

April 2026



As we approach the end of the 2025–26 season, this month’s update highlights several key deadlines, opportunities and programme updates across the BUCS Football network. With the final Football Accreditation reporting window closing on 30 April, this remains a critical priority for all accredited institutions as we finalise this year’s ratings and look ahead to next season.

Alongside this, we look ahead to the BUCS Football Development Network Day & Awards in May, share opportunities for students and staff through national FA programmes, and highlight upcoming funding opportunities launching at the end of the month. Please review the updates below carefully and ensure relevant information is shared across your teams and student networks.

UPDATES:

- 1. BUCS Football Development Network Day & Awards 2026**
- 2. FA Women’s Leadership Programme: Cohort 8 Applications Open Now**
- 3. FA Female Health Hub**
- 4. FA Leadership Academy 2026**
- 5. FA Introduction To Coaching Football**
- 6. Upcoming Funding Opportunities – Launching 30 April**
- 7. BUCS Football And Futsal SAG Roles**

Football Accreditation Reporting Window

The final reporting window for BUCS Football Accreditation is currently open and will close on Thursday 30 April.

The deadline for institutions seeking to achieve 3* accredited university status passed on Friday 10 April to allow time for recognition ahead of our BUCS Football and Futsal Awards. If you would like to discuss how to increase your accreditation star rating ahead of the next reporting cycle, please contact Sean.Lofting@bucs.org.uk to arrange a meeting.

If your institution did not submit a report in January, it is **essential** that you complete reporting within this window to retain your accredited university status heading into the 2026/27 academic year.

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BUCS Football Development Network Day & Awards 2026

Registrations are now closed for the 2026 BUCS Football Development Network Day, taking place on **Tuesday 5 May 2026** at **The Slate, University of Warwick**. If for any reason you are no longer able to attend after registering, please let us know as soon as possible. This ensures we can manage catering, and other resources effectively, and may allow another staff to take your place. Where possible, please consider arranging a replacement from your university to attend in your place. This ensures your university is still represented and allows the substitute to take the learnings from the day back to your team, benefiting the whole institution.

Further event information can be found here:

<https://www.bucs.org.uk/events-page/football-development-network-day-awards-2026.html>

If you have any questions, please contact [Sean Lofting](#) or [Alai Ayyakannu](#).

FA Women's Leadership Programme: Cohort 8 Applications Open Now

The global award-winning Women's Leadership Programme is back, with applications for Cohort 8 open now. This empowering initiative supports female and non-binary students from all backgrounds who aspire to work in football. Designed to unlock potential and enhance employability, the programme offers a unique blend of personal development, industry insight and professional networking. Participants gain access to exclusive learning opportunities, build confidence and join a supportive network of current and future leaders within the game.

Full programme details and application timelines are available on the [website](#). Institutions are encouraged to send this information out, identify and support applicants.

Eligibility Criteria:

- Identify as female or non-binary
- Undertaking a part-time or full-time course, or a sabbatical role, at a BUCS Football Accredited University during the 2026-27 academic year
- Demonstrate ambition to work in a football-related role, particularly with a focus on the Women and Girls' Game, following graduation or sabbatical

Applicants will be encouraged to seek sponsorship for the programme fee from their university, Students' Union, County FA or another supporting organisation. BUCS can support conversations around funding, particularly for students from Historically Underrepresented Groups or those who may find it difficult to meet the cost.

For further information, please contact [Beth Edwards](#) or email fawlp@bucs.org.uk.

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FA Female Health Hub

The FA have launched the Female Health Hub, a new online resource aimed at supporting women and girls participating in football. The hub brings together expert-informed guidance and practical resources across key female health topics, helping players to feel more informed and supported both on and off the pitch. The first covered topics are on menstrual health, breast health and injury resilience, with more areas to follow as the resource grows.

We encourage institutions to share the resource with students to help raise awareness of female health topics and ensure players feel confident accessing information and support where needed. The Female Health Hub can be accessed here: [THE FEMALE HEALTH HUB](#)

FA Leadership Academy 2026

Applications are now open for participants for the FA Leadership Academy (FALA) 2026. Delivered by the FA National Youth Council, FALA is a 12-month learning and development programme for young leaders aged 16-24.

The programme begins with a four-day residential from Monday 27 - Thursday 30 July 2026 at Walton Hall, Wellesbourne, Warwickshire, where participants will develop key skills through a range of immersive workshops and activities. This is followed by a 12-month development journey, supported by the FANYC, a FALA26 mentor, and the FA, to deliver a project that creates positive impact within their football community. Find out more [here](#).

Applications are now open and close on **Monday 25 May 2026 at 12:00pm**.

The application form can be accessed here:

<https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/019d436ca53b7e9e8e275020d36bfb84>

We encourage institutions to share this opportunity with their students. For further information, please contact the FA National Youth Council at nationalyouthcouncil@thefa.com.

FA Introduction to Coaching Football

As part of The FA's ongoing transition of coaching education onto its new digital learning platform, My Learning, the Introduction to Coaching Football (I2CF) course is moving from FA Learning to the new system.

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Bookings for I2CF courses will open on My Learning from **Tuesday 14 April 2026**, with delivery on the new platform beginning from June 2026. Courses taking place in May 2026 will remain available to book via FA Learning.

Learners already enrolled on FA Learning will continue to be fully supported and will have 12 months to complete their course.

Upcoming Funding Opportunities – Launching 30 April

We're pleased to share that a new round of Football Development funding opportunities will go live on 30 April 2026. These opportunities are designed to support universities in growing participation, strengthening workforce development and enhancing delivery across football and futsal programmes. This funding round will include:

- Referee Development Hubs
- Football Development Projects
- Coaching Hubs

Further details on eligibility, application criteria and timelines will be shared once the funding opens.

We encourage institutions to begin considering how these opportunities could support your current delivery and future plans, and to engage relevant colleagues ahead of the launch.

If you have any questions, please contact [Sean Lofting](#).

BUCS Football and Futsal SAG Roles

The BUCS Football and Futsal Sport Advisory Groups have vacant roles for both staff and student representatives. Please see below and share with colleagues and student committees. The deadline for all roles is 15th May 2026.

[BUCS Football Sport Advisory Group - Performance Representative](#)

[BUCS Football Sport Advisory Group - Student Representatives](#) (Looking for 1 Male and 1 Female Rep)

[BUCS Futsal Sport Advisory Group - Student Representatives](#) (Looking for 1 Male and 1 Female Rep)

If you have any questions, please contact [Sean Lofting](#).
