



**DEMONSTRATING THE VALUE OF
HIGHER EDUCATION SPORT:
GUIDANCE FOR BUCS MEMBERS
DECEMBER 2024 (LAST REVIEWED MAY 2025)**

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SECTION 1: OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

The recent Sport England report on the social value of sport and physical activity in England outlined the continued impact that sport has enriching lives and the value this provides to the individual as well as the country. The report found the total annual social value of sport and physical activity in England for 2022/23 was £107.2 billion¹.

In 2020 British Universities and Colleges Sport (BUCS) published a report on the Value of University Sport and Physical Activity, written by Julie Brunton and Vince Mayne². This report contained a call to action for institutions to review how they position sport and physical activity, especially in light of rising isolation and anxiety amongst higher education students. The report brought together strong academic evidence across six key themes:

- University sport and student recruitment.
- University sport, transitions and retention.
- Student sport, physical activity, health and wellbeing.
- University sport and graduate attainment.
- University sport and graduate employability.
- Contribution to universities' civic and global agenda.

Within these areas the report outlined the impact sport has on: student choice of university; university's market position and 'brand pull' of university sport; the improvement related to social aspects, accelerated friendship and belonging; and the increase in life satisfaction, happiness, and reductions in anxiety and depressive symptoms. The report authors noted that sport participants were gaining a higher percentage of 1st and 2:1 degree outcomes than students who did not participate in sport. Furthermore, graduates participating in university sport earned more than non-sports participants, with sport volunteers earning a further premium. The report also noted that the return on investment on every £1 spent on community sport and physical activity generates an economic and social return of £3.91.

THE CHALLENGE

The current financial crisis across the higher education sector has meant that sport departments are facing budget cuts to their sport and physical activity provisions. Sports staff at higher education institutions are widely aware of the value sport provides to students in areas of mental and physical wellbeing, supporting grade attainment and providing a sense of belonging. However, this is sometimes less widely known or accepted across external departments and within institutional senior leadership teams. Against this backdrop, BUCS has been engaging with a working group of member institutions around how institutions can illustrate the value of higher education sport in terms of key strategic drivers.

Our members have an increasing appetite to be able to demonstrate the impact sport is having beyond where an institution finishes in a BUCS table or the number of memberships they sell. Institutions will vary on how critical each key strategic driver is when demonstrating the impact sport is having at their institution.

¹ Sport England, [Social Value of Sport and Physical Activity](#), October 2024

² Brunton J. & Mayne V., [The Value of University Sport and Physical Activity](#), November 2020

The purpose of this guidance document is to support the BUCS membership in advocating for the value of higher education sport within their institution. We've highlighted within the document approaches that institutions have used to demonstrate the value of sport across the following strategic drivers:

- Student Recruitment
- Student Wellbeing
- Student Attrition
- Student Retention
- Student Attainment
- Graduate Outcomes
- Direct Financial Value

Within each of these areas there will be information, including:

- Existing research that can support each institutional strategic driver.
- Outlining metrics that are being used currently by institutions in the higher education sector.
- Points to consider when measuring the impact sport has on each key strategic driver.

Institutions will be at different points in their data capture life cycles and therefore will face unique challenges to demonstrating impact as a result of this. Some of these challenges might include limited resources, internal permission needed to access data, and sophistication of embedded data capture systems. The information below aims to help institutions identify and navigate these challenges and others.

SECTION 2: EVIDENCING THE VALUE OF HIGHER EDUCATION SPORT

Overview

- This will be an evolving document to reflect information that comes to light as conversations in these areas progress through the academic year.
- Collecting data on type of participation, for example club sport, gym members, recreational sport, will allow you to demonstrate which types of engagement and the volume of types of engagement have the biggest impact. Also having access to student demographic characteristics, for example ethnicity, gender, and/or disability, will allow you to illustrate the differences in impact across different demographics groups.
- A common challenge when presenting data of this kind would be the relationship of correlation and causation. There are instances of institutions bridging this gap to show that it is sport causing the positive impact by using statistical significance testing.
- The availability of data in key strategic driver areas can differ by area. Data in areas such as student wellbeing can be available with less of a time lag i.e. a survey can be completed in the term and data on student wellbeing is available straight away. However, in the instance of graduate outcomes this data will be time lagged due to the need to wait until graduates have reached a certain point post graduating. The other areas mentioned are likely to fall into the middle of this scale and can be impacted on by the availability of data centrally from your institution.
- There is certainly other work being carried out in the sector and we are keen to hear from those that are doing this and can demonstrate impact. If you would like to reach out to BUCS on this topic, please email Liz Prinz, Insight Manager (liz.prinz@bucs.org.uk) or Cameron Masters, Insight Officer (cameron.masters@bucs.org.uk).

STUDENT WELLBEING – measuring the impact of sport/physical activity on a student's wellbeing (Edinburgh-Warwick scale) compared to those students who are not active.

It is accepted across the wider higher education sector that wellbeing is a fundamental part of academic success and overall health of a student, both from a mental and physical perspective. We also know that the mental wellbeing of students is on the decline and the prevalence of students disclosing a mental health condition to their institution within England has dramatically increased over the past 10 years. Students at English institutions experience lower wellbeing than young adults as a whole, and higher education providers have experienced significant increases in demand for counselling and disability services³. The Cibyl UK Mental Health Survey 2024, surveyed over 12,000 current students (92%) and graduates within the last 2 years (7%) from over 145 universities. Most strikingly, the report stated that 1 in 2 undergraduates report that their mental health has declined since starting university⁴. They also reported that a third of responders were experiencing mental health difficulties at the time of the survey and half worried about their mental health either on a daily or weekly basis in the last 12 months.

The 2024 National Student Survey results show that disabled students, particularly students with mental health issues, tend to be less satisfied with nearly every aspect of their experience compared to their peers – including (for providers in England) reporting feeling less comfortable with sharing their ideas and opinions. Students also complained about lack of communication around mental health support⁵.

³ House of Commons Library, [Student Mental Health in England: Statistics, policy, and guidance](#), September 2024

⁴ Cibyl, [Student Mental Health Study 2024](#), November 2024

⁵ WonkHE, [NSS 2024 – results by student characteristics](#), October 2024

Sport can have a profound impact on mental wellbeing. The Sport England Active Lives survey, one of the largest annual surveys of adult activity levels in the world, repeatedly illustrates the positive association between activity levels and mental wellbeing in adults, with some activity being good and more being better. Those that are active (150+ minutes a week) have the most positive scores when rating life satisfaction, happiness, feelings of anxiety and feeling that life is worthwhile when compared to those that are fairly active (30-149 minutes a week) and those that are inactive (less than 30 minutes a week). These positive associations with activity levels are also consistent for individual development, such as achieving goals and perseverance when something is difficult⁶.

The BUCS British Active Student Survey in 2019-20, further evidenced the positive associations between activity levels and wellbeing, specifically for students⁷. Students who were active achieved higher metrics for happiness, life satisfaction, social inclusion, mental wellbeing and social trust among others. The BUCS Student Active Wellbeing Survey 2024-25 reinforced the connection between activity levels and personal and mental wellbeing.⁸

With the obvious and well-documented positive impact that sport has on both mental and physical wellbeing, sport and physical activity should be front and centre of any strategies to improve this. With the financial struggles being faced by institutions and the wider higher education sector, sport and physical activity can be an alternative to the ongoing pressures on counselling and student support services.

USEFUL METRICS

Below are some metrics that are currently being used by institutions in the Higher Education Sector.

- UNIVERSITY OF EAST ANGLIA - Run an annual campus wellbeing survey which looks at the activity impact on social wellbeing metrics, including,
 - Percentage of active students understanding why sport and physical activity is important, compared to inactive students.
 - Percentage of active students feeling safe off campus around the local area, compared to inactive students.
 - Percentage of active students feeling they are dealing better at being at university, compared to inactive students.
- KING'S COLLEGE LONDON - Use National Student Survey data to benchmark community belonging and use Active Lives and UCLA data to benchmark community loneliness.

CONSIDERATIONS

When measuring the impact sport has on student wellbeing at your institution, consider the following:

- Aligning your results with other institutions and the sector will help you benchmark your own performance. The Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale is a common tool for measuring mental wellbeing across many different sectors⁹. BUCS included this measure in its latest Student Active Wellbeing Survey (launched in November 2024) and will report on the results for both inactive and active students in the analysis, providing a sector-wide, standardised benchmark. This has also

⁶ Sport England, [Active Lives Adult Survey November 2022-23 Report](#), April 2024

⁷ BUCS, [British Active Student Survey Report](#), June 2020

⁸ BUCS, [Student Active Wellbeing Survey Report](#), April 2025

⁹ Warwick Medical School, [The Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scales \(WEMEBS\)](#)

been used in the British Active Student Survey from 2019-20 and in the BUCS Active Impact reports from 2022-23¹⁰ and 2018-21¹¹.

- The impact of sport and physical activity on staff at an institution should not be forgotten, for example reducing sick leave and the associated financial benefit to the university of this, improving their mental wellbeing, reducing their stress levels. An example of this can be heard on the linked [SportH.E podcast](#).
- In order to show the full impact of the benefits of being active in this area, within any sample that is collected, it is important to gather responses from non-active students. This will allow for a comparison to occur between these two cohorts of students and demonstrate this impact fully locally.

AVAILABLE RESEARCH

- British Active Student Survey (BASS) 2019-20
 - Link to full report and executive summary - [BUCS British Active Student Survey 2019-20](#).
- Student Active Wellbeing Survey 2024-25 Report - [BUCS Student Active Wellbeing Survey Report 2024-25](#).
- Sport England Active Lives Data and Report - [Active Lives | Sport England](#)
- Cibyl Student Mental Health Study 2024 Report - [Student Mental Health Research 2024](#)

STUDENT RECRUITMENT - Measuring the impact of the institution's sport/physical activity offer on student recruitment.

When deciding what institution to attend, students' decision-making processes typically centre around academic offerings, both from a reputational and teaching point of view, as well as career prospects and opportunities once they have graduated.

From UCAS data collected in 2023, nine in ten students reported that its 'important' or 'extremely important' that their course is good value. Just under half of students surveyed referenced either career pathways or prospects; within this getting a 'meaningful job' reported as one of the most important factors in going to university, far ahead of the salary associated with the job¹². Similar information is found within data reported by Times Higher Education in 2017 which surveyed over 27,000 international students who were considering studying in the UK asking about the factors that were most likely to influence their choice of university¹³.

Within these examples, neither displayed or reported any parts of a sport and physical activity offering as factors of studying at an institution therefore not capturing the impact that sport and physical activity has on a student's decision. From across the population that responded to the British Active Student Survey from 2019-20, for both the reason for attending higher education in general and attending a specific institution, sporting opportunities ranked fifth after succeeding academically, improving

¹⁰ BUCS, [BUCS Active 5 Impact Report 2022-23](#), November 2023

¹¹ BUCS, [BUCS Active Impact Report 2018-21](#), May 2021

¹² UCAS, [The Individuality of Student Choice](#), January 2023

¹³ Times Higher Education, [Why do student go to university and how do they choose which one?](#), June 2017

employability, getting the 'student' experience and location in terms of being important or very important.¹⁴

With limited data present in the area, it isn't clear exactly how sport impacts the recruitment process and the sway areas of the provision, such as the facilities and types of sport offered, have on students' decision making. With data being collected in this area in the Student Active Wellbeing Survey, we hope to add some additional insight to this area. With the diverse range of BUCS member institutions in the sector, it is very likely that the impact sport has on this area will depend on factors such as facilities and sporting opportunities present e.g. sports scholarships.

Although the impact may be different for different institutions, sport and physical activity offers have the potential to influence a student's choice and may be the crucial factor if they perceive institutions to be similar in other factors.

USEFUL METRICS

Below are some metrics that are currently being used by institutions in the Higher Education Sector.

- UNIVERSITY OF EAST ANGLIA – Collects data to measure.
 - Percentage conversion of attendees at any sport open day talk to applications compared to the overall university conversion.
 - Percentage conversion of attendees at any sport open day presentation to 'Firm' compared to the overall university conversion.
- CARDIFF UNIVERSITY - Collects data on whether students cite sport as a significant influencing factor in their decision to study at the institution.

CONSIDERATIONS

When measuring the impact sport has on student recruitment at your institution, consider the following:

- In addition to collating data from institution open days, you can also look at the conversion rate of performance athletes influenced to attend an institution, noting this could come from various different sources e.g. coaches, clubs, NGBs etc.
- One way of understanding the role sport programmes and offers has is by targeted analysis of key words in the student application process.
- Understanding what it is about a sport and physical activity programme and offer that has attracted the student to an institution (e.g. strength and conditioning facilities, access to activity classes) is useful.
- Equally, understanding and collecting evidence on whether the sporting offer/facilities were a detraction and how much of a factor this is in a student's decision to not come to an institution would also be useful but is more difficult to access.
- What more can be done to show the impact that sport has on attracting international students and students from lower socio-economic backgrounds? There are barriers associated with the perception of higher education and sport can be used to break these down. Sport can be a route into higher education for someone who otherwise might be intimidated by an institution or by coming to the UK to study.

¹⁴ BUCS, [British Active Student Survey Report](#), June 2020

AVAILABLE RESEARCH

- British Active Student Survey (BASS) 2019-20
 - Link to full report and executive summary - [BUCS British Active Student Survey 2019-20](#).

STUDENT ATTRITION - Measuring the role that the sport and physical activity offer at universities plays in reducing likelihood of students dropping out of university.

Student attrition is a crucial factor in the higher education revenue stream. With the ongoing financial struggles that institutions are facing, it is pivotal, from a financial point of view, that institutions can retain as many students as possible. This is particularly the case against a backdrop of falling application rates: UCAS applications were down by almost 10,000 in 2023 and international students has fallen by almost a third. While 2024/25 saw modest increases in the number of 18-year-old and international applicants, overall applications remain in decline¹⁵.

The lower the attrition rate an institution has, the less pressure there is on recruiting students to cover the turnover of students from year to year. Not only is this pivotal from a financial point of view, institutions have to report on continuation and completion outcomes to the Office for Students (OfS)¹⁶.

Advance HE reported in 2024 that fostering a sense of belonging among students has emerged as a crucial element for academic success, student retention and overall wellbeing. The report goes on to highlight the significant impact of belonging on student outcomes. It noted that students who feel a strong sense of belonging are more likely to persist in their studies, leading to improved retention rates. It outlines the benefit of higher retention rates increasing stability of the student population, which can reduce the costs associated with recruitment and marketing efforts aimed to attract new students to replace those who leave before qualifying¹⁷.

We know that being involved in sport can positively impact students' sense of belonging. In the BUCS Student Survey 2023-24, ninety-four percent of respondents agreed that being involved in sport gave them a sense of belonging to their institution and its community¹⁸. This also extends when comparing students who are active and inactive. The BUCS Student Active Wellbeing Survey 2024-25 reported that active students were 14 percentage points more likely to have a sense of belonging with their institution than inactive students. Also, students who take part in neither sport nor gym are twice as likely to say they are "often or always" lonely compared to students that take part in both¹⁹. Ultimately, if sport helps students feel a sense of belonging and feel less lonely within their institution, it will likely have a positive knock-on effect on institutions' efforts to retain students.

USEFUL METRICS

Below are some metrics that are currently being used by institutions in the Higher Education Sector.

- LEEDS BECKETT UNIVERSITY – Calculate the proportion of students who persist in the pursuit of a higher education qualification within one year (or two years for part-time students). Compare this data by sport students and non-sport students.

¹⁵ Times Higher Education – [Inside Higher Ed, What do students want from higher education?](#), October 2024

¹⁶ Office for Students, [Condition B3: baselines for student outcomes indicators](#)

¹⁷ Advance HE, [Fostering belonging in higher education: Implications for student retention and wellbeing](#), March 2024

¹⁸ BUCS, [BUCS Student Survey Report 2023-24](#), September 2024

¹⁹ BUCS, [Student Active Wellbeing Survey Report](#), April 2025

- UNIVERSITY OF EAST ANGLIA – Calculate the withdrawal rate of sports engaged students compared to the general university population.
- UNIVERSITY of EAST ANGLIA – Percentage of active students reporting that they have made friends at university compared to inactive students.
- HERIOT-WATT UNIVERSITY – Carries out an annual survey to demonstrate the impact of sport. Questions such as 'I feel part of the community of staff and student' and 'The Sport Union impacts my sense of belonging to HWU' are used to inform on student attrition.

CONSIDERATIONS

When measuring the impact sport has on student attrition at your institution, consider the following:

- Some members have had pushback from colleagues that students who play sport are more likely to take part in other activities at their university as well, meaning that the link between sport, sense of belonging and retention is not necessarily clear. This is very hard to prove one way or another and makes it more difficult to illustrate that sport specifically is having the positive impact. This link therefore might be challenged in institutions' executive teams. Providing multiple pieces of data showing a link between sport and student retention will strengthen the case being made.
- Different elements of sport might be contributing to students' sense of belonging, including participation, volunteering, spectating/support, so it is useful to understand the impact of each area (as applicable).
- There may be internal challenges to obtaining the relevant data internally on student participation and central student information to allow this comparison to be completed.

AVAILABLE RESEARCH

- Value of Higher Education Sport and Physical Activity Report
 - Link to full report and executive summary - [The Value of University Sport and Physical Activity](#)
- BUCS Student Survey 2023-24
 - Link to full report - [BUCS Student Survey Report 2023-24](#)
- WonkHE and Pearson: Building Belonging in Higher Education 2022
 - Link to news article and full report - [The four foundations of belonging at university | Wonkhe](#).
- Student Active Wellbeing Survey 2024-25 Report - [BUCS Student Active Wellbeing Survey Report 2024-25](#).

STUDENT RETENTION TO POSTGRADUATE STUDY - Measuring the contribution the sport/physical activity offer at universities plays in increasing the likelihood of students staying on at the university beyond the term of their original enrolment.

Reports from the sector outline that there is increasing importance being put on postgraduate recruitment, in some cases from an international student perspective²⁰. This appears to be driven by the increased fees brought in by international postgraduate students. Depending on how far institutions recruitment strategies are weighted towards postgraduate programmes, the impact sport can have on this area can differ. With the previously mentioned financial situation squeezing institutions, student numbers can be positively impacted here. The higher the conversion rate of students from undergraduate to postgraduate, the less onus is placed on actively recruiting these students. This is another area where there is less research on the impact sport has on this process. Where this is being investigated, the research is typically carried out at a local level, mainly in the form of case studies.

Institutions that are able to secure students on to postgraduate courses who are already studying at the university, whether that is from undergraduate to Masters or Masters to PhDs, will help to reduce marketing and recruitment expenses involved in filling spaces on these programmes. However, as reported in a recent article on HE Professional, it is reported that engaging with undergraduate students already at the institution is an invaluable resource that is sometimes overlooked¹⁸.

There also seems to be the appetite from students to continue into further study. Insight from the Student Room in 2023 stated that 86% of students they surveyed were open to postgraduate study, with the main perceived benefits being gaining skills and knowledge and increasing their earning potential. A point to note in this data was that even though 86% were open to postgraduate study, almost all respondents (94%) had concerns about taken this route, with the biggest concerns relating to money²¹.

The article on HE Professional illustrated some benefits to engaging with the undergraduate students. This included belonging, trust and confidence. Undergraduate students are already familiar with the culture, resources and opportunities being offered by the institution and already have a sense of belonging. The relationships that are already built with academics, peers and support services can increase the trust and confidence in the postgraduate options available. Engaging with students can contribute to higher retention rates and success by ensuring that they are fully informed prior to starting their postgraduate journey.

There is likely significant crossover in the aspects that influence student attrition that also influence student's desire to stay on at the institution to complete a postgraduate course. In most cases, the academic course is the main driver behind continuing on to further education, however sport has the potential to influence this decision.

USEFUL METRICS

Below are some metrics that are currently being used by institutions in the Higher Education Sector.

- UNIVERSITY OF EAST ANGLIA – Calculating the conversion of 'sports engaged' students into postgraduate study compared to the general student population.

²⁰ HE Professional, [Why is it important to include your own undergraduate students in your postgraduate recruitment activity](#), November 2024

²¹ The Student Room, [So, what's impacting the decision-making of prospective postgraduates?](#), November 2023

CONSIDERATIONS

When measuring the impact sport has on student retention to postgraduate study at your institution, consider the following:

- This area of impact may be more relevant for institutions that have performance sport programmes and/or offer sport scholarships, where impact can be measured through case studies.
- In specific institutions, coaches and members of the sport department have conversations with performance students to understand whether there would be relevant postgraduate courses to study. How do universities capture and evidence these conversations?
- Continuing on to postgraduate study can be an attractive option to students as there are typically fee reductions for those students that continue to another course at the same institution.

STUDENT ATTAINMENT - Measuring the likelihood of grade elevation/reduction linked to levels of physical activity

As with student attrition, student attainment (degree outcome) is one of the criteria institutions are required to report on to the Office for Students so this is high on the list of priorities for university executive teams²². Enabling students to achieve their potential requires a positive environment, which sport can contribute towards.

The Value of University Sport and Physical Activity report published by BUCS outlined a number of benefits of sport which can help improve students' attainment levels²³. An increasing body of evidence shows the benefits of physical activity improving cognition and students' learning ability. Furthermore, students' involvement in physical activity improves self-concept, improves cognition, reduces boredom, reduces stress and increases attention span and concentration. Both these physiological and psychological mechanisms have been identified as key factors to explain the association between physical activity and academic achievement.

Sport and physical activity not only have an impact on actual attainment but can also impact students' perceptions of their attainment (i.e., their self-confidence). A study of UK higher education students found that those with higher physical activity reported better perceptions of outcomes in both academic attainment and employability²⁴. These findings are consistent with the 2019-2020 British Active Student Survey, which reported a clear association between physical activity levels and the type of physical activity with academic attainment perception²⁵. The BUCS Student Active Wellbeing Survey from 2024-25 also showed that those that are involved in sport and attend the gym were more likely to predict a 1st or 2:1 than those that just played sport, just went to the gym, or did neither.²⁶

USEFUL METRICS

Below are some metrics that are currently being used by institutions in the Higher Education Sector.

- UNIVERSITY OF NOTTINGHAM – The comparison of students who attained 1st or 2:1 grade by the following breakdowns

²² Office for Students, [Condition B3: baselines for student outcomes indicators](#)

²³ Brunton J. & Mayne V., [The Value of University Sport and Physical Activity](#), November 2020

²⁴ Budzynski-Seymour et al., [Physical activity, mental and personal well-being, social isolation, and perceptions of academic attainment and employability in university students: The Scottish and British active student surveys](#), May 2020

²⁵ BUCS, [British Active Student Survey Report](#), June 2020

²⁶ BUCS, [Student Active Wellbeing Survey Report](#), April 2025

- Comparison between students that participated in sport against those that did not participate in sport against the institutions baseline.
 - Segmenting and comparing this data by type of participation. (e.g. pay as you go, club member, club committee, scholar etc).
 - Segmenting and comparing data by ethnicity groups and EDI groups (gender, disability, levels of deprivation, entry tariff – number of UCAS points held prior to commencing their studies).
- LEEDS BECKETT UNIVERSITY – Collating data on the percentage of students who successfully finish a higher education qualification, comparing students against non-sport students.
 - LONDON SOUTH BANK UNIVERSITY – Conducts an annual campus survey which collects data on perception of attainment and looks at the impact activity levels have.
 - UNIVERSITY OF EAST ANGLIA – Calculates the percentage of sports engaged students obtaining good honours degrees compared to the general population.

CONSIDERATIONS

When measuring the impact sport has on student attainment, consider the following:

- Anecdotally, members have reported that senior leaders are open to measures of perceptions of attainment as well as attainment itself. They recognise that this speaks to students' confidence of what they can achieve. Where possible, however, graduate outcomes and employment should be used as they are stronger measures.
- An ideal scenario would be to track those students who gave perceived attainment outcomes to see if this was achieved in their final year? I.e. to prove that x% of students achieved their perceived attainment target.

AVAILABLE RESEARCH

- British Active Student Survey (BASS) 2019-20
 - Link to full report and executive summary - [BUCS British Active Student Survey 2019-20](#).
- Student Active Wellbeing Survey 2024-25 Report - [BUCS Student Active Wellbeing Survey Report 2024-25](#),
- Value of University Sport and Physical Activity Report
 - Link to full report and executive summary - [The Value of University Sport and Physical Activity](#)

GRADUATE PROSPECTS/OUTCOMES - Measuring the relationship between sport/physical activity and graduate prospects.

Graduate employment is another criteria that institutions report on to the OfS. This is specifically progression to professional jobs and postgraduate study²⁷. Graduate outcomes are featured as a regular metric in university ranking tables on platforms such as the Guardian and Complete University Guide.

²⁷ Office for Students, [Condition B3: baselines for student outcomes indicators](#)

This data point is therefore likely to be a significant factor for students choosing an institution to study at.

The number of applications per graduate job has rocketed by 59 per cent in a year, according to the Institute of Student Employers (ISE) annual student recruitment report²⁸. The survey is based on responses of 145 member employers, who in total recruited over 40,000 graduates last year. The period saw 1.2m applications for graduate positions, with the mean number of applications per vacancy rising to 140. Against this backdrop of an increasingly competitive job market, students must work hard to stand out²⁹.

In a 2013 report, BUCS spoke to employers, higher education institutions and students and found that as the numbers of graduates increase, students need to do more than pass a degree to get their first job and sustain their employability³⁰.

There was significant evidence from employers that engagement in sport is a recognised strength of graduates, as are involvement in volunteering and management. The skills and experience these roles offer give students a competitive edge in the job market. It was noted that engagement in sport also provides a wide range of positive attributes wanted by employers, most notably team working, communication skills, motivation, competitiveness and resilience. From a university's perspective, senior executives are fully aware that the sport offer is not just about investment in facilities, it's an overall package which includes participation and opportunities for engagement such as volunteering, management and leadership activity.

There also is strong evidence that engagement in sport provides a good return on investment of education fees and means an uplift in average annual salary for those that competed in sport compared to those that did not.

USEFUL METRICS

Below are some metrics that are currently being used by institutions in the Higher Education Sector.

- **UNIVERSITY OF NOTTINGHAM** – The comparison between students that participated in sport and did not participate in sport against the institutions baseline, looking into the following data points:
 - Percentage in a Graduate Outcome – The percentage of graduates in Highly Skilled Work or further HE or Professional Study within 15 months of graduation.
 - Percentage in a Positive Outcome – The percentage of graduates in any form of work or further study within 15 months of graduation.
 - Annual Average salary - The annual average salary of graduates in full-time work in the UK within 15 months of graduation.

These data points are segmented by type of participation (pay as you go, club member, club committee, scholar etc), ethnicity groups and EDI groups (gender, disability, levels of deprivation, entry tariff – number of UCAS points held prior to commencing their studies).
- **LEEDS BECKETT UNIVERSITY** – Collating progression data from the Graduate Outcomes survey on managerial or professional employment, or further study, 15 months following the completion of a higher education qualification and compare this by sport students and non-sport students.

²⁸ Institute of Student Employers, [ISE Recruitment Survey 2024](#), 2024

²⁹ [WonkHE, What does the graduate jobs market look like right now?](#), October 2024

³⁰ BUCS, [BUCS Employability Research Report](#), June 2013

- LONDON SOUTH BANK UNIVERSITY - Conducts an annual campus survey which collects data on perceptions of employability and looks at the impact that activity levels have.
- UNIVERSITY OF EAST ANGLIA – Collects data on whether recent graduates agree that their current activity fits with their future plans and the percentage of active students feeling they are working towards their long-term goals compared to inactive students.

CONSIDERATIONS

When measuring the impact sport has on graduate prospects/outcomes at your institution, consider the following:

- This data can lag due to the time that this takes to become available.
- We are not claiming that sport is more important than academic achievement in higher education, but we know that sport can play a positive role in employability to help students stand out from their peers.

AVAILABLE RESEARCH

- Value of University Sport and Physical Activity Report
 - Link to full report and executive summary - [The Value of University Sport and Physical Activity](#)
- British Active Student Survey (BASS) 2019-20
 - Link to full report and executive summary - [BUCS British Active Student Survey 2019-20](#)
- BUCS Employability Research Report 2013
 - Link to the full report - [BUCS Employability Research Report](#).

DIRECT FINANCIAL VALUE – Measuring the financial value of the sport and physical activity related assets of the university.

With the ongoing financial pressures within the sector and the budget cuts that internal institution departments are facing, some sports departments are looking to demonstrate their economic value to their institution. This is centred around understanding the return on investment from the money invested into the sport, whether this be from a social or economic point of view. Not all departments within the sector operate at a profit and, for these institutions, it is important to demonstrate the wider value that is being provided outside of the economic return.

Sport England have recently released an updated report on the social value of sport and physical activity in England³¹. This report estimated both the primary and secondary value of sport and physical activity. Primary value is the direct benefit and value to individuals of improved wellbeing. Secondary value is the wider value to society, including the state. The total social value of sport and physical activity in England for 2022/23 was £107.2 billion. This breaks down to £96.7 billion of primary value and £10.5 billion of secondary value. The report also provisionally estimated the annual social cost of the inequalities seen in adult physical activity at £15.6 billion. This is broken down to £14.2 billion from primary value and £1.4 billion from secondary value.

³¹ Sport England, [Social Value of Sport and Physical Activity](#), October 2024

Using this updated information from the Sport England data, BUCS are working with the Sport and Recreation Alliance to be able to ascertain the social value of sport within the higher education sector. We will share this information with members in due course. Social value calculators within the wider sporting ecosystem e.g. 4GLOBAL, offer members the ability to demonstrate social value beyond the pound spent.

MEASURES INSTITUTIONS ARE CURRENTLY IMPLEMENTING

- UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH - Research project assessing the social and economic impacts of the sport activities, facilities and programmes. Output will be an estimate of the return on investment which will identify the economic and social value achieved through this investment.

AVAILABLE RESEARCH

- Sport England Social Value of Sport and Physical Activity
 - Link to full report - [Social value of sport and physical activity | Sport England](#)
- The economic impact of higher education teaching, research and innovation.
 - [LE-UUK-Impact-of-university-TL-and-RI-Final-Report.pdf](#)

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY BUSINESS OFFICERS ([CUBO](#))

CUBO is the association for commercial and campus services professionals working in higher and further education institutions in the UK and Ireland. Their mission is to lead and promote excellence in the development of campus life, services and the student experience. In their remit, they look to connect members and support their professional development through events, training, research and the sharing of best practise. They also support members to use their management skills and business acumen to deliver effective and sustainable services and commercial activities that enhance universities. They administer the UUK/GuildHE Accommodation Code of Practise to which over 140 members subscribe.

We have involved colleagues from CUBO in the conversations on this piece of work and will look to collaborate and partner with them at all opportunities that arise to help broaden the work that is ongoing in this area.

SECTION 3: CASE STUDIES

These case studies aim to provide some additional context to how the work is being completed, potential partnerships utilised within an institution, challenges that have been faced in carrying out the work and the impact that the work has had on promoting the value of higher education sport. Thank you to the institutions that have submitted case studies for this section of the report.

UNIVERSITY OF EAST ANGLIA



Name – Mark Heazle

Role – Head of Sport and Physical Activity

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Brief statement of what they were trying to achieve

'Protect the resource that was available to the sports department in the event of budget cuts by the university'

What methodology did you use?

We used the BUCS 2020 position statement as our starting point for developing our Value and Impact of Sport and Physical Activity Framework - this was helpful in identifying and confirming the strategic drivers that are important to HE institutions. From here, we looked at what sort of data was available to us and how they could be applied to the six identified themes, and if there were any gaps where we needed to develop new or additional datasets to help support the work. There is a mix of datasets from internal sources and student records, Pulse survey data, and some from other external data sources such as the Complete University Guide.

What was the timeline of undertaking this piece of work?

We initially started this work in February 2023, when it was clear that the UEA's financial outlook was going to become challenging - our initial thinking, in the face of expected budget cuts across the institution, was to protect what we had. From starting work early in 2023, we then took the findings from the 2022/23 student cohort to our Student Experience Committee in November 2023, which provided invaluable feedback. From here, we carried out some statistical significance testing on the emerging key performance indicators. The process was repeated over the summer of 2024, with data from the 2023/24 academic year. The second year was an easier exercise to carry out, with the supporting departments better equipped and better prepared to meet our needs.

The University's senior staff have now acknowledged the importance of the work and have requested that it is now undertaken on an annual basis, with the findings reported into the Student Experience Committee every year. This has helped to ensure the continued support and assistance from other departments in future years.

How does this work impact your institution's wider strategic objectives?

With the arrival of a new VC in the summer of 2023, a new university strategy was developed, with student recruitment and student experience key parts of that strategy so it has been really helpful to be able to explain to senior leaders within the institution that our programmes are having an impact in these areas. Perhaps most surprisingly, the data has shone a light on just how big the impact that our programmes have on non-continuation/withdrawal rates of students, with there being a significant difference between those who are engaged in our programmes and those who are not - we intend that this sort of data, and the impact that it shows, will now give us additional leverage to get involved in areas such as the university's Access and Participation Plan.

What, if any, other institutional departments did you collaborate with during the process?

We initially worked with colleagues from the University's Admissions, Recruitment and Marketing directorate (ARM), as well as those from Finance, Planning and Governance (FPG), who provided us with a great deal of support with access to student data and records etc. Latterly, we have also engaged with colleagues from the academic School of Education and Lifelong Learning's PE, Sport and Health team, who have provided assistance with the statistical significance testing of some of the key performance indicators.

What challenges did you face during the process?

There were numerous initial challenges. Capacity of staff within the teams that we were reliant on for assistance e.g. ARM, FPG was an issue, with it taking slightly longer to get the sort of engagement that we needed, but we are there now and the key performance indicators are now built into the annual reporting cycle that FPG carry out for us. We also had to make some changes to the university's Privacy Policy to make students aware of the ways in which we were using their participation data alongside other academic and personal data, which was an unexpected hurdle that took some time to resolve. We have also had to grapple with how we define 'engagement' in our programmes - there are multiple systems in use that record participation data, e.g. facility management MRM systems, SU systems, clubs, Active Campus programmes etc, without a robust way of actually recording who does what and where, so we took the decision to define engagement as anybody that has been involved in any of our programmes at least once in the academic year.

What impact has this data had internally promoting the value of sport?

The desire to develop the Framework was based on the need to protect the resource that we had in the face of budget cuts across the institution. What actually transpired was that we were able to make estimates on the financial value of our programmes in the key areas of recruitment, continuation and conversion from UG to PGT courses and then successfully built business cases to increase our resource base with the recruitment of staff that have some very explicit targets in the areas of student recruitment and engagement. We have presented our work to the VC and other senior leaders at the University, which we hope will position us favourably as financial challenges continue. We are incorporating this data into an annual review document that will help to keep the profile of what we do high.

Additional information

We also use 4Global's Social Value Indicator from their DataHub suite of tools. This is especially useful in the context of the role that the university plays in the local community and its civic obligations. In 2023/24, the tool estimates that participation at the Sportspark generates £5.835m of social value.

Please see page 19 for a copy of the University of East Anglia Value and Impact of Sport and Physical Activity Framework.

University of East Anglia Value and Impact of Sport and Physical Activity Framework

	Strategic Driver	Measure	Source	22/23 Value	23/24 Value	Comparison or	Positive Impact	Statistical Significance	Notes/Commentary	Statistical Significance Details
1	University Sport and Student Recruitment	% conversion of attendees at any uea+sport open day talk to applications v overall UEA conversion	uea+sport / ARM	80.0%	67.7%	53.3%	🛡️	Yes	130 attendees across 2023 open day sports talks. People who attend an open day sport talk are more likely to apply to UEA; 67.7% applied, compared to 53.3% of open day attendees on average. Stats provided by Lindsey Green.	Z-Test carried out by Ciaran Maloney (PGR), supervised Dr. Victoria Warburton, Associate Professor of Education and Lifelong Learning, EDU. 95% confidence interval 0.06 - 0.23.
2		% conversion of attendees at any uea+sport open day presentation to 'Firm' v overall UEA conversion	uea+sport / ARM	38.3%	25.4%	23.5%	❌	No	130 attendees across 2023 open day sports talks. 25.4% of these went on to make UEA their 'Firm' choice, compared to the UEA's overall conversion rate of 23.5%. Stats provided by Lydia Newton.	Z-Test carried out by Ciaran Maloney (PGR), supervised Dr. Victoria Warburton, Associate Professor of Education and Lifelong Learning, EDU. 95% confidence interval -0.12 - 0.03.
3	University sport, transition and retention	Withdrawal rate of sports engaged students v general UEA population.	uea+sport/FPG	3.9%	5.9%	8.1%	🛡️	Yes	4636 students entered first year of study in 23/24. 8.1% of these (380) dropped out. Of sports engaged students within that 4636 (2988) the number dropping out is 176, or 5.9%. Statistics provided by Charlotte Caws	Z-Test carried out by Ciaran Maloney (PGR), supervised Dr. Victoria Warburton, Associate Professor of Education and Lifelong Learning, EDU. 95% confidence interval -0.08 - 0.04.
4		% active students reporting that they have made friends at UEA v inactive	Pulse Survey	83.0%	84.0%	78.0%	🛡️		High activity level (<2.5hr/pw) = 84%, low activity level (>1.5hr/pw) = 78%. Data provided by Tableau reports	
5		Conversion of "sports engaged" students into PG study v general UEA population.	uea+sport/ARM/FPG	10.5%	7.8%	6.9%	🛡️		3377 students completed their first degree in 22/23. 76.7% (2592) were awarded a 2.1 or above. Of sports engaged students within that 3377 (1579), 82.3% were awarded a 2.1 or above. Statistics provided by Charlotte Caws.	Z-Test carried out by Ciaran Maloney (PGR), supervised Dr. Victoria Warburton, Associate Professor of Education and Lifelong Learning, EDU. 95% confidence interval 0.00 - 0.3.
6	University sport, physical activity and health	% active students understanding why sport and physical activity is important v inactive	Pulse Survey	99.0%	100.0%	95.0%	🛡️		High activity level (<2.5hr/pw) = 100%, low activity level (>1.5hr/pw) = 95%. Data provided by Tableau reports	
7		% active students feeling safe off campus around the local area v inactive.	Pulse Survey	74.0%	71.0%	72.0%	❌		High activity level (<2.5hr/pw) = 71%, low activity level (>1.5hr/pw) = 72%. Data provided by Tableau reports	
8		% active students feeling they are dealing better at being at university v inactive	Pulse Survey	80.0%	76.0%	74.0%	🛡️		High activity level (<2.5hr/pw) = 77%, low activity level (>1.5hr/pw) = 74%. Data provided by Tableau reports	
9	University sport and graduate attainment	% of sports engaged students obtaining good honours degrees v general UEA population.	uea+sport/FPG	82.3%	77.9%	74.9%	🛡️	Yes	3377 students completed their first degree in 22/23. 76.7% (2592) were awarded a 2.1 or above. Of sports engaged students within that 3377 (1579), 82.3% were awarded a 2.1 or above. Statistics provided by Charlotte Caws.	Z-Test carried out by Ciaran Maloney (PGR), supervised Dr. Victoria Warburton, Associate Professor of Education and Lifelong Learning, EDU. 95% confidence interval 0.04 - 0.10.
10		% active students reporting they have the right life skills v inactive	Pulse Survey	74.0%	72.0%	66.0%	🛡️		High activity level (<2.5hr/pw) = 72%, low activity level (>1.5hr/pw) = 66%. Data provided by Tableau reports	
11	University sport and graduate employability	% active students feeling they are working towards their long term goals v inactive	Pulse Survey	68.0%	73.0%	71.0%	🛡️		High activity level (<2.5hr/pw) = 73%, low activity level (>1.5hr/pw) = 71%. Data provided by Tableau reports	
12		Graduate prospects: Outcomes—success of graduates after leaving	CUG 2025	88.0%	80.0%	82.5%	🛡️		Data applies to Sports Science-related courses i.e. PESH. Comparison data is UEA overall score. CUG measure - 'The success of graduates after leaving university'.	
13		Graduate prospects: On track—measure of whether recent graduates agree that their current activity fits with their future plans	CUG 2025	95.0%	85.0%	78.7%	🛡️		Data applies to Sports Science-related courses i.e. PESH. Comparison data is UEA overall score. CUG measure - 'A measure of recent graduates agree their current activity fits with their future plans'.	
14	University sport and the civic and global agendas	Volunteering Academy—numbers engaged.	uea+sport	656	733	656	🛡️		Number of individuals enrolled as a volunteer on any uea+sport programme, including club committee positions. 656 in total in 22/23.	
15		PESH placements—cash value attributed to placements	uea+sport/PESH	£52,301	£103,446	£52,301	🛡️		2023/24 PESH Placement Hours = Yr1 750, Yr2 3342.5, Yr3 4950 = 9042.5 hours x £11.44 (National Living Wage) = £103,446. Comparator = 22/23 figure.	
16		Money raised by sports clubs for charitable purposes	uea+sport	£31,031						

LEEDS BECKETT UNIVERSITY

Name – Dan Stanley

Role – Head of Sport, Health and Wellbeing

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**Brief statement of what they were trying to achieve**

'Evidence how sport is making a significant difference to the university objectives of recruitment, retention, graduate prospects and the student experience.'

What methodology did you use?

For our recruitment data collection, we focused on recruitment activities led by university-employed coaches in our focus sports, specifically tracking the interactions between these coaches and prospective student-athletes. Coaches record all contacts made with potential recruits, noting each individual's progression through the recruitment process. This included logging whether each recruit applied to the university, and ultimately, whether they enrolled.

Additionally, we track whether each prospective student was a domestic (UK) or international candidate. Importantly, this dataset only includes individuals directly recruited by the coaches, giving us a clear view of the impact of coach-led recruitment efforts on enrolment.

To collect data on student retention, attrition, and graduate prospects, we collaborated closely with the Data Insight Team, who analysed the continuation, completion, and progression data for students participating in university sport, comparing their outcomes to those of non-participating students. This analysis was based on membership data from Beckett Sport, enabling us to identify trends and differences in retention and success rates between students involved in university sport and those who are not.

What was the timeline of undertaking this piece of work?

The recruitment data is collected over a 12-month period with the main bulk of data between September and January (UCAS window). We are in year 3 of collecting the data.

The continuation, completion and progression data was turned around in a matter of days because we used existing data via systems such as banner.

How does this work impact your institution's wider strategic objectives?

It is very early days but we are now able to evidence how sport is making a significant difference to the university objectives of recruitment, retention, graduate prospects and the student experience. However, data alone isn't enough, it needs to be supported with stories/case studies that bring the data to life.

What, if any, other institutional departments did you collaborate with during the process?

Data Insight Team

What challenges did you face during the process?

No challenges collecting the data other than staff capacity. The biggest challenge is using it to influence relevant stakeholders at the university.

What impact has this data had internally promoting the value of sport?

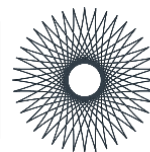
It is early days and influencing the relevant stakeholders/decision makers takes time. What the data has enabled us to do is influence colleagues internally to look at sport through a different lens and understand the need for us to evidence the impact of sport in a different way.

HERIOT WATT UNIVERSITY

Name – Dan Potter

Role – Sports Officer

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**Oriam**
SCOTLAND'S SPORTS
PERFORMANCE CENTRE**Brief statement of what they were trying to achieve**

'Show the university the value of sport is more than wellbeing, which has already been well understood and accepted'.

What methodology did you use?

Please note that this is an ongoing project in its infancy to fully connect databases. We have had pockets of work done in the past but this is looking to see how we can connect databases to show sport is a key differentiator for the university across attrition, retention, wellbeing, attainment and graduate outcomes.

We began with what we want to get out of this and why we wanted/ needed it.

The What

- *How do students, who play sports (part of clubs), differ in retention, attrition, wellbeing, attainment and graduate outcomes to those who aren't playing sport.*
- *How do students, who are active (part of sports clubs or Oriam or Active Wellbeing programmes), differ in retention, attrition, wellbeing, attainment and graduate outcomes compared to those who aren't active.*

The Why

We wanted to show the university the value of sport is more than wellbeing, which has already been well understood and accepted. We wanted to look at metrics that will affect the university in couple of key areas:

- *Income (student fees recruitment and then attrition)*
- *Reputation (graduate outcomes, wellbeing & student experience)*

We are trying to connect our database (Oriam & Sports Union) with university databases (Student records & Alumni) so that they can 'tag' students with the following key bits of data:

- *If they are active (Oriam member/ Sports Union member).*
- *What club(s) they are/were a part of.*
- *What team(s) they are/were a part of.*
- *If they volunteered in sport and for how many hours (committee position, sports ambassador, coaching, SU Executive).*
- *Any sporting successes (Cups, leagues, individual accolades).*

A breakdown of how this data is gathered is as follows:

- *Oriam membership database (Gladstone) has a breakdown of all student Oriam members.*
- *Oriam membership database also shows which members have a Sports Club Membership and for which club.*
- *BUCS play team lines allows the Sports Union to see which team(s) members are part of (only works for BUCS sports and is extremely laborious having to download individual team lines).*

- *Sports Union keeps a track of all Club committee, ambassadors, coaches, and executive committee members. This also keeps a track of the number of hours volunteered by each volunteer and what awards they qualify for.*
- *Taken from BUCS historic data and any other external competition archives. Manual to match up BUCS team lines with success.*

What was the timeline of undertaking this piece of work?

This has been a piece of work that began in summer 2024 with increased resource available to drive this work. We are hoping to have this piece of work completed in time for the end of 2024/25 academic year.

How does this work impact your institution's wider strategic objectives?

A strategic theme for the university is building flourishing connected communities. We aim to show the value of sport to the institution in this area through student experience, alumni connection and sense of belonging.

Another key focus of the university has been employability of graduates, we want to be able to evidence the impact sport, volunteering and being active can have.

What, if any, other institutional departments did you collaborate with during the process?

As this is a piece of work that aims to align multiple sources of data with the university, it required/will require working with the following departments:

- *Student Records*
- *Legal & Governance*
- *MRAC (Marketing, Recruitment, Admission, Communications)*
- *RAS (Registry & Academic Support)*
- *Alumni & Development Team*
- *Sports Union*
- *Oriam*

What challenges did you face during the process?

Understanding how we can connect into different university systems and how we can 'tag' a student with different data points effectively to get the output that we wanted.

The current challenge is data sharing agreements between Oriam (subsidiary company of HW) the Sports Union (part of the university) and the university. There are also challenges around the protected data and what purpose it serves having access to it (e.g. SIMD postcodes).

What we have learnt is to be persistent in getting to the right person and to follow up when someone offers something.

What impact has this data had internally promoting the value of sport?

Still to be determined once we have the results. Hopefully it will promote the importance of sport that it can emerge as a theme of the next university's strategy.

SECTION 4: VALUE OF SPORT EXAMPLES FROM THE WIDER SPORTING ECOSYSTEM

ENGLAND RUGBY – ENRICHING LIVES: THE SOCIAL VALUE OF COMMUNITY RUGBY UNION IN ENGLAND

In October 2024, the RFU released 'the first-ever research into rugby union's social value in England' which reported the contribution of £2.03 billion in social value during the 2023/24 season through approximately 378,000 players, supported by 89,000 volunteers.

The report was commissioned by the RFU to understand the extent of rugby union's impact on society and social and economic benefits that rugby union has within the country. This covers the impact from playing, volunteering and RFU's core activities including facility investment, community rugby programmes, and workforce training and development.

The methodology used to calculate the social value was stated to be consistent with the process used by experts in the areas of social value assessment. The steps used were establishing scope and identifying key stakeholders, mapping outcomes, evidencing outcomes and giving them a value, establishing impact, calculating the social return on investment and reporting, using and embedding the calculations. The key findings from the report include:

- £707 million in value through improved physical and mental health.
- £823.5 million in social and community value, which includes £736 million from volunteer efforts, £20.6 million in charitable giving, £3.5 million in crime reduction and £62 million benefits in education and employment.
- £502 million in economic growth through employment, investment in infrastructure and expenditure on players' requirements.

The report goes on to group the impact that rugby union has into three areas: stronger and better-connected communities, improved health and wellbeing, and economic growth through employment. This high social value was evidenced to be felt across the most challenging areas, while also improving the lives of people from all backgrounds and communities across England.

To read the full report, please click [here](#).

SWIM ENGLAND: DON'T PUT A CAP ON SWIMMING

Swim England published research in September 2023 to outline how water-based activity continues to make a significant contribution to the physical and mental wellbeing of the nation. The report also called for the government to ensure that the country has a sustainable network of pools to support all the activities and sports that rely on them, as well as increasing access to outdoor swimming opportunities.

This is against the backdrop of more than 1,000 publicly accessible pools having closed since 2010, while around 1,500 are in excess of 40 years old and coming to the end of their 'shelf life'. The report states that swimming is generating social value of £2.4 billion a year through improved physical and mental health, reduced crime, enhanced skills, improved educational attainment, improved life satisfaction, and improved social and community development.

Swim England used the 4Global Social Value Calculator to generate the social value figures. The report outlines that this combines participation data from Sport England Active Lives Survey, with the national Social Return on Investment model used for all sport in England to show in monetary terms the social value of swimming. The figures were fine-tuned by incorporating specific evidence relating to the

subjective wellbeing figure value of swimming from external research. The main findings from the research include:

- Of the total social value of £2.4 billion, £1.6 billion was generated by public leisure facilities.
- Swimming helped to prevent more than 78,500 cases of ill health in 2022.
- Swimming prevents 2,500 cases of dementia each year, saving the NHS £106 million.
- Swimming prevents more than 22,516 cases of type 2 diabetes in England each year, saving the NHS £103 million.
- The national social model shows that swimming contributes £1.2 billion worth of social value through improved life satisfaction of swimmers.

To read the full report, please click [here](#).

SCOTTISH RUGBY: SOCIAL IMPACT AND VALUATION REPORT 2023-24

To demonstrate the benefits of rugby within Scotland for the annual period of April 2023 – March 2024 Scottish Rugby produced a report relating to participation in domestic grassroots rugby across the country. They collected data from over 1,600 individual players, parents, volunteers and match officials alongside more than 60% of member clubs.

They found that the value of rugby participation in Scotland over that 12-month period was over £159 million. This included £13.5 million economic value, £41.2 million social value benefit and £103.3 million of health and wellbeing benefit. The most significant contributions came from an equivalent value of £31 million from volunteering efforts and £92 million from subjective wellbeing benefits coming from being part of the rugby community. The benefits equate to £7.71 of social value returned for every £1 invested, at an annual social value of participation of more than £3,000 per player.

To read the full report, please click [here](#).

FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION OF WALES: THE VALUE OF WELSH FOOTBALL STUDY

In November 2021, the Welsh FA released data measuring the impact of grassroots football on the Welsh economy. Using the UEFA social return on investment model, the study found that players from across the country currently generate over £553 million each year, broken down as £263 million in direct contribution to the Welsh economy, more than £206 million in healthcare costs saving and almost £84 million in social benefits. These headline figures are based on 90,000 players and 18,000 volunteers registered with the Welsh Football Association.

Using this data, the projections show that the overall contribution would rise to £692 million each year if the targets of the Welsh Football Association strategic plan 'Our Wales' are met.

To read more on this study, please click [here](#).