Jobs & Careers in the Sports Sector
The sector is large and diverse, for an overview of potential careers go to ‘Options with Your Subject’ at prospects.ac.uk/options_with_your_subject.htm and look at the Sport and Leisure Management and Sports Science information. The sector is expanding, but there is still serious competition for many jobs and it is very important to get as much experience as you can and network with potential employers.

Gaining experience

Qualifications such as coaching certificates, pool lifeguard, mountain leader, child protection or first aid will improve your chances.

Once you have certificates you may be able to find other paid part-time or holiday work locally, but if you cannot find paid work, there are often opportunities to volunteer, and this can be equally valuable for your CV and personal development. Getting involved in sports clubs and societies on campus, especially in an official position, is also valuable evidence of your skills and abilities. If you have a specific interest such as sports development, try to get some work shadowing. For students at Cheshire Campus support is provided for those seeking placements – see the Facebook group Man Met Cheshire Placements.

Summer camps in the USA are a popular choice offering experience and a chance to travel. It is possible to specialise, e.g. working with challenging behaviour or sport coaching. Organisations come onto campus in the autumn and early spring terms to recruit, and this is a good opportunity to ask questions. Summer camp work is also available in the UK, some on a day basis, others residential. Tour operators also offer opportunities to work with children and sometimes adults as an activities instructor in Europe or elsewhere during holiday periods.

USA Summer Camp Organisations

ccusa.com
campamerica.co.uk
campleaders.com
bunac.org.uk
challengersports.com

UK Activity Providers

British Activity Providers Association is a good site to search UK activity providers, many of which will offer job opportunities thebapa.org.uk. Large providers include King’s Camps kingsrecruit.com, Camp Beaumont cbjobs.co.uk and PGL Holidays pgl.co.uk. The National Citizen Service (NCS) helps young people discover their talents and realise their potential whilst having fun ncsthechallenge.org.
Volunteering

You can discover volunteering opportunities by visiting the Students’ Union theunionmmu.org/your-opportunities/volunteering/ ask about their clubs and societies. See mmusv.com for Sport based volunteering options. Join the Cheshire Campus placement Facebook group Man Met Cheshire Placements.

Go to the national volunteering database at do-it.org.uk where you will find listings of opportunities and contact details for local volunteer centres. Many organisations welcome volunteers, so if you are interested in something specific, make a direct approach to them or contact the National Governing Body of your area of interest and ask for advice and ideas sportengland.org/our-work/national-governing-bodies/sports-that-we-recognise.

Starting points for specific career areas

Sports Coaching: for a good summary, including entry requirements and sources of vacancies, see the Sports Coach profile at prospects.ac.uk/job-profiles/sports-coach

Organisations have sprung up in recent years offering in-school (e.g., to cover teacher non-contact time) or after-school sports coaching – these may be a source of part-time work to help you develop experience. Such organisations tend to cover most areas of the UK. For examples, see: sport.premier-education.com

Sport Development: See the Sports Development Officer profile at prospects.ac.uk/job-profiles/sports-development-officer. Significant related experience is desirable; contact local sports development officers to ask for work shadowing.

Sports Science: Covers a range of areas but those looking to enter niche sports science fields such as biomechanics or sports psychology frequently gain related experience and go on to postgraduate study in their chosen area of interest. Even if no purely academic study is undertaken, graduates will need to acquire additional qualifications such as The British Association of Sport and Exercise Sciences (BASES) or Register of Exercise Professionals (REPS) registration, or qualifications in cardiac rehabilitation (BACR).

A good place to start your research is bases.org.uk. Advice and information on study and careers, including profiles of numerous sports science careers. Even if not currently seeking an opportunity, you are recommended to browse the job vacancies at BASES on a regular basis. They cover internships and PhD studentships as well as paid posts. Some jobs are attached to academic departments in universities.

Another source of potential careers is with sports clothing and equipment manufacturers such as Adidas or Nike, who may employ sports scientists to advise on technical aspects of using products.
Sports Psychology: Prospects provides a profile for Sports Psychology prospects.ac.uk/job-profiles/sport-and-exercise-psychologist - refer to the British Psychological Society bps.org.uk for information on training without a psychology degree.

Physiotherapy: see the profile at prospects.ac.uk/job-profiles/physiotherapist

Physiotherapist accelerated two-year courses for graduates are available at a number of universities, including Manchester Metropolitan University. Entry is competitive and relevant experience and an upper second class degree required.

Health and Fitness: The major employers are commercial health and fitness clubs. Some chains are keen to employ graduates but most are looking mainly for vocational qualifications in personal training and fitness instructing such as those offered by Premier Training premierglobal.co.uk and the YMCA ymcafit.org.uk. It is advisable to be on the Register of Exercise Professionals exerciseregister.org.

A Sports Science degree could give you provisional membership.

Many graduates begin as fitness instructors and go on to manage a club; see the Prospects profile prospects.ac.uk/job-profiles/fitness-centre-manager

Personal trainers are often self-employed.

Opportunities also occur in the health sector with private health providers such as Nuffield nuffieldhealthcareers.com/ or through NHS trusts offering, for example, GP referral services. Hospital-based jobs can be found—search for information on NHS jobs at jobs.nhs.uk. Referral for preventative or rehabilitative exercise can also sometimes be contracted out to the private sector.

Teaching: Options include secondary PE, primary teaching and lecturing in further and higher education—see prospects.ac.uk/job-profiles. For Early Years, Primary and Secondary teaching also go to getintoteaching.education.gov.uk.

Competition is fierce for both secondary PE and primary teacher training. Relevant experience is required - the more the better - and some of this must be in a school, although other work with young people is also relevant. Be prepared to approach more than one school for experience and try to get into a couple with different catchments/characteristics if you can. There is more than one route to Qualified Teacher Status and providers like to see applicants who are familiar with a range of sports and activities, so if you have been focusing mainly on one sport, extend your experience into other activities such as dance or water sports if you can. You need to prepare early by gaining the relevant work experience, finding out about the available routes and making your application early in your final year.

Sports, Talent and Event Management and Administration: You will need a strong
interest in business. For role information see prospects.ac.uk/job-profiles/sports-administrator and www.prospects.ac.uk/job-profiles/event-organiser

Again, there is variety, with sports administrators needing planning and administrative skills, whilst getting involved in sports marketing or sponsorship will need a flair for communication, sales and negotiating. Consultancy is an option. Many act for large corporate clients, but some large companies have their own sponsorship department. Sports Administrators may work for governing bodies, umbrella organisations such as Skills Active, or for larger organisations such as Premier League football clubs. Go to SportBusiness sportbusiness.com for useful background information and news.

Leisure Management: leisure management employers include local authorities but as services are contracted out and the commercial sector grows opportunities have diversified. In addition to sporting venues and leisure centres, potential employers include theme parks, tourist attractions, cinemas and holiday destinations such as Centre Parcs. Information on Leisure Centre Management from the National Careers Service: nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk/advice/planning/jobprofiles/Pages/LeisureCentreManager.aspx and prospects.ac.uk/job-profiles/theme-park-manager

Large providers of contracted out sports provision include:

Parkwood Leisure leisurecentre.com
DC Leisure Management placesforpeopleleisure.org

Local authority vacancies are advertised on their own websites or lgjobs.com

Outdoor Pursuits: See prospects.ac.uk/job-profiles/outdoor-activities-education-manager. Most jobs in outdoor pursuits require Governing Body instructor certificates. If you can offer them in several activities it is an advantage. See also the British Activity Providers Association (BAPA) web site listed above.

If you are interested in teaching, Bangor University offers a PGCE (Secondary) in Outdoor Activities.

Self-Employment

It is increasingly likely that careers in the sports sector may include self-employment or portfolio working (combining several part-time roles at the same time), especially in areas such as coaching or personal training. Voluntary work can be a way of developing additional paid opportunities. Personal trainers may be both self-employed and working for an employer at the same time. Some jobs can be seasonal, for example in outdoor pursuits, or on short-term contracts.

For some graduates this variety and chance to change jobs or control their time is attractive. If you are interested in, or feel that you need to know more about self-employment, start with the information on Prospects Web prospects.ac.uk/self_employment.htm or our own careers guide to self-employment at mmu.ac.uk/careers/guides.
Additional Job Vacancy Sites

The largest single site for vacancies across the sector is leisureopportunities.co.uk

Others include:

bases.org.uk
leisurejobs.com
uksport.gov.uk/jobs
eis2win.co.uk

Manchester Met’s own vacancy service for students mmu.ac.uk/findajob

Careers & Employability Support

The Careers & Employability Service offers a range of support to Manchester Met students and graduates:

- **Find Opportunities**: We advertise hundreds of part time, graduate and internship roles through My Career Hub.

- **Careers Consultant Appointments**: Book a 30 minute appointment and get expert advice from our specialist Careers Consultants.

For more information visit: mmu.ac.uk/careers