

BUCS NATIONALS 2027-2030



HOSTING MANUAL



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1. INTRODUCTION

Introduction

British Universities & Colleges Sport (BUCS) is pleased to invite collaborative proposals from member institutions, city or town councils, and private venues or leisure operators to host BUCS Nationals for the period 2027 to 2030.

BUCS Nationals is the flagship event in the BUCS domestic events programme and is recognised as the largest annual multi-sport event in the UK. The successful bidder will be appointed the designated host city/town for the event, with BUCS retaining overall administrative and operational responsibility through its executive team.

This document, along with the accompanying attachments, outlines the minimum bid specifications and provides essential background information to support the development of an innovative, dynamic, and inclusive bid proposal.

About BUCS

British Universities & Colleges Sport (BUCS) is the leading national organisation for higher education sport in the United Kingdom. BUCS supports over 150 member institutions across Great Britain and Northern Ireland, facilitating a wide-ranging programme of competitions and events.

Our mission is to **embed sport and active wellbeing at the heart of the student experience**. This is underpinned by our organisational values of being **inclusive, innovative, respectful and dynamic**. In line with our ambition to deliver exceptional student sporting experiences that **inspire, develop and unite**, BUCS Nationals plays an essential role in achieving this, providing a platform to strive towards our goal of supporting over 1 million students to be active each year by 2030.

A link to the 2023-2030 BUCS Strategy document can be found [here](#).

Each academic year, BUCS delivers more than 120 domestic events across 45 sports, offering competitive opportunities for over 100,000 students across all its competitions programmes. These events include stand-alone championships inclusive of but not limited to a diverse range of sports including surfing, rowing, and cross-country to multiple combat sports.

BUCS Nationals: Overview

BUCS Nationals is one of the flagship multi-sport events in the BUCS calendar. Launching in 2013, the event has been delivered in collaboration with a city-wide partnership with the City of Sheffield alongside the University of Sheffield and Sheffield Hallam University and the local leisure operators. The event sees a competitive opportunity for students to represent their university in the highest level of domestic university sport, bringing together multiple sports in one central location over three days.

In 2013 we saw BUCS Nationals launch with 13 different sports at 10 city wide venues. Over the years, the event has continued to evolve in response to facility availability and the changing needs of the sporting landscape. This adaptability has allowed BUCS Nationals to deliver a high-quality student experience regardless of scale – for example, in 2023 the event successfully showcased four sports over the weekend.

This adaptable model of event delivery has proven to be highly effective in delivering a dynamic, inclusive, innovative and respectful competition. Highlights from the last iteration of BUCS Nationals in 2025 can be viewed [here](#).

The event has previously provided a springboard for athletes to progress onto World, Commonwealth, Olympic and Paralympic successes. Multiple athletes go on to represent their home nation and win medals on an international stage, these include Duncan Scott (Swimming), Poppy Maskill (Para Swimming), Tom Young (Para Athletics), and Sam Ricketts (Badminton).

In 2025, BUCS Nationals featured:

- Six sports

- Four venues
- Participation from 123 BUCS member institutions
- 4,300 athletes
- 200+ officials
- 30+ volunteers from local universities
- Over 600 university support staff in attendance

BUCS is now seeking to appoint a host partner for BUCS Nationals 2027–2030. This presents a unique opportunity for cities and institutions to showcase their commitment to student sport, community engagement, and major event delivery.

In addition to elevating the profile of your institution or city within the sector, hosting a BUCS event provides the chance to showcase the breadth of your facilities, increase the visibility of your university amongst our commercial partners and offer invaluable work experience for local students and staff at the largest multi-sport event in the university calendar.

Hosting can also bring a performance advantage through home support and local facilities, while simultaneously showcasing programmes and infrastructure to future student athletes. Taken together, these contribute to generating economic value across the wider geographical area for both the university, its partners and the host city.

The selected host will enter a partnership with BUCS, taking on the role of designated host city for the event period. While the event's administration and oversight will remain under the authority of the BUCS executive, the host will play a critical role in the planning, resourcing, and delivery of the event experience.

The preferred dates would be:

12-14 February 2027

11-13 or 18-20 February 2028

The dates for 2029 and 2030 are likely to be similar, however we await the release of World Federation calendars.

Please note, the venue is required for the full event period, including build phase and de rig and should not have any conflicting events over this time.

2. SPORT INFORMATION AND EVENT FORMAT/STRUCTURE

Previous success at BUCS Nationals has been underpinned by the close geographical proximity of competition venues. Using fewer venues is preferred to create a united feel for the event and to ensure efficient event management, and to endeavour to create an easy transport network and sense of connectivity amongst the venues.

The championships listed below comprise of the core sports and optional sports which could be included in the event. To encourage innovation and sustainability in the future of the BUCS Nationals structure, BUCS will accept bids containing a minimum of four sports, with a minimum of two from the list of core sports.

Championship Event	Core Sport	Optional Sport
Athletics - Indoor Championships	✓	
Badminton - Individual Championships	✓	
Boxing - Individual Championships		✓
Climbing - Individual Championships		✓
Fencing - Individual Championships	✓	
Judo - Individual Championships		✓
Karate - Individual Championships	✓	
Swimming - Long Course Championships	✓	
Trampoline - Individual Championships		✓

Championship Event	Participant Numbers (approx.)	Event Days	Set up and dig rig vary between sports, but in most cases require full venue access the day before.
Athletics - Indoor Championships	1400	Friday - Sunday	
Badminton - Individual Championships	250	Friday - Sunday	
Boxing - Individual Championships	250	Friday - Sunday	
Climbing - Individual Championships	450	Saturday	
Fencing - Individual Championships	550	Friday - Sunday	
Judo - Individual Championships	400	Saturday - Sunday	
Karate - Individual Championships	380	Saturday - Sunday	
Swimming - Long Course Championships	1000	Friday - Sunday	
Trampoline - Individual Championships	350	Saturday - Sunday	

3. INFORMATION ON BIDDING

BUCS invites collaborative bids from city councils, universities, venues and relevant stakeholders. Hosts must demonstrate:

- 1) Experience of managing and hosting sporting events across multi-site venues
- 2) Ability to source a volunteer workforce
- 3) Capacity to support city/town wide marketing and promotion
- 4) Financial or Value in Kind (VIK) support for the event, Eg. reduced or free venue hire,
- 5) Experience of working collaboratively with stakeholders to host and deliver large sports events

The bid should include and make detailed reference to all the following:

Event Delivery and Facilities

- How the facilities meet and/or exceed the requirements
- Facility location map
- Previous event hosting experience
- Designated main contact for venue management

Finance and Business

- Financial overview including venue, catering, staffing costs and any VIK contributions
- Any current commercial partners the host works with

Volunteer and Staff Management

- Access to volunteers and a collaborative approach to recruit between 20-40 volunteers for sport and event management based roles
- Details of additional support e.g. volunteering, media, marketing, live streaming etc.

Working with BUCS

- Why the host wishes to host this event and work with BUCS
- Any additional support the host wishes to provide

Phase 1

All interested hosts must submit an Expression of Interest Form (Appendix 1) by Friday 31 October 2025 with their intention to place a bid.

Phase 2

An optional meeting slot will be held for potential hosts on Wednesday 5 November to ask queries before submitting final proposals.

Phase 3

Bid Submissions compiled by hosts and sent to BUCS Executive. This should consist of Appendix 2 – General Requirement Specifications and then the associated sporting technical specifications from Appendix 3 which are being proposed as part of the bid. Bids need to be submitted to Alice Wilkie – BUCS Head of Event Operations (alice.wilkie@bucs.org.uk) by the deadline detailed below.

Phase 4

Shortlisting will happen amongst the BUCS Executive, with all bidders contacted by the end of this window to inform of the intent to progress to the next phase, or to inform that the application will not be progressed any further.

Phase 5

A site visit window is planned between Monday 19 January and Friday 30 January.

Phase 6

After the conclusion of the site visits, a decision is expected by the end of February 2026

4. TIMELINES FOR BIDDING

Thursday 1 October 2025	Bid Questionnaire available to complete
Friday 31 October 2025	Expression of Interest Deadline
Wednesday 5 November 2025	Bookable slots to meet BUCS Executive
Friday 28 November 2025	Deadline for submission of Bid Questionnaire
Monday 1 December – Friday 19 December	Shortlisting window – all bidders contacted by Friday 19 December
Monday 19 January – Friday 30 January 2026	Site Visit window
February 2026	Host venue announced

5. ESSENTIAL ANCILLARY REQUIREMENTS

In addition to the sporting technical requirements, the below ancillary requirements must be met. Appendix 2 should be completed to detail provision in these areas.

Requirement	Details
Ground Floor Storage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Storage space near Event Management Office in a main venue. Accessible for drop-off with vehicle access. To be used before and during the event. Approximately 10m x 10m space
Media Room	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Centrally located in key venues, ideally near or overlooking the field of play. Must include space for mixed zone and photography. May require multiple rooms across sites. Needs tables, chairs, power, and high-bandwidth internet. <p>Capacity requirements: Approx. 20 (boardroom)</p>
Catering & Water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Competitor food (sit-down & takeaway, athlete-appropriate, dietary options) Catering for ~220 BUCS staff/volunteers daily (coordinated with BUCS) Spectator catering close to sports area (healthy food, hot/cold drinks, managed alcohol) Water fountains throughout venue(s)
WiFi/Internet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High-speed WiFi is expected. Hard-wired connections preferred. A private network for BUCS staff is ideal.
Live Streaming	Facilities and infrastructure should support live streaming (details to be determined).
Sustainability	Venue should show environmental initiatives which support those that are detailed in Sport England's Every Move Strategy .
VIP Hosting	VIP hosting facilities to be considered (specific requirements to be determined)
Spectator Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ticketing (whole event or individual elements) Catering & refreshments Toilet provision – male, female, gender neutral Live results/screens Parking, public transport, and spectator routes In-venue screens/multimedia platforms for event messaging
Sponsor Activation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BUCS will be able to exploit the venues for its own commercial gain All venues will be available 'clean'
Accommodation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Up to 200 low-cost hotel rooms for staff/officials near venue(s) Any preferred hotel rates should be shared Competitor accommodation not required, but venue can suggest options for BUCS to publicise
Parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sufficient nearby parking for spectators, competitors and workforce Free parking for competitors Minibus/coach parking on-site desirable but not essential
Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adequate security for participants and spectators Can be internal or external staff BUCS and venue to agree on staffing levels and locations
Inclusivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gender-neutral changing facilities Multi-faith and quiet space Full accessibility at all venues is essential
Risk Management	<p>All of the above should be underpinned with appropriate risk management processes, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> compliance with national and local health and safety regulations medical provision emergency evacuation procedures safeguarding policies contingency planning traffic management plans security plans insurance coverage

5. VOLUNTEERING PROVISION

Volunteers are key to the delivery of BUCS Nationals, in 2025 over 30 individuals from the local university and local council community, helped to deliver the event. The relationship between BUCS and the institutions in the host city is integral to the delivery of a successful workforce. Should the Host not have connections in the local higher education space, BUCS can enable and facilitate a working partnership to support volunteering needs.

BUCS will work closely with the host to help build a volunteer workforce or develop an existing one. It will be the responsibility of the host universities(s) to ensure that all the correct internal departments and stakeholders are involved, previous successful partnerships have included:

- University Sport Department
- Students Union
- Student clubs for the sports within Nationals
- Volunteering programme leads
- Student media teams
- Employability office
- Senior Academic Staff from appropriate degree courses (Event Management, Sport Management, Media courses, other sport related courses)

BUCS will provide structure for the volunteer training to be delivered with the host as required in the hope that a volunteering legacy is retained or enhanced at the institutions post event.

The roles required for BUCS Nationals include (though are not limited to):

- Field of Play Assistants
- Volunteer Coordinators
- Announcers & Commentators
- Registration Assistants
- Medal Presentation
- Spectator Services/Wayfinding
- Media
- Photography

6. COMMERCIAL CONSIDERATIONS AND BUCS RIGHTS

Marketing

It is required that the host would work in conjunction with the BUCS Marketing and Commercial team to help facilitate communications in advance and during the event, and ensure the delivery of any sponsorship activation programmes.

This could include, but is not limited to:

- Local marketing to generate spectator interest
- Media engagement
- A joint launch plan in local and national press
- Ticket sales (if appropriate)
- Access to key alumni/relevant sporting personalities of local universities
- Student media support

Bids should demonstrate support from the most relevant department/staff member within the host partnership group to work with the BUCS Marketing and Commercial team.

Live Streaming

BUCS is the owner of all rights to the broadcast and/or live streaming of BUCS Nationals but welcomes the support of the host city to deliver the production. BUCS will manage all production requirements including management of third-party production provider.

Branding

BUCS would reserve the right to brand the athlete area (field of play) at venues and agreed areas outside the venues and public domain areas with a mix of BUCS and BUCS partner branding.

For host venue branding (that does not contain branding of commercial partners) BUCS would agree with the host appropriate levels of branding and is keen to recognise through a suitable branding plan the partnership between the host and BUCS. BUCS would reserve the right to have any conflicting venue partner branding pitch/court side removed.

Commercial Rights

BUCS owns the rights to commercially exploit the BUCS Nationals event. This includes sponsorship, branding, merchandise sales, photography, advertising and value in kind promotions and product. BUCS will work to secure additional funding to cover costs and enhance the student experience at the event through leveraging these rights and delivering event-based activity.

BUCS will provide a list of its commercial partners and their activations prior to the start of the event.

As this is a BUCS event the hosts, venues and university may not enter into any commercial agreement surrounding this event without the prior written consent of BUCS. For the avoidance of doubt this includes any merchandise, third party retailers, data capture, marketing activity and advertising or event/social activity.

If you have any questions regarding the commercial rights or partners that have attended the event previously please let us know.

BUCS Rights

BUCS reserve the full rights to the BUCS Nationals event and will act in the best interest of the event and our member institutions at all times.

All potential partners will accept that, during the final season of the agreement (2029-2030 season), BUCS will publicly re-tender the event at a time set by BUCS.