

Programme Specification for MSc Sport (Applied Sport Science)

This document applies to Academic Year 2021/22 onwards

Table 1 Programme Specification for MSc Sport (Applied Sport Science)

1.	Awarding institution/body	University of Worcester
2.	Teaching institution	University of Worcester
3.	Programme accredited by	N/A
4.	Final award or awards	PG Cert, PG Dip, MSc
5.	Programme title	MSc Sport (Applied Sport Science)
6.	Pathways available	N/A
7.	Mode and/or site of delivery	2 x intensive weeks (One in September and one in January) followed by bi-weekly sessions on campus at the University of Worcester
8.	Mode of attendance and duration	Full Time: 1 year (September-September). Part Time: Typical time to complete the course part-time would be 2 years.
9.	UCAS Code	N/A
10.	Subject Benchmark statement and/or professional body statement	QAA Masters Degree Characteristics Statement 2020
11.	Date of Programme Specification preparation/ revision	August 2019, AQU amendments to Section 19, February 2021 AQU amendments and general updates

12. Educational aims of the programme

This course is designed for students wishing to progress in their careers in Applied Sport Science, in either an athlete support or a research role. Applied Sports Science is the application of scientific principles and knowledge in the support of performance driven athletes and their coaches. The course aims to improve the knowledge, understanding and practical skills of practitioners working in or hoping to work in the sports performance industry. With this in mind the primary focus of content is related to enhancing athletic performance. This distinguishes the course from other postgraduate courses that also include aspects such as health. This specific focus provides students with a greater depth of understanding and technical skills and will better prepare students to further their careers in the highly competitive field of applied sports science.

The educational aims provide the over-arching structure to the course, together with also establishing its key philosophical underpinnings.

On completion of the course, students should be able to:

1. develop a systematic and in-depth understanding and a critical awareness of current problems and/or contemporary issues in applied sport science;
2. develop a critical understanding of research methods applicable to their own applied research and advanced scholarship within the field of sport science;
3. demonstrate proficiency in practical and technical skills required in applied sports science;
4. solve complex problems in applied sports science scenarios through application of knowledge and 'applied skills' such as decision making, collaboration and team work;
5. further develop their own continued professional development through independent learning and continued reflective practice;

6. engage in and experience international academic study and employment and further develop vocational skills required to meet the challenges of the global, knowledge-based economy;
7. demonstrate advanced communication skills both in written, verbal and audio visual formats;
8. develop originality in the application of theoretical principles and apply research skills to create further knowledge within the discipline of applied sport science.

13. Intended learning outcomes and learning, teaching and assessment methods

The learning outcomes for the Applied Sport Science Masters programme are as follows:

Table 2 knowledge and understanding outcomes and which module/code they relate to

Knowledge and Understanding			
LO no.	On successful completion of the named award, students will be able to:	Module Code/s	Award <i>State if PG Cert, PG Dip or MA, MSc, etc.</i>
1.	Analyse and critique appropriate theory in applied sport science	MSPO4232 MSPO4234	MSc PG Dip PG Cert
2.	Critically reflect upon current problems or contemporary insights in applied sport science	MSPO4276 MSPO4270 MSPO4265	MSc PG Dip PG Cert
3.	Analyse and critically reflect upon a wide range of quantitative and/or qualitative methods applicable for research or practice in applied sport science	MSPO4232 MSPO4234 MSPO4270	MSc PG Dip

Table 3 cognitive and intellectual skills outcomes for module code/s

Cognitive and Intellectual skills			
4.	Demonstrate an in depth understanding and application of appropriate research methods	MSPO4276	MSc
5.	Design, implement and evaluate a personal research project in a contemporary area of applied sport science, demonstrating critical analysis of the research process, appropriate research methods and the analysis, interpretation and dissemination of data	MSPO4276	MSc
6.	Critically analyse and appreciate different perspectives, values and strategies of applied practitioners in the field and synthesise these with theory to deal with complex issues systematically and creatively and communicate their conclusions clearly to specialist and non-specialist audiences	MSPO4265 MSPO4270	MSc PG Dip
7.	Demonstrate self-direction and originality in identifying needs, formulating solutions and evaluating strategies within the context of applied sport science	MSPO4232 MSPO4234	MSc PG Dip PG Cert

Table 4 learning skills and capabilities related to employability outcomes for module code/s

Skills and capabilities related to employability			
8.	Develop critical self-reflection and an independent autonomous approach to learning required for continuing professional and personal development as a reflective practitioner	MSPO4270	MSc PG Dip
9.	Demonstrate critical self-assessment of key and vocational skills in the field of applied sport science	MSPO4265 MSPO4270 MSPO4234	MSc PG Dip
10.	Demonstrate competency in key sport science assessment techniques	MSPO4232	MSc PG Dip PG Cert
11.	Demonstrate a high level of proficiency in methods of enhancing performance	MSPO4234	MSc PG Dip PG Cert

Table 5 transferable/key skills outcomes for module code/s

Transferable/key skills			
12.	Demonstrate initiative and personal responsibility when working alone or with others on applied problems or tasks	MSPO4232 MSPO4234	MSc PG Dip PG Cert
13.	Make decisions in complex applied situations using systematic and creative methods and communicate their conclusions clearly	MSPO4232 MPSO4234	MSc PG Dip PG Cert

Learning, teaching and assessment

The MSc programme aims to further develop students' independent learning ability and enable them to become effective, reflective practitioners. Consequently, the learning, teaching and assessment methods are designed to provide opportunities for the students to develop these qualities. The learning environment will include a full range of practical work, lectures, seminars, workshops, problem-based learning, project work and independent and group study tasks. Students will be encouraged to take control of their learning in an independent manner. Three modules will be taught during bi-weekly sessions and 'Intensive study weeks'. These modules will include practical laboratory and field based activities, student presentations and self-assessment of practical competencies.

The course is structured to allow students the flexibility to gain significant work experience within the sports science industry alongside their formal learning. This is considered by employers to be one of the primary differentiating factors between successful and unsuccessful applicants for jobs within applied sports science. The Professional Placement comprises a 30 credit module (MSPO4270; 100 hours placement activity) and encourages students to make an in-depth self-critical assessment of their practice whilst also developing lifelong critical reflective skills. We support reflective learning in an applied setting, allowing students to apply skills, knowledge and understanding derived from their own professional practice as well as from specialist course modules into a professional setting, and explore the challenges of applying 'book-learning' into professional practice. Placements are identified in the main by postgraduate students (in some cases, contacts within the School are used to help a

student struggling to find a placement opportunity). The majority of current professional students will cite their placement activity within their current place of work and normally use it to further develop their effectiveness and/or implement new initiatives identified by themselves in discussions with their employers.

On completion of the MSc programme students should have demonstrated competency in a range of skills relating to knowledge and understanding, cognitive and intellectual skills and key skills and further, given the wide variety of modes of presentation of information required by employers today, the course aims to assess students abilities and skills in as wide a range of these modes as possible whilst ensuring coherence with the module intended learning outcomes. As such, students are required to submit assessments including oral presentations, portfolios, research proposals, written reports, case studies, data handling assignments and research findings through the Sport Research Project. In addition, opportunities exist for students to undertake an interdisciplinary approach to their work and ensure a holistic analysis of the subject area being studied. Students are prepared to undertake this project from the outset of their studies. Throughout both pathway specific modules and in Leading People in Sport, they are encouraged to critically assess the quality of data and methodological considerations relating to its generation. Two full days in the January intensive week will be dedicated to specific preparation for the research project, and will cover the necessary processes relating to the writing of a proposal and key ethical considerations.

Teaching

Students are taught through a combination of intensive weeks, interactive workshops, lectures, seminars and laboratory practical's, fieldwork, practical activities etc. Interactive workshops take a variety of formats and are intended to enable the application of learning through discussion and small group activities. Seminars enable the discussion and development of understanding of topics covered in lectures, and laboratory practicals are focused on developing subject specific skills and applied individual and group project work.

In addition, postgraduate students will have a minimum of two meetings with their Personal Academic Tutors, timed to coincide with key points such as induction or assessment.

Contact time

For intensive study weeks students are expected to have 5 x 8 hours of contact time per intensive week (2 in total). In addition, full time students are expected to study two modules per semester and have approximately 8 hours of 'in-person' contact time per week. Part time students are expected to study one module per semester and have approximately 4 hours of 'in-person' contact time per week.

In addition, students attend two complete study days (16 hours) prior to their period of professional practice, and are able to access 8 hours of tutorial support during the course of their Research Project study. Students will also receive two days of structured Research Project preparation.

Independent self-study

In addition to the contact time, students are expected to undertake around 2 hours of personal self-study per module per week. Typically, this will involve online study tasks, reading journal articles and completing formative assignments. The Sports Research Project requires substantial independent work and can be expected to require 600 hours of study. In addition students are required to undertake 100 hours of placement activities as part of their Professional Placement.

Independent learning is supported by a range of excellent learning facilities, including the Hive and library resources, the virtual learning environment, and extensive electronic learning resources.

Teaching staff

Students will be taught by a teaching team whose expertise and knowledge are closely matched to the content of the modules on the course. The team includes senior academics with research and consultancy experience, postgraduate students, laboratory technical staff and demonstrators. In addition, students can expect to receive sessions with guest lecturers who are currently engaged in Sport and Exercise science activities outside of the university.

Teaching is informed by research and consultancy, and the majority of lecturers on the course have a higher education teaching qualification or are Fellows of the Higher Education Academy. Students can learn more about the staff by visiting our staff profiles. <https://www.worcester.ac.uk/discover/sport-meet-our-experts.html>.

Assessment

The course provides opportunities to test understanding and learning informally through the completion of practice or 'formative' assignments.

Each module has one or more formal or 'summative' assessments which are graded and count towards the overall module grade. Assessment methods include a range of coursework assessments such as essays, reports, portfolios, performance, presentations and a final research project. The precise assessment requirements for an individual student in an academic year will vary according to the course selected.

14. Assessment strategy

The overall aim of the course is to develop students into more effective practitioners in Applied Sports Science and this is reflected in both the learning and teaching strategy but also the assessments. As such, a range of intellectual, practical and interpersonal skills will be assessed.

Each module has an assessment strategy which is aligned to the intended learning outcomes of the module itself but are also aligned to the overall course learning outcomes. The assessments include a balanced range of activities that reflect the roles and responsibilities of practitioners within applied sports science; the assessment mediums include written, practical, verbal, digital and graphical as these are all mediums that graduates will be expected to be competent in.

Throughout the course the assessments and associated tasks are set in context while students are challenged to find their own solution to a particular issue or problem. Throughout the course teaching and assessments are set in real world scenarios using real athletes and real case studies. This helps to increase the consequence of these scenarios and further improves the student's real world experience.

A feature of this course is the utilisation of a Problem Based Learning approach to the delivery of a range of modules and throughout assessments. This approach is utilised in order to emphasise the multi- and interdisciplinary nature of the course and enhance students' employability & career preparation through the development of a range of key transferable skills.

A period of professional work based learning is included within the course whereby students are required to apply their knowledge and skills to a sport science environment setting and assessed on aspects associated with their own continued professional development. Although many of our current students are already in employment within the sports science industry, this is not a requirement of admission. The course culminates with a Masters level Sports Research Project during the final year of study.

15. Programme structures and requirements

The entire programme requires students to complete 180 credits (90 ECTS) at Level 7 in the TCRF. The course is available in full and part-time modes. A full time student can complete the course in 12 months, while part –time completion of the course is normally achieved over a period of 2-3 years.

Students completing the course through part time study must take a minimum of one module in each academic year, although the normal pattern of study would be to take 90 credits in total across each of two years.

It is recommended that part time students discuss their options with the course leader when deciding on the combination of modules studied in each year.

Table 6 award map for each level of the course

Module Code	Module Title	Status Mandatory (M) or Optional (O)			
		Credits (Number)	PG Cert	PG Dip	MSc
MSPO4232	Assessing the Limits to Human Performance	30	M	M	M
MSPO4234	Enhancing Human Performance	30	M	M	M
MSPO4265	Leading People in Sport	30		M	M
MSPO4270	Professional Placement	30		M	M
MSPO4276	Sports Research Project	60			M
Total Credits		180			
PG Certificate					
To be awarded the PG Cert in Applied Sports Science students must successfully complete 60 credits at Level 7 from the modules; “MSPO4232 Assessing the Limits to Human Performance” and ‘MSPO4234 Enhancing Human Performance’.					
PG Diploma					
To be awarded the PG Dip in Applied Sports Science students must successfully complete the PG Certificate plus “MSPO4265 Leading People in Sport” and “MSPO4270 Professional Placement” modules to a total minimum of 120 credits at Level 7.					
Masters (MSc)					
To be awarded the Masters, students must complete a total of 180 credits at Level 7 including 60 credits from the “MSPO4276 Sports Research Project”.					

16. QAA and professional academic standards and quality

The course has been developed with reference to the UK Quality Code for Higher Education ensuring that the qualification represents appropriately the level of achievement required for Masters courses. A full copy of the above document can be found by visiting the QAA website: [FHEQ qualification descriptor](#); [QAA Masters Degree Characteristics Statement 2020](#)

The course takes into account the [QAA Masters Degree Characteristics Statement 2020](#) that specifies the key characteristics in relation to purpose, content, structure and delivery, teaching, learning and assessment methods and relationship to further study or employment for Master’s Degree programmes.

It is further acknowledged that most “taught” Master’s programmes will include some learning undertaken in a structured environment. Master’s programmes, considered to be of the “professional/practice” type, often combine structured and independent learning methods alongside time spent in practice.

The course teaching and assessment strategy is aligned to both internal (the UW Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy) and industry benchmarks for vocational qualifications and practice in Applied Sports Science (BASES, NSCA, UKSCA).

This award is located at Level 7 of the FHEQ.

17. Support for students

The following guidance and support structure is in place for students participating in this course:

- Applied Sports Science students experience a wide variety of support for their learning e.g. seminar group work, practical activities, tutorials, Opportunities for Exploration, pre-module learning activities, Personal Academic Tutor support and the use of e-learning and access to computer and internet facilities e.g. Blackboard.
- Induction event
- Student Course Handbook (published on an annual basis).
- Online support and guidance from tutors where travel to the University is limited between module sessions.
- All students have a Personal Academic Tutor who offers general support regarding academic progress, academic support, pastoral support and guidance and can guide the process of Personal Development Planning (PDP). The Personal Academic Tutor is available to support students in a variety of ways including telephone or online contact if travel to the University is limited between study sessions.
- Library induction and information skills packages;
- The Information & Communication Technology Service provides training and can assist with all technology questions <http://www.worc.ac.uk/ict/>; study skills provided within the subject, and separately by Student Services. The [Disability and Dyslexia Service](#) within Student Services provides specialist support on a one-to-one basis. In addition, Student Services specifies appropriate arrangements that can be made for students with disabilities
- Opportunities to study/travel abroad (optional);
- Students supported by Library Services (Library, IT, Media and Print) <http://www.worcester.ac.uk/library>;
- The University's Careers Service provides training opportunities for career planning;
- Firstpoint <https://www2.worc.ac.uk/firstpoint/> and Student Services <https://www.worcester.ac.uk/life/help-and-support/services-for-students/home.aspx>, <https://www2.worc.ac.uk/disabilityanddyslexia/> to answer all queries related to student life;
- The University's International office offers support to overseas students via Firstpoint; The Language Centre provides English Language courses for International students.

18. Admissions

Admissions policy

The University aims to be accessible. It is committed to widening participation and encouraging diversity in the student population. The School of Sport and Exercise Science works closely with central student support services including the Admissions Office and the International Centre to support students from a variety of different backgrounds. We actively encourage and welcome people from the widest range of economic and cultural backgrounds and value the contribution of mature learners.

Our policy is to offer a place to any student that we deem to be capable of success and who is likely to substantially benefit from the programme. We support the University's mission statement of *increasing access, widening participation and assisting students to achieve their potential*.

Entry requirements

Students will normally have a 2:1 degree classification in either a sport or science (e.g. biology, physiology, psychology) discipline.

Students who hold a relevant degree classification of either 2:2 (or below), or, a non-related degree will be considered on a case by case basis and may be required to submit a portfolio of evidence to demonstrate experience of work within the field. Applicants should be able to demonstrate academic capability for study at this level and strong interest and commitment in the relevant disciplines.

In the event of students completing their period of Professional Placement in an environment where they may be working with children or vulnerable adults, they will be required to follow their home country procedures for Disclosure & Barring Service enhanced disclosure checks and they must provide this evidence to University of Worcester staff prior to acceptance.

Any applicants whose first language is not English or who has not been educated wholly or mainly in the medium of English must reach a minimum IELTS overall band score of 6.5 with a score of at least 5.5 in any individual component (or equivalent in an approved test in English) or otherwise demonstrate that they have an adequate command of both written and spoken English before starting the course.

See [Admissions Policy](#) for other acceptable qualifications.

International students may apply for this course through University of Worcester International College (UWIC) pre-Masters course.

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) requirements

Enhanced disclosure may be required for the course, depending on the placement-related options the student chooses

Recognition of Prior Learning

Students with relevant previous study at postgraduate level or with extensive experience may be considered eligible for recognition of prior learning. Please contact the Registry Admissions Office for further information or guidance on 01905 855111.

Further information on Recognition of Prior Learning can be found at <http://www.worcester.ac.uk/registryservices/941.htm>

Admissions procedures

Potential students should apply directly via the Registry at the University of Worcester. Given the potentially diverse backgrounds of applicants with a sport or science related degree qualifications, all will be interviewed in order to ascertain their suitability for the course. Interviews can be conducted in person, via telephone or skype to suit the applicant.

Admissions/selection criteria

Prospective students may contact the course leader for further information and guidance on suitability for the course.

In all circumstances, the following criteria will guide acceptance to the course:

- strong knowledge in the field of sport or related subject suitable for Masters level academic work;
- a willingness to learn and develop their skills and knowledge of applied sports science;
- evidence of engagement with professional and academic literature/publications in applied sports science;
- ability to manage self, learning and professional duties where applicable;
- a good communicator;
- evidence of ability to manage work independently;

Additional costs associated with the course:

Any other additional costs associated with the course will be notified to applicants prior to commencement of study.

Please contact the Registry Admissions Office for further information or guidance on +44 (0)1905 855111.

19. Regulation of assessment

The course operates under the University's [Taught Courses Regulatory Framework](#)

Requirements to pass modules

- Modules are assessed using a variety of assessment activities which are detailed in the module specifications.
- The minimum pass mark is D- for each module.
- Students are required to submit all items of assessment in order to pass a module, and in some modules, a pass mark in each item of assessment may be required.
- Full details of the assessment requirements for a module, including the assessment criteria, are published in the module outline.

Submission of assessment items

- Students who submit course work late but within 7 days (one week) of the due date will have work marked, but the grade will be capped at D- unless an application for mitigating circumstances is accepted.
- Students who submit work later than 7 days (one week) of the due date will not have work marked unless they have submitted a valid claim of mitigating circumstances.
- For full details of submission regulations please see the Taught Courses Regulatory Framework.

Retrieval of failure

- Students are entitled to resit failed assessment items for any module that is awarded a fail grade.
- Reassessment items that are passed are capped at D-.
- If a student is unsuccessful in the reassessment, they have the right to retake the module (or, in some circumstances, take an alternative module); the module grade for a re-taken module is capped at D-.
- A student who fails 60 credits or more after exhausting all reassessment opportunities may be required to withdraw from the University.
- A student will be notified of the reassessment opportunities in the results notification issued via the secure student portal (SOLE). It is the student's responsibility to be aware of and comply with any reassessments.

Table 7 requirements for awards

Requirements for Awards

Award	Requirement
PG Cert in Applied Sports Science	Passed a minimum of 60 credits at level 7, as specified on the award map
PG Dip in Applied Sports Science	Passed a minimum of 120 credits at level 7, as specified on the award map
Masters in Applied Sports Science (MSc)	Passed a minimum of 180 credits at level 7, as specified on the award map

PG Cert and PG Dip awards are unclassified. The awards of Masters may be made with Pass, Merit or Distinction.

Classification of Masters

The classification will be determined by whichever of the following two methods results in the higher classification.

Method 1

- a) Candidates will be awarded a Distinction where they have attained an average of A- (PD) or higher from the credit achieved with the University for the award.
- b) Candidates will be awarded a Merit where they have attained an average of C+ (PM) or higher from the credit achieved with the University for the award.

Method 2

- a) Candidates will be awarded a Distinction, irrespective of their other module results, where they have attained 90 credits at grade A- (PD) or higher
- b) Candidates will be awarded a Merit, irrespective of their other module results, where they have attained 90 credits at grade C+ (PM) or higher

Candidates will be awarded a Pass where they have not fulfilled the rules for Method 1 or Method 2, but are eligible for the award of a Masters.

For further information on degree classification, see the [Taught Courses Regulatory Framework](#).

20. Graduate destinations, employability and links with employers

Graduate destinations

The course equips students to progress further in their career within applied sports science. This may be attaining a first internship or paid position for recent graduates alternatively more experienced practitioners will be in a better position to apply for promotion or to move into more senior positions within the industry.

In this regard the course has an excellent track record in a highly competitive industry; postgraduate destinations include Head of Junior Academy Recruitment at Manchester United Football Club, Head of Sports Science and Medicine Bournemouth FC, Sports Scientist at Birmingham City FC, Strength and Conditioning Coach at Worcester Warriors RFC, Strength and Conditioning Coach at Castleford Tigers RLFC.

The course also prepares students for further study and higher level research degrees, in this regard several students have successfully progressed on to fully funded PhD studentships. While other students have gained more immediate employment in Higher Education in teaching and technical support roles.

Student employability

A major focus of the course is in preparing students for graduate employment within applied sports science. As such many of the tasks and activities are based upon real world scenarios and tasks required in the sector. Further to this students must complete a work placement module which focuses on broader and non-technical employability skills such. Within this module hours of work placement opportunity are required. Students are supported throughout this process in terms of guidance for an appropriate placement or how to develop their own practice within the placement. One further feature of the work placement module in particular, is that it may provide the opportunity for students to begin the process of accumulating the portfolio of work that could contribute to a subsequent application for accreditation as an applied sport and exercise scientist. Details of how individuals may apply for British Association of Sport and Exercise Sciences (BASES) accreditation can be found here:

https://www.bases.org.uk/sspage-professional_development-accreditation_and_endorsement-bases_accreditation.html

Links with employers

With a view to further developing the course and also improving graduate employability, the course team consulted with industry leaders in Applied Sports Science with experience in both Higher Education and High Performance. The current course content includes many of the recommendations made during this consultation process, with a view to improving potential career prospects of students.

Further to this the course team have strong links with professional sports teams in the local area such as Worcester Wolves Basketball, and Severn Stars. These links provide an excellent basis to liaise with and discuss course development with a view to further enhancing future employability of students.

Further links with employers are continually being developed as the course grows in reputation.

Please note: This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if s/he takes full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided. More detailed information on the learning outcomes, content and teaching, learning and assessment methods of each module can be found in associated course documentation e.g. course handbooks, module outlines and module specifications.