	72,50	71,11	66,67	82,22	64,44	66,67	55,56	0,00	66,73
33%	Yes	1	66.310	83,08	80,00	70,77	70,77	61,54	63,08	64,62	58,46	58,46	66,15	67,69	55,38	60,00	50,00	20,00	60,78

# CIES OFFERS TOP-LEVEL ACADEMIC PROGRAMMES ALL OVER THE WORLD





### FIFA Master International Master (MA) in Management, Law & Humanities of Sport



3 Universities



3 Countries



1000 Contact Hours



Full-Time Programme



650+ Alumni



90% of graduates working in the sports industry



### FIFA/CIES International Programme in Sports Management



19 Universities



19 Countries



150 - 200 Contact Hours



Part-Time Programme



6000+ Alumni



70% of graduates involved in football



### Master in Sports Law



1 University



1 Country



500 Contact Hours



Full-Time Programme



250+ Alumni



One of a kind in Switzerland

#### REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME COORDINATOR AT FIFA

FIFA MASTER ALUMNA



atou Binetou Ba, a Senegalese national, currently works as a Regional Development Programme Coordinator at FIFA and is a FIFA Master Alumnus from the 2021 edition of the course. Her journey in sports began after an eight-year tenure at the Presidency of Senegal, where she worked in the Child Protection and Promotion Department. Despite her passion for this work, Fatou longed to incorporate her love for sport into her career. This desire led her to pursue the FIFA Master in 2020/21, something which became the turning point she needed.

Upon graduating from the FIFA Master in July 2021, Fatou took on a consultancy role with FIFA, working on a social programme related to women's football in The Gambia. Simultaneously, she was recruited as Deputy General Director at the Senegalese Youth Football Academy, Génération Foot in Dakar, which is an institution known for producing talent such as Sadio Mané and Pape Matar Sarr. Her work there involved developing the academy's administration to meet international standards. Her expertise also brought her to the attention of the Confédération Africaine de Football (CAF), where she worked as a consultant in event management and protocol

operations. These experiences paved the way for her current role at FIFA as Regional Development Programme Coordinator (RDPC) for Africa. She is currently based at FIFA's Paris office.

### What does your current Regional Development

Programme Coordinator role at FIFA involve?
Fatou Binetou Ba: My role as an RDPC involves supervising football projects funded by FIFA under the Forward Programme, which is dedicated to developing football across Africa. This means assisting Member Associations in every possible way—such as offering guidance, liaising with relevant stakeholders and supporting them to achieve their goals. It's a dynamic role that requires a lot of adaptability, but it's incredibly rewarding.

#### What do you love most about your job?

FA: I was initially concerned that my lack of technical football knowledge might be a hindrance but I have found that my other skills are just as valuable. The environment is so rich, with diverse profiles. The key to fitting in is confidence and trusting yourself, along with inspiring others to do the same. I love the continuous learning process and the opportunity to make a real impact on sport in the African continent.

### Why did you choose to do the FIFA Master?

FA: I met a FIFA Master alumna who spoke highly of the programme and the opportunities it provided to graduates. Despite my doubts, I decided to take the leap because of my love for sport. It was certainly the right decision. I have always been passionate about sport, and the programme allowed me to turn that passion into a career.

#### How important was the FIFA Master for your career?

FA: The FIFA Master opened up multiple opportunities for me. It is hard to say if any other programme would have led me down the same path, but I know that it was crucial in shaping my career in ways I couldn't have imagined

Are you still in touch with classmates or other alumni? How important is that network for you? FA: Yes, I have stayed in touch with several of my classmates. We do our best to be there for each other and I know that the network is always there to support me whenever I need it.

#### What are your fondest memories of the FIFA Master?

FA: The graduation ceremony was incredibly emotional for me. It symbolized all the sacrifices I had made to earn the diploma. I was delivering the graduation speech in Neuchâtel without knowing that my father had passed away that morning and was being buried in Senegal. It was one of the happiest and saddest days of my life.

#### How is the role of women in sport administration evolving?

FA: The landscape is changing, but there is still resistance in some areas, depending on the sport and the country. Personally. I have been fortunate to work with men who recognized my abilities and trusted me. Women bring a unique perspective to sports administration, particularly in governance, with an attention to detail and organization. We should encourage more women to take on leadership roles in this field.

#### Do you have any advice for current or future FIFA Master students?

FA: Be yourself, be willing to share and focus on building relationships with your classmates. Don't get too caught up in grades or impressing guest speakers. The experience is about more than just academics —it is also about the connections you make and the personal growth you will undergo. After the programme, be patient and persistent in seeking the right opportunities. Good luck!



### FIFA Master ranked Europe's No.1 course for a record 12th time by SportBusiness





### **University of Massachusetts Amherst**

AMHERST

ATTENDANCE 30.000+ STUDENTS



he University of Massachusetts Amherst's MBA/MS Sport Management and MS Sport Management claims first place overall in the SportBusiness Postgraduate Rankings for the third consecutive year. The university is the second oldest sports management program in the world (est. 1971) and is housed in the Isenberg School of Management.

The programme, which forms part of the Mark H. McCormack Department of Sport Management at UMass, has a typical cohort size of 22 to 30, with applicant rates normally reaching 125. The number of full-time staff working on the course is 13, all under the leadership of graduate programme director Will Norton, who assumed the role ahead of the 2021-22 academic year. The total faculty number will increase to 15 when two new-year full time staff are added ahead of the 2024-25 academic year.

#### **RANKINGS AT A GLANCE:**

- → First place for third successive year
- → Ranked first in the peer review
- → Ranked second for overall student satisfaction (graduates choice)
- → Highest individual student satisfaction scores were for

the quality of the faculty and the ability to both connect with alumni and network with industry executives.

UNIVERSITY	PROGRAM	PEER REVIEW
University of Massachusetts Amherst	Mark H. McCormack Department of Sport Management MBA/MS Sport Management and MS Sport Management	100.00
Ohio University	Dual MBA/MSA Program	90.00
CIES (International Centre for Sport Studies)	International Master (MA) in Management, Law and Humanities of Sport - FIFA Master	80.00
University of South Florida	Vinik Sport and Entertainment Management Program	70.00
Loughborough University	MSc Sport Management	70.00





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NAME

### University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

CHAPEL HILL

ATTENDANCE 34.000+ STUDENTS



The University of North Carolina's Masters in Sport Administration has moved up one position to number two both in the US and Globally for 2024.

This follows a rise of five and six places respectively in 2023's rankings.

The two-year course, based out of the university's Chapel Hill campus, sees students assigned a full-time internship within the UNC Athletic Department during their second year.

Each year the course cohort is comprised of nine fully funded students. The decision to limit this number to nine is a conscious one by the faculty, viewing this as the ideal group size to facilitate an effective experience for its students.

The course expanded in 2023, with the launch of its dual MA/MBA degree, combining its Masters in Sports Administration with the university's Masters of Business Administration degree.

The programme director is Erianne Weight, who assumed the position in 2022 after many years where the course was under Barbara Osborne's leadership.

Having been formed in 1982, the UNC celebrated the 40th anniversary of the programme in 2022 and continues to go from strength to strength in the rankings.

### **RANKINGS AT A GLANCE:**

- → The second lowest acceptance rates at 9% of applicants
- → Ranked fourth for overall

student satisfaction (graduates choice)

- → Highest response rate from alumni
- → Maximum student satisfaction score for quality of faculty, other very high scores for quality of curriculum, ability to network with industry executives and the professional and academic mentorship provided.

UNIVERSITY	PROGRAM	GRADUATES CHOICE
University of Modena e Reggio Emilia & University of San Marino	MasterSport - Master in Management dello Sport System	98.52
University of Massachusetts Amherst	Mark H. McCormack Department of Sport Management MBA/MS Sport Management and MS Sport Management	96.89
University of North Texas (online)	Online MBA Sport Entertainment Management	95.83
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill	Masters in Sport Administration	95.56
Virginia Common- wealth University	VCU Center for Sport Leadership	95.25







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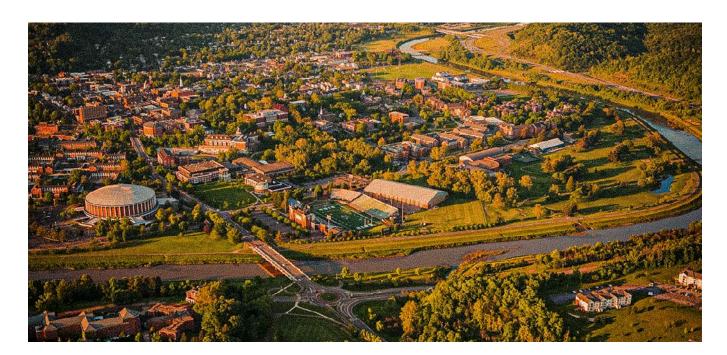
CATEGORY

GLOBAL RANKING

### Ohio University

ATHENS

ATTENDANCE 25.000+ STUDENTS



he University of Ohio's Master of Sports Administration degree takes third place in both North America and globally in the Postgraduate Rankings, following two second placed finishes in 2022 and 2023.

This marks the first time the programme has not finished in the the top two in any of the SportBusiness Postgraduate Course Rankings, having held the enviable record of having placed in the global top two across all editions of the rankings.

The course, which is offered as an MBA/MSA dual award, is based out of Ohio University's College of Business in Athens, Ohio and has been run since 1966. It's typical maximum cohort is 35, supported by 11 full-time staff working on the programme.

Heading up this group is the recently appointed department chair, Dr. Lamar Reams, Ph.D. Dr. Reams is

responsible for all sports degree programmes in the college of business.

### **RANKINGS AT A GLANCE:**

- → Second in the peer review
- → Second highest response rate from alumni
- → Highest individual student satisfaction scores were for

the ability to both connect with alumni and network with industry executives.

UNIVERSITY	PROGRAM	PEER REVIEW
University of Massachusetts Amherst	Mark H. McCormack Department of Sport Management MBA/MS Sport Management and MS Sport Management	100.00
Ohio University	Dual MBA/MSA Program	90.00
CIES (International Centre for Sport Studies)	International Master (MA) in Management, Law and Humanities of Sport - FIFA Master	80.00
University of South Florida	Vinik Sport and Entertainment Management Program	70.00
Loughborough University	MSc Sport Management	70.00





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**Terrance Thomas**, Dual MBA/MSA 2017 Detroit Lions Foundation Program Officer





The online MSA professors add a lot of value to this program. Their course content and willingness to help made a big difference in my OHIO experience.

**Tyler McBride**, MSA 2024 Associate Commissioner, Atlantic Coast Conference





Being an OHIO graduate has given me instant credibility as a leader in the sports administration industry.

**Lindsay LaBennett**, MSA 2018 Vice President, Impact and Inclusion, Wasserman SWITZERLAND

CATEGORY
EUROPEAN RANKING

### CIES (International Centre for Sport Studies)

NEUCHÂTEL

ATTENDANCE 650+ STUDENTS



or the 12th year running, across 13 editions of SportBusiness Postgraduate Rankings, the FIFA Master course has been ranked number one in Europe.

This well-respected course is operated by the International Centre for Sport Studies(CIES) in partnership with three universities, De Montfort University in Leicester (UK), SDA Bocconi School of Management in Milan (Italy) and the University of Neuchâtel (Switzerland).

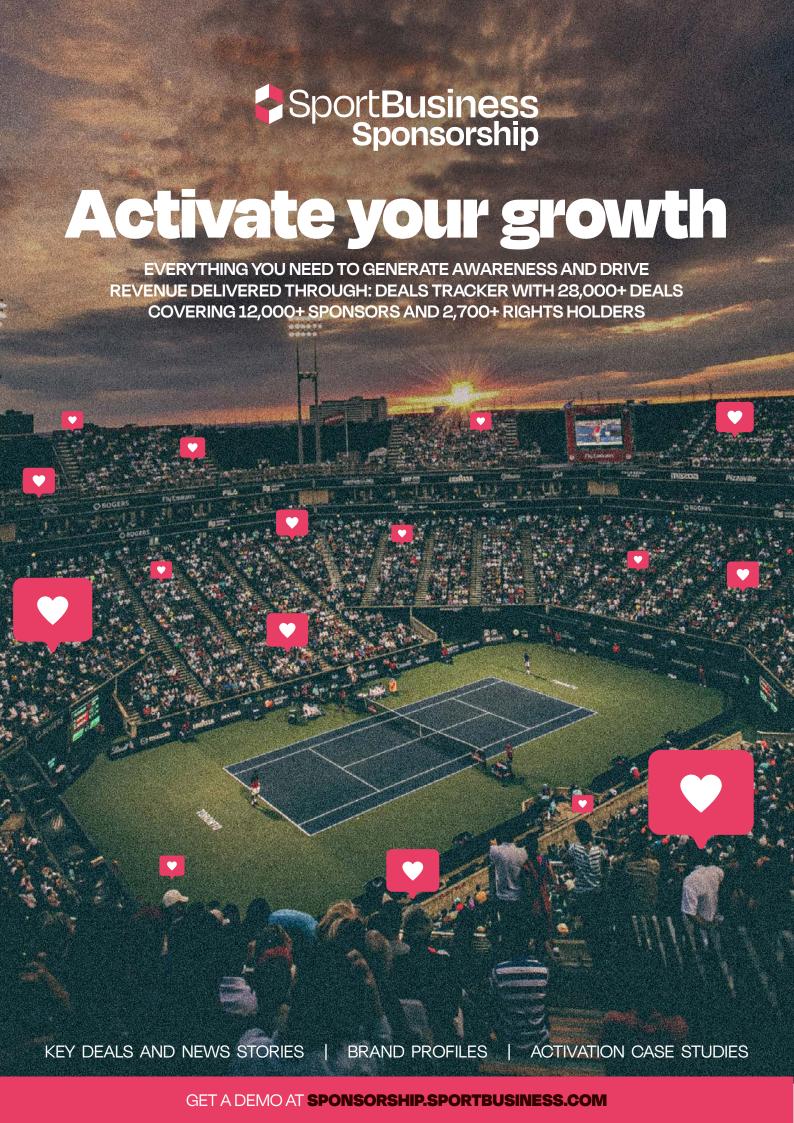
Established in 2000, the FIFA Master will soon reach its 25th anniversary, and CIES will celebrate 30 years. In 2023 the FIFA Master Alumni Association (FMA) marked their 20th anniversary hosting several regional gatherings across the globe.

### **RANKINGS AT A GLANCE:**

→ Ranked third overall in the peer review

- → The top placed European course for the 12th time in 13 years
- → Highest individual student satisfaction scores were for the ability to connect with alumni
- → Ranked third program overall for the importance of the degree in career advancement
- → Close to 90% of the 650+ alumni from over 120 countries work directly in the international sports industry

UNIVERSITY	PROGRAM	AVERAGE SALARY (INT\$)
University of North Texas (online)	Online MBA Sport Entertainment Management	136.875
CIES (International Centre for Sport Studies)	International Master (MA) in Management, Law and Humanities of Sport - FIFA Master	125.610
Ohio University PMSA (hybrid)	Professional Master of Sports Administration	122.857
George Washington University	Masters in Sport Management	117.444
Johan Cruyff Institute (online)	Master in Sport Management - Online	114.279





# How the FIFA Master gave future JFA chief new perspectives



Tsuneyasu Miyamoto, who was appointed Japan Football Association (JFA) president in March 2024, completed his FIFA Master course in 2013 after wrapping up a glittering playing career that saw him captain his country at two FIFA World Cups.

The FIFA Master is organised by the International Centre for Sports Studies (CIES) in partnership with three universities – De Montfort University in Leicester, UK; SDA Bocconi School of Management in Milan, Italy; and the University of Neuchâtel, Switzerland. Here, Miyamoto explains how the programme has contributed to his flourishing career in sports governance.

### Looking back, why did you join the FIFA Master programme?

**Tsuneyasu Miyamoto:** After 17 years as a professional footballer,

I wanted to acquire new football-related knowledge of things away from the pitch. Thanks to the FIFA Master, I can now see football from a managerial, legal and historical perspective, rather than just a playing perspective. Spending a year with 30 students from 24 different countries and living in three different European cities during my studies was a totally unique experience for me.

### What were your favourite experiences during the programme?

TM: "I particularly enjoyed the Milan module because sports marketing was totally new to me at that time. As with all of the FIFA Master modules, we had great speakers who had considerable experience. "We also had the opportunity while in Italy to be given presentations by top football clubs such as Juventus,

After 17 years as a professional footballer, I wanted to acquire new football-related knowledge of things away from the pitch

Inter Milan and AC Milan, along with Ferrari. These were very helpful and gave me ideas for the future. "Also, one of my favourite memories was winning an important football match against another university during the Leicester module. The game went to penalties, with me taking the final one. Luckily, I scored and the celebrations and enjoyment with my classmates afterwards is something I will never forget!"

### How did you handle the transition from footballer to FIFA Master student?

TM: "To tell you the truth, it was really tough for me to get used to the daily schedule of the FIFA Master, because I needed to attend class from 9am to 5pm, which was something completely different from my professional career as a footballer.

"However, by continuing to study and learn new things, I was able to plan my future post-playing career, and I was soon able to imagine what new possibilities could be available to me after graduation.

"After completing my FIFA Master degree, I obtained a licence to become a professional coach. This was something I planned from the beginning. I had expected eventually to move into management after working as a professional coach for several years, so being in my current position was one of the realistic targets."

### What does your current role as JFA president involve?

TM: "In addition to communicating with FIFA and the Asian Football Confederation, I also need to communicate with key individuals at the Football Associations in all 47 prefectures across the country. My schedule is filled with meetings within the JFA, building relationships with sponsors, and participating in the activities of the national team."

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

TM: "Thanks to the FIFA Master course, I learnt that when making important decisions, we should always take into account historical, managerial and legal elements. I now always try to keep in mind the importance of having multiple perspectives during the decision-making process.

"The knowledge which I gained

"The knowledge which I gained from the course continues to help me today and the FIFA Master alumni community has made my job a lot easier recently. Whenever the JFA needs to work with other member associations, things go more smoothly if the association's counterpart is a FIFA Master graduate, and I have had many

instances where the FIFA Master alumni network has helped me."

### What advice would you give to future students on the course?

TM: "I hope that future FIFA Master students will join the course with an open mind, ready to improve themselves and to learn from each other. 'Commitment', 'cooperation' and 'inspiration' are the three words I would use to describe the FIFA Master and what you will need for success during your studies."

I now always try to keep in mind the importance of having multiple perspectives during the decisionmaking process





### **University of Modena e Reggio Emilia & University of San Marino**

MODENA

20.000+ STUDENTS



he sports management programme jointly offered by the University of Modena e Reggio Emilia and the University of San Marino has been ranked as the secondbest course in Europe and seventh overall in the world.

This programme has garnered widespread acclaim, particularly for its outstanding student satisfaction.

It was ranked first by graduates in overall student satisfaction, achieving the highest marks in four key areas: the quality of the curriculum, the level of guidance and preparation for securing employment in the sports industry, the ability to network with industry executives, and the quality of professional and academic mentorship.

Also, the programme has been ranked first in Europe for the degree's importance in advancing graduates' careers, further solidifying

its reputation as a leading choice for those seeking to excel in sports management.

### **RANKINGS AT A GLANCE:**

- → Second ranked European course / seventh overall
- → Ranked first for overall student satisfaction (graduates choice) including four maximums for the

quality of the curriculum, the level of guidance and preparation provided in finding a job in the sports industry, ability to network with industry executives and professional and academic mentorship

→ Ranked first for the importance of the degree in career advancement

UNIVERSITY	PROGRAM	CAREER ADVANCEMENT
University of Modena e Reggio Emilia & University of San Marino	MasterSport - Master in Management dello Sport System	98.33
George Washington University	Masters in Sport Management	93.85
CIES (International Centre for Sport Studies)	International Master (MA) in Management, Law and Humanities of Sport - FIFA Master	91.76
Virginia Commonwealth University	VCU Center for Sport Leadership	90.00
Ball State	Master of Arts (MA)/Master of Science (MS) in Sport Administration	88.89



NAME

### Johan Cruyff Institute (online)

AMSTERDAM, BARCELONA, MEXICO CITY & LIMA ATTENDANCE 9.500+STUDENTS



The Johan Cruyff
Institute's online sports
management programme
has risen to become the
second-ranked online
program globally, improving
from third place last year.

It continues to be recognized as the top European online programme for the second consecutive year.

The programme has received high praise from students, particularly in key areas such as the quality of the faculty, the quality of the curriculum, and the level of professional and academic mentorship provided.

These strengths have contributed to its reputation as a leading choice for those pursuing an online education in sports management.

#### **RANKINGS AT A GLANCE:**

→ Second ranked online programme, up from third last year

- → Top European online program for second year
- → The program's highest student satisfaction scores were in quality of faculty, quality of curriculum and professional and academic mentorship

UNIVERSITY **PROGRAM** University of North Texas (online) Online MBA Sport Entertainment Management Johan Cruyff Institute (online) Master in Sport Management - Online Global Institute of Sport (online) MSc International Sport Management Unisport Management MBA Sports Management School (online) New York University (online) MS in Global Sport Master of Science in Sport Administration -University of Cincinnati (online) Online

AUTHOR ADAM NELSON



### Advantage America: Why US-based courses consistently come out on top



or second year in a row, the top ten of the SportBusiness Postgraduate Rankings contains just a single course from outside of the United States of America – which happens to be the only non-US-based course to have ever topped the list in its 13-year history: the Fifa Master at CIES. This year has also seen a decline in the number of non-US programmes in the overall top 40, down to 13 – having made up almost half of the rankings in 2021, when 18 came from the rest of the world.

To understand why America continues to dominate our rankings, we took a look at some of the key distinctions between US programmes and the rest of the world, and some innovations that may

change things in the future.

### A MORE DEVELOPED MARKET

One reason is simply that the US has been doing this far longer. The courses at Ohio University and UMass have finished in the top spot of our rankings in every year but one, and it's no coincidence both have been running for over 50 years. That's not just 50 years in which to hone and refine their teaching methods, but 50 years' worth of graduates seeded across the global sports industry, creating an unparalleled alumni network.

At the centre of the US's dominance, though, is the fact that the American sports market is so much more mature and developed, in a commercial sense, than anywhere in the rest of the world. Real Madrid,

the world's biggest and most valuable football team, is only the 13th most valuable sports team overall, behind 12 US-based teams from across the NFL, NBA and MLB. And beneath the major leagues, the American collegiate system provides another layer of the sports business which requires just as many people to run, staff and operate it at all levels.

Michelle Harrolle, Director of the Vinik Sport & Entertainment Management Programme at the University of South Florida, notes that this also creates far more opportunities for students to get hands-on experience of the sport industry while studying, and great employment opportunities after graduation. "In the Tampa Bay Area, we

have access to the National Football League, the National Hockey League, the United Soccer League, the Women's Tennis Association, Ironman... all within reach of our campus, so our network is super strong in this space," she says.

"And this density of professional sports organisations is true for lots of American big cities. Meanwhile, if you take a state like lowa, there's not a lot of professional teams, but people live and breathe the college sports teams, so even in smaller markets there's a hugely developed sports ecosystem."

Peter Dickenson, Postgraduate Programme Director at Loughborough University, observes that in the North American market, sport is viewed and run much more strictly as a business, while in Europe it still often retains its more social, egalitarian roots. "There's a lot of stuff that happens in the States, where it's a cutthroat, business-oriented perspective, that perhaps we're beginning to catch up with but haven't necessarily got there yet," he says. "That said, for some things, we might not want to get there, or have gone in a

"The US is very flexible if something is happening [in the sports world]. If they see a movement in it, they are allowed to run with it."

completely different direction. 'Sport for good', it its broadest sense, is still important."

#### **EMPLOYABILITY FOCUS**

A bigger sports sector and more developed economic model means not only more demand for educated graduates, but for the kinds of specialist knowledge of the industry that are being generated by sports management courses – fuelling another aspect that gives American courses an advantage in the rankings, which is their greater focus on employability.

It is worth noting here that the methodology we use for the SportBusiness Rankings have also tended to foreground those elements, particularly as we assess only postgraduate, not undergraduate courses. (The QS Rankings, for instance, which look at a much wider range of criteria, places Loughborough as the best in the world for sports-related subjects, while schools in Canada and Australia also appear in the top ten.) By far the biggest weighting in our survey - carrying more than double the points of any other individual criterion - is given to employment status at 12 months and three years after graduation, which plays far more into the US approach.

"If you look just at the state of Florida and the people who govern our university system, there's a huge focus on how universities are going to help students with jobs," says Harrolle. "Getting them onto job placements, preparing them for the job market. The way it's seen here is, you're paying for a service to be educated, so with that, let's make sure we're preparing you the best way possible for what's next, so we do a lot of 'above and beyond the classroom' work, helping you with interviews, teaching you about gratitude, teaching you about leadership, and integrating those within everything we do."

It is not the case, of course, that European courses don't focus on creating employable skillsets, but that they often prioritise a more traditional university model of theory and research, says Dickenson. "From my experience of the US market, I've seen a lot of student assessments that focus on the 'real world', [with] answers are expected to be underpinned academically." he tells SportBusiness. In the UK system, the focus might be inverted. "We're pretty good at using academic underpinnings to explain the 'real world'." Neither approach is necessarily 'correct', he says, but "a bridge linking both camps is paramount to sport management."

A traditional advantage for American sports management courses has been an ability to be more reflexive and reactive, Dickenson adds. "The US is very agile in what it can do. If something's happening [in the sports world] and they see a movement in it, they are allowed to run with it. Because of the nature of the US market, if they see something changing, they can go and have a play." The tenure system in the US also creates a greater level job stability for senior professors, he points out, meaning academics feel freer to play around with elements of their teaching, leading to more opportunities to innovate.

### INTERNATIONALISATION AND 'CROSS-POLLINATION'

So, are there any reasons that the US's dominance of the SportBusiness and other university rankings should change in the coming years? One reason may be the increasing internationalisation of the sports industry.

With the NBA, MLB and NFL now using annual international fixtures to expand their reach, and bodies like Fifa and World Rugby looking enviously at the US market for growth, the industry is starting to require different kinds of people, both with more general commercial skillsets, and with more specific local knowledge. The Global Institute for Sport, which operates postgraduate degree courses out of major sports venues in London, Manchester, Miami and Melbourne, is one provider that is prepared for this development.

By having an international base and approach, GIS president Sharona Friedman feels that the course is able to cherry pick the best knowledge from each territory it works in, and then disseminate that knowledge around the world. "When looking at Australia [where GIS has its newest campus], for instance, they're really big on sustainability," she says. "They have the best fan engagement in the world, it's very successful and very different from the model in the US, where they're much better on things like sponsorship and marketing. So every market has something different they bring to the table, which we want to build into our courses.

"And I would argue that different places have inherently different cultural values, so a part of what we're trying to do is actually level the playing fields around the world by taking areas of strengths and weaknesses and disseminating them accordingly. It's about that cross-pollination."

But internationalisation is not just an advantage for institutions like GIS. Dickenson and Harrolle also both attest to an increased number of international students from the likes of India or China coming to the UK and the US respectively and then taking the knowledge they acquire back to their home markets and developing the sports industry there, where there is now greater demand for those specific skillsets, rather than choosing to stay within the Western ecosystems.

Friedman concludes by noting that the advantages the US has long enjoyed will be eroded as the sector matures around the world, and suggests that "levelling of the playing field" will come to the education sector, too. "Sports subjects have always been really popular in the US, because sport has always been big, big money in the US. That's now happening all around the world in markets that previously didn't have commercially developed sports sectors. If you look at the sheer number of people outside the US verses inside of the US – it can catch up and even eclipse it at some point."





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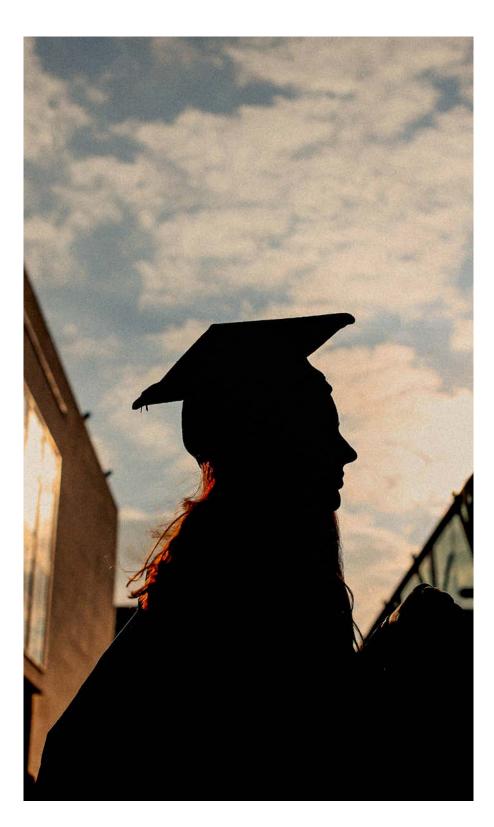


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ADAM NELSON



# Decisions, decisions... Things to think about when choosing your course



with more and more postgraduate sports management courses starting each year, and the quality of those on our rankings always growing, it can be more difficult than ever for prospective students to decide which programme is right for them. Here, SportBusiness takes a look at some of the biggest factors you should be focusing on when shopping around for a programme.

#### LOCATION

The 2020s so far have seen significant societal shifts including, of course, the pandemic, as well as rising global inflation and increased costs of living that have led many students to rethinking how they choose their courses. According to recent research from University College London, as many as one in three new students starting university in the UK in 2023 are set to live at home and study at a local university, rather than choosing the once-traditional route of moving farther afield and living in halls.

But it's not just costs that should impact your decision when selecting the location of your sports management course. With many programmes, particularly at masters level, including things like work placement elements or guest lecturers from nearby sports organisations, it's worth considering the market in the area, and also looking at each institution's ties to local sports bodies: are there multiple teams nearby offering internships to students and graduates? Do relevant local executives make appearances on the course to share their knowledge?

Finally, with the explosion of distance learning and MOOCs (massive open online courses), you might consider that you don't need to leave your desk to get a great sport management degree. Some of the biggest and best schools in the world are now offering

virtual programmes you can complete from wherever you are in the world, which may suit many students, particularly those looking to study alongside being in existing full-time employment or who have other family commitments.

#### **AFFORDABILITY**

Naturally, a key question to ask before settling on a course is: how much is this going to cost me? The price for postgraduate courses has risen steadily over recent years and while it can vary considerably depending on numerous factors, any two-year postgraduate course in the US is going to run into the tens of thousands of dollars.

All universities will offer a limited number of scholarships, financial aid and bursaries to support students, so it's worth making sure that each of your shortlisted schools have a good selection of packages available for you to apply for. Other avenues of support may be available in different countries, such as grants from research bodies like UK Research and Innovation, or interest-free career development loans which you won't pay back until after your course has finished.

Consider also that the the course is not the only cost involved: a year at Columbia in New York City is going to be considerably more expensive than a year in Athens, Ohio, so think about your living costs and other expenses, as well.

### EMPLOYMENT AND EARNING POTENTIAL

One of the key metrics of the SportBusiness Rankings is employability, looking at factors like how soon after graduation students find employment, what level they're at three years

"A strong alumni network can help open so many doors, not just to fresh graduates looking for a first break in the industry, but throughout an entire career in sports." after completing the course, and the salary they're earning. It's clearly an aspect worth keeping in mind as you shop around for programmes - and you may occasionally find yourself surprised by some of the outliers. The University of Liverpool, which offers highly specialised courses in particular sectors of the sports world, leads the way for employment in sport after 12 months on this year's rankings, showing the value of specific knowledge to employers and recruiters.

### SPECIALISATION AND TEACHING STYLES

Not all sports management masters courses are made equal, and not all of them highlight and foreground the same things. Some courses will be clear about their specialisation from the outset, while others may offer a more rounded education but simply have greater teaching and research strengths in particular areas. Look into the professors on each course as much as you can, and see which ones best align with your own interests.

The best programmes will offer a complete industry-wide view, and when choosing a postgraduate course, it's natural to not know what your ultimate destination may be. But if you do have a solid idea of which sector of the sport sector appeals to you most, it may pay to choose a course which has stronger teaching experience and industry connections in that area, rather than to aim for a higher-ranked, but more generalised, programme.

Many courses will also offer blended approach between inclassroom learning, theory-based modules, and hands-on industry experience, but the precise ratio of this will differ between institutions, and it's important to consider which approach best suits your learning style and will allow you to maximise the value you get out of the degree.

### ALUMNI NETWORK AND MENTORSHIP

What you learn on your course is crucial, of course, as are the kinds of opportunities your

particular degree will afford you once you've graduated. But the old cliche remains true: sometimes it's as much who you know as what you know. A strong alumni network can help open so many doors, not just to fresh graduates looking for a first break in the industry, but throughout an entire career in sports. Part of what keeps schools like UMass and Ohio University at the top of our rankings year after year is the strength and depth of their alumni networks, with both having now offered sports management courses for more than fifty years - that's over half a century's worth of graduates who have passed through their halls and are now working at all levels of the sport industry, in the US and internationally.

A long history is only one part of the equation, though – some universities are better than others at utilising these networks and ensuring former graduates continue to give back to their alma maters. Several schools in the USA now have multitiered mentorship programmes, which see alumni, staff and industry figures offer one-on-one mentorship to current students, while PhD candidates may offer support to postgrads, who in turn mentor undergraduates students - all contributing to creating a network that can continue to support an individual throughout their career in sport.

### **RANKING AND REPUTATION**

Finally, it wouldn't be much of a ranking if we didn't recommend you take a look at our own table, as well as those of other publications which are likely to assess at universities' more general strengths away from purely the sports management courses. It's worth remembering, however, that all of the courses we rank - and even many we don't! offer great postgraduate sports management degrees, and the criteria that separate them in our overall rankings may not always be the key criteria for the specific requirements of each individual student. Use this ranking as a guide, an inspiration and a starting point, but don't let it become your ultimate decision maker.



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