

UCFB

UNIVERSITY CAMPUS OF FOOTBALL BUSINESS



Master of Science in Sports Directorship

ONLINE



University of
East London

Delivered by University Campus of Football Business — UCFB, Validated by University of East London, in academic partnership with Johan Cruyff Institute

Be a Leader in the Global Sports Industry

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OUTLINE OF THE MASTER

Duration

2 years

Credits

180 UK credits,
approximately 90 ECTS

Modality

Online

Learning format

Flexible online learning

Start date

September 2026
January 2027

Language

English

Qualification

Master of Science in Sports
Directorship awarded by
University Campus of Football
Business — UCFB and VSI,
validated by University of
East London, in academic
partnership with Johan Cruyff
Institute.

Fees

Price:
€ 21,360 (£ 18,500)

Price per year:
€ 10,680 (£ 9,250)

*Prices in euros are approximate and will
depend on the exchange rate applicable at
the time of payment.

Payment methods

Payment in installments
available

THE PROGRAM

Master of Science in Sports Directorship Online

The Master of Science in Sports Directorship will prepare you for one of the most important roles in modern global sport: that of Sporting Director. Critically, it will provide you with the skills, knowledge, and experience required to operate in a strategic leadership role within a sporting organization.

This two-year, online course delivers a unique curriculum tailored to meet the real demands of leading sports organizations. This elite executive postgraduate program is designed to equip sports professionals and leaders with the skills to develop a successful vision and drive the long-term success of sports organizations through the prominent role of Sporting Director.

The MSc Sports Directorship is delivered by University Campus of Football Business (UCFB) and VSI Executive Education, in collaboration with Johan Cruyff Institute, combining academic excellence, industry expertise and executive-level learning within the global sports industry.

UCFB is one of the leading higher education institutions specialized in sport and football business in the UK, offering innovative undergraduate, postgraduate and executive programs connected directly to the professional sports industry through its campuses in London and Manchester.

Through VSI Executive Education, the program incorporates an executive learning approach designed for ambitious sports professionals seeking to strengthen their strategic, commercial and leadership capabilities through real-world industry application and interaction with leading experts from across the sports sector.

Together, Johan Cruyff Institute, UCFB and VSI Executive Education provide an international, industry-focused and professionally oriented learning experience designed to prepare current and future leaders of the sports industry.



ROB WILSON
Course Leader,
MSc Sports Directorship

With more than 25 years of experience in higher education and an international reputation in the business and finance of sport, Rob Wilson serves as Dean at University Campus of Football Business, where he leads academic strategy, partnerships, governance and industry-connected education.

An expert in sport economics, finance and governance, Rob has authored seven books and more than 100 peer-reviewed publications. He regularly advises governing bodies, leagues and investors on financial sustainability and strategic growth, and his insights are frequently featured in international media including the BBC, Sky Sports, ESPN, the Financial Times and The Wall Street Journal.

[VIEW PROFILE](#)

Is this the master's degree you are looking for?

The Master of Science in Sports Directorship Online is a unique international program delivered by University Campus of Football Business, validated by University of East London, and developed together with VSI Executive Education in academic partnership with Johan Cruyff Institute.

This collaboration combines UCFB's industry-focused higher education model, the academic quality standards of the University of East London, VSI Executive Education's executive learning expertise, and Johan Cruyff Institute's internationally recognized experience in sports management education and strong connection to the global sports industry.

The program has been designed to provide students with a practical, international and career-oriented learning experience that reflects the realities of modern sport. By combining academic knowledge with applied learning, the degree prepares students to understand the complexity of the sports industry while developing the strategic, managerial and leadership skills required within sports organizations worldwide. Teaching is delivered by experienced academics and industry professionals connected to clubs, federations, agencies, brands and leading sports organizations, providing students with direct exposure to current trends, real business challenges and industry best practices.

Throughout the program, students benefit from applied projects, guest speakers, collaborative learning experiences and international industry exposure designed to connect academic learning with real-world practice while strengthening students' professional networks.

Choosing this degree means becoming part of an international educational ecosystem that combines academic excellence, executive-level learning, industry relevance and global perspective — a powerful platform for building a successful career within the global sports industry.

Thanks to the collaboration between University Campus of Football Business, University of East London, VSI Executive Education and Johan Cruyff Institute, the MSc Sports Directorship combines industry-focused education, executive learning and academic excellence with the international recognition and validation standards of a leading UK university, offering students a practical and globally connected learning experience directly linked to the world of professional sport.



OBJECTIVES

Become a Successful Sporting Director

The MSc in Sports Directorship Online is the first course of its kind designed to develop the personal and commercial attributes required to become a successful Sporting Director.

The purpose of the course is to develop learners with the knowledge and skill sets required to move into a strategic leadership role at an executive level within a sports organization or sports business.



LEARNING OUTCOMES

Developing critical and innovative leaders for the global sports sector

The term Sporting Director refers to a position in competitive sports organizations that sits between executive leadership and on-field operations (e.g., head coach). This term is often interchangeable with “technical director,” “director of football/cricket,” etc.

The main educational aims of the program are to:

- Develop students' ability to think critically and creatively about the role of the Sporting Director and its place within the global sports environment.
- Provide opportunities to identify, analyze, and present innovative approaches to complex problems in the global sports sector.
- Foster a reflective approach to professional practice to support continuous learning.
- Facilitate research and inquiry into issues associated with the role of the Sporting Director.
- Enable students to communicate complex ideas and arguments related to the global sports environment.



SYLLABUS

A flexible, innovative, and practical curriculum designed for working professionals

Covering sports leadership, personal development, innovation and change management, sport governance, and best practices—alongside a diverse range of hands-on extracurricular activities—the program provides comprehensive preparation for the role of Sporting Director. A core element of the program is the application of neuroscience.

The program is delivered over two years through four modules plus an applied research project. Its structure allows students to balance study and professional commitments effectively.

The program equips students with the practical skills and experience required to advance their careers in the sports business industry.

All programs are formally reviewed and revalidated every five years to ensure content, assessments, and outcomes remain current. The review process for this program will be done during the academic year, and students will have the opportunity to contribute feedback.



MODULES

MODULE 1

Personal Leadership in a Global Sporting Environment

30 Credits

This module explores leadership styles, personality dynamics, and decision-making processes relevant to the evolving role of the Sporting Director. It examines both classical and contemporary leadership theories through case studies drawn from sport and the broader business world.

MODULE 3

Leading Innovation and Change in the Global Sports Industry

30 Credits

This module provides an understanding of innovation theory and practice within the global sports industry. It examines drivers of change and the challenges of implementing innovation in high-performance environments, incorporating insights from neuroscience and psychology.

MODULE 5

Applied Professional Project

60 Credits

This module develops research and critical thinking skills through the completion of an applied project. Students will address real-world challenges in the sports industry, demonstrating their ability to apply academic knowledge in professional contexts.

MODULE 2

Leading High-Performance Sports Organizations in the Global Environment

30 Credits

This module focuses on the characteristics of high-performing sports organizations, including strategy, culture, and talent management. It draws insights from both sport and business to address leadership challenges in high-performance environments.

MODULE 4

Financial, Legal, and Media Issues for the Sporting Director

30 Credits

This module develops a foundational understanding of financial, legal, and media considerations in the sports industry. It examines the responsibilities of the Sporting Director and relevant regulatory frameworks to support effective decision-making.

MASTERCLASSES

The program includes regular masterclasses delivered approximately every six weeks. These sessions provide valuable insights from senior professionals across the sports and business sectors.



VSI SPORTING DIRECTORS SUMMIT

Connect with elite industry leaders at the Annual VSI Sporting Directors Summit

Each year, the VSI Sporting Directors Summit brings together industry experts to discuss the evolving role of the Sporting Director. Students and graduates have free access to this event. Participants include representatives from Premier League football clubs, Super League rugby, as well as professionals from politics, law, and business, creating a dynamic environment focused on executive leadership in sport.

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

Your career starts here

The MSc Sports Directorship prepares students for leadership and strategic management roles across the global sports industry. Graduates develop the skills required to lead sporting projects, manage high-performance environments and contribute to the long-term success of sports organizations.

Potential career opportunities include:

- Sporting Director
- Technical Director
- High-Performance Manager
- Football Operations Manager
- Club General Manager
- Talent Identification & Recruitment Manager
- Player Development Manager
- Academy Director
- Head of Sporting Strategy
- Sports Operations Manager
- Performance & Athlete Pathway Manager
- Sports Governance & Leadership Roles
- Consultant in Sports Strategy and Management

Graduates may pursue careers within professional clubs, federations, leagues, academies, governing bodies, agencies, consultancy firms and other organizations operating within the international sports industry.

"I certainly took the opportunity to network with like-minded people on the program... Being able to speak openly in a supportive environment with 25 other people, and gather their thoughts and opinions on situations you may be facing in your own work environment."

LEE DYKES
Director of Player
Recruitment at
Brentford FC

MSc Sporting
Directorship
Class of 2018–2020



LEARNING MODEL

Global networking and interactive education

The program is delivered fully online, offering students the flexibility to combine their studies with professional and personal commitments. Learning takes place through live online sessions, collaborative activities and interactive discussions that encourage engagement, networking and knowledge exchange among peers from across the global sports industry.

The program follows a task-based pedagogical approach, focusing on the learning process rather than solely on outcomes. This methodology promotes a strong integration between academic theory and practical industry application.

Students are encouraged to draw on their own professional experience throughout the program, enriching discussions and collaborative learning. Teaching combines academic expertise with contributions from guest speakers and industry professionals connected to the international sports sector. Sessions are highly interactive, and continuous formative feedback is embedded throughout the learning journey to support students' development.

Confidentiality and mutual trust are emphasized throughout the program in order to encourage open dialogue, critical reflection and the sharing of professional experiences and best practices.



A TYPICAL WEEK INCLUDES

- 1 Narrated e-lectures and online presentations
- 2 Interactive e-lessons and Moodle-based activities
- 3 Directed reading and independent study
- 4 Weekly tasks and formative learning activities
- 5 Collaborative discussions and research exercises
- 6 Live online sessions, drop-ins and assessment guidance

STUDENT PROFILE

Designed for ambitious professionals and elite athletes

The MSc in Sports Directorship is designed for ambitious individuals with a strong drive to succeed. We are looking for self-starters who possess a combination of skills, experience, and motivation.

You may already be working in a sporting environment—for example, in coaching, medical, finance, or marketing roles—and are looking to take the next step in your career. Alternatively, you may come from a business background and wish to transition into the sports industry.

The program also offers former athletes and sports professionals the opportunity to acquire the business skills needed to step into the role of Sporting Director. As an online program, it provides the flexibility to combine studies with professional and personal commitments. Many participants have prioritized their sporting careers over formal academic study earlier in life, and the application process takes this into account.

The course is designed to build on existing talent and experience while developing new, cutting-edge skills that are in demand across the sports industry. Entry to the program is therefore based on a combination of professional experience, career trajectory, and motivation.



JOLEON LESCOTT
UCFB Graduate
Ex-Manchester City and England Footballer

“I always wanted to go into football administration, I see more longevity in that career path than coaching on the grass. The biggest thing is networking... It has created a buzz that I know I am passionate about and I want to succeed in.”

INTERVIEW

The Evolving Role of Sporting Directors in Today's Sports Industry

TONY FAULKNER

Co-founder and Managing Director of VSI Executive Education

Tony Faulkner is the co-founder of VSI Executive Education alongside Andrew McIntyre and has played a key role in shaping the Master's in Sporting Directorship since its launch in 2013.

The program was inspired by his work as Performance Manager at Manchester City Football Club, where he conducted global research into high-performing sports organizations. His vision has been to create a diverse learning environment that brings together professionals from sport and business, encouraging collaboration, new perspectives, and shared learning.

— The professionals we attract come primarily from professional football and the wider sports industry: sporting directors, professional footballers, sports agents, heads of performance, coaches, managers, and analysts. However, we intentionally aim for around 7 % to 9 % of each cohort to come from business sectors outside of sport.



— Years ago, it was common for a former footballer to move straight into the position of Sporting Director upon retirement. While that still happens, it is no longer the norm. Today, those players who successfully transition into executive roles usually undergo formal or informal apprenticeships to master the global sports industry and its business models. As a result, they are far better prepared to handle such complex senior responsibilities”.

— The majority of our students are already established within the industry and generally join us for three main reasons. First, there is career transition: they want to become a Sporting Director, often moving into executive leadership from roles like head coach or head of performance. Second, they view the program as continuous professional development to upskill and refine their knowledge after years in the field. And third, it offers financial advancement, as a Sporting Director is a key decision-maker in a senior role that is exceptionally well compensated in the major leagues.

— Gaining a refined understanding of how to operate at an executive level is highly valuable across all sectors. That is why we see a fluid exchange: we have professionals from the corporate world entering football through our program, and conversely, sports industry professionals who move into high-level corporate roles outside of football after graduating.

— At VSI and UCFB, we have always believed in the power of partnerships driven by a shared vision. Through this collaboration, we can help advance the Johan Cruyff Institute brand, while they connect us with new markets and regions worldwide where they hold a strong presence.

STUDENT SUPPORT

Academic, technical, and wellbeing support services

Students are supported throughout their academic journey by academic, professional, technical and personal support services.

Academic support

Academic tutors and module leaders

Program leaders and program support staff

Study skills and academic writing support

Assessment guidance and feedback

Learning resources and library services

Student support and wellbeing services

INDUCTION AND ONBOARDING

At the beginning of the program, students participate in a structured induction and Welcome Week. This introduces students to the academic team, support services, program structure, assessment methods, Virtual Learning Environment and learning resources. Additional orientation activities take place at the beginning of each academic semester to support progression and engagement.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT SUPPORT

The program is designed for an international student community. Since much of the learning content is available on demand, students can usually study in their own time zone. Live sessions follow the UK academic calendar and working week.

International students also benefit from student support services, inclusive learning policies and opportunities to connect with peers and faculty worldwide.

TECHNICAL SUPPORT

Technical support is available during office hours to assist students with access to the Virtual Learning Environment, digital learning tools and online resources.



ADMISSIONS, QUALIFICATION AND FEES

How do I access the master's program?

The MSc Sports Directorship is designed for ambitious professionals seeking to develop their leadership and strategic management capabilities within the global sports industry. Applicants should demonstrate the academic, professional and personal competencies necessary to successfully undertake postgraduate-level study within a flexible and industry-focused learning environment.

Applicants are expected to demonstrate:

- Strong knowledge of sports management appropriate for postgraduate-level academic work.
- Evidence of engagement with professional and academic literature relevant to continuing professional development (CPD).
- Ability to manage self-directed learning alongside professional responsibilities, where applicable.
- Demonstrated ability to work independently.
- Proven track record of addressing complex and multidisciplinary issues relevant to the chosen subject area.

ADMISSION PROCEDURE

Applicants must submit the following documents:

- ✔ Completed application form.
- ✔ Evidence of highest academic and/or professional qualifications.
- ✔ Evidence of relevant professional experience, if applicable.
- ✔ Personal statement of up to 500 words.

Applications submitted through the flexible entry route may require review by the course leader. The course leader will determine whether a professional reference or additional task is necessary.

APPLICATION PROCESS

- 1 Pre-enrollment is conducted through the **UCFB Learner Portal**. Detailed instructions for completing the application will be provided on the portal.
- 2 To book a discovery call prior to applying, applicants may contact VSI Executive Education at (+44) 345 459 9765 or email info@vsiee.com.
- 3 The course leader may review flexible entry applications and request additional documentation or tasks if necessary.

Fees

Price

€ 21,360 (£ 18,500)

Price per year

€ 10,680 (£ 9,250)

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Contact

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