



BUCS STRATEGY 2017 - 21

THE BEST UNIVERSITY SPORT EXPERIENCE IN THE WORLD

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

BUCS OVERVIEW	3
MESSAGE FROM THE CEO	4
BUCS STRATEGY 2017-21	5
PHYSICAL ACTIVITY & HEALTH	7
SOCIAL & RECREATION SPORT	9
INTERVARSITY COMPETITION	11
PERFORMANCE SPORT	14
PROFESSIONAL & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT	16
INCLUSION	18
PROFILE & INFLUENCE	20
RESOURCING	23



BUCS OVERVIEW

British Universities & Colleges Sport (BUCS) is the national governing body for Higher Education (HE) sport in the UK, a membership organisation, and a company limited by guarantee with charitable status.

BUCS delivers over 50 sports, from archery to ultimate to almost 160 member institutions comprising a busy league programme of nearly 6,000 teams and over 100 championships events every year.

However, BUCS is far more than the huge intervarsity sport programme. In response to the demand from its members, BUCS activities have expanded to include areas such as physical activity, social and recreational sport, professional and workforce development, sports development, business development, and advocacy to name a few.

BUCS's profile has increased as a respected partner in the sport and physical activity sectors. This is evident from the additional investment into the sector via funding routes and the direct investment from a number of national governing bodies, resulting in £50 million of investment into BUCS member institutions over the past seven years.

All this has provided a strong platform from which to identify and capitalise on further opportunities; to build on BUCS strengths, align our stated ambitions more closely with members' future needs and better harness resources within and around the sector.

BUCS is first and foremost a membership organisation, and this strategy is about the BUCS office, board and members working collectively together, as "BUCS". This alliance will together leverage the overall investment in the delivery of higher education sport to its highest potential, enhance the student experience and increase the profile and influence of Higher Education sport.

Finally, the strategy should provide a strong steer for themes and content for future BUCS conferences and professional development, whilst those events should in turn provide further refinement and adjustments to the strategy. Over the next four years as this strategy is delivered, this document will remain "live" and will continue to be refined and updated, as new research and development further refines the seven strands.



MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

This is an exciting strategy which sets out a pathway to deliver real value to our members – by increasing the impact of sport and physical activity in Universities and Colleges across the UK for their students, staff and local communities. It captures all aspects of involvement within sport and physical activity across the sector and shows the real and significant contributions BUCS member institutions make to the health, wellbeing and sporting life of the wider British population.

The BUCS strategy 2017-21 provides an ambitious vision of where the sector will be in 2021, and a set of structured objectives which will drive the organisation towards this vision over the coming years.

This strategy has been created with and by members, for our members and covers the full spectrum of university sport. From physical activity through to social & recreational sport through to the intervarsity leagues and competitions up to performance sport – this new strategy also provides a clear vision of how this will be delivered.

BUCS is in a very strong position to enable it to have a significant impact on the delivery of physical activity and sport, and with the full engagement of members BUCS will be able to show the true value and potential of university sport at a local, regional and national level.

Through the seven strands of the strategy, BUCS and its membership will deliver the best university sport experience in the world for students, staff and local communities impacted by member institutions, whilst providing rewarding opportunities and development for student sabbaticals and staff involved in sport in the member institutions and BUCS staff.

Vince Mayne

BUCS Chief Executive Officer



BUCS STRATEGY 2017-21

Our mission: “The best university sport experience in the world”

A bold statement which will drive the delivery of all areas of the association in the coming years.

Our vision: A world class higher education sport and physical activity experience, creating the most engaged university communities in the world.

Why we do what we do: Through sport enhance people’s lives by adding value and enabling people to reach their potential.

We will achieve our mission and vision by:

1. Broadening the scope of our strategic vision to encompass the full range of activity which takes place within the university sport setting, from physical activity and health through to performance sport.
2. Creating and developing the workforce within the membership and the communities within universities.
3. Raising the profile of BUCS within these communities and externally with key strategic partners, including celebrating the successes and impact of the delivery of the wider HE sport sector.

The key strategy strands of the BUCS Strategy are as follows:

1. Physical Activity & Health
2. Social & Recreational Sport
3. Inter Varsity Competition
4. Performance Sport
5. Professional & Workforce Development
6. Inclusion
7. Profile & Influence



Values

BUCS is an alliance between members (HE institutions), the BUCS office and the BUCS board. Our values are important to our delivery as they shape our culture and how we will work collaboratively to deliver the strategy. They are:

1. **Positive** – Enabling a proactive, productive and enjoyable environment.
2. **Inclusive** - Proactively developing a BUCS family that is accessible, supportive and honest.
3. **Professional** - Taking personal responsibility to ensure high quality actions and outcomes.
4. **Innovative** - A culture of bold ambition and creativity.
5. **Leadership** - Creating opportunities for leadership and outstanding leaders.



PHYSICAL ACTIVITY & HEALTH

This area of the strategy aims to develop and broaden the range of opportunities that exist for staff and students within the HE sector to become more physically active, boosting their health and wellbeing. Objectives focus on widening access and breaking down barriers for those that are not currently active. Relationships will be forged with key partners within the physical activity and health landscape to aid and shape national and localised opportunities within the HE sector– getting the university population more active, more often.

Mission: To inspire and enable our students, staff and wider community to become more active more often.

Vision Aims & Objectives:

Vision Aim 1: Research - To gain insight on the value, size and impact of physical activity programmes to institutions student and staff experience, relevant for members to use for internal and external advocacy.

Strategic objectives:

- *Develop a research proposal between BUCS and ukactive for consideration of National Sport Funding to show the institutional value to activity programmes.*
- *Participate in the BUCS audit of HE institutions' facilities and programmes.*
- *Gain insight from the sector to help identify barriers to participation, the right activity offer and the best marketing tools to promote this.*

Vision Aim 2: Collaboration - To galvanise a sense of collectiveness within the HE sector to exploit the potential opportunities as a significant body.

Strategic objectives:

- *Develop a HE wide activity campaign suitable for all institutions.*
- *Explore the opportunity to act as a collective 'chain' of sport and fitness centres.*
- *Exploit the collective value of our sector to attract commercial interest.*



Vision Aim 3: Development - To facilitate forums in which best practice from both inside and outside the sector can easily be accessed and shared.

Strategic objectives:

- *Create a central resource/tool kit hosted on the BUCS website.*
- *Explore a HE specific Physical Activity Excellence kite mark.*
- *Ensure we stay abreast of advancements in technology and their use in Physical Activity.*
- *Identify and share good practice for underrepresented groups.*
- *Ensure the continued promotion and development of our network groups.*

Vision Aim 4: Partnerships - To grow and promote physical activity through partnerships that have national impact.

Strategic objectives:

- *Develop relevant BUCS strategic partnerships most notably with (but not exclusive to) ukactive and CIMSPA in the first instance.*
- *Align with the strategic themes of Profile & Influence, Professional & Workforce Development, Social & Recreational Sport and Inclusion, linking with associated expert partners supporting these areas of the strategy.*

What will success look like in 2021?

By 2021 we want to have the most active university community in the world across all levels of participation.



SOCIAL & RECREATION SPORT

This area looks to support institutions with the engagement and regular participation of students and staff members in social and recreational sport programmes. Within this, opportunities will be provided for institutions to develop the workforce and infrastructure around social sport, whilst assisting members with the development of a wide range of high quality opportunities and programmes for the university community. The impact of involvement in sport at any level will be a key consideration, notably around achieving wider university objectives and the contribution to student experience, health and mental wellbeing.

Mission: To engage with students and staff across the HE sector to highlight the value participating and volunteering in social and recreational sport can play in enhancing their university experience.

Vision Aims & Objectives:

Vision Aim 1: Participation - To encourage students and staff to become more active through social and recreational sport programmes.

Strategic objectives:

- *Maximise the opportunities available to engage with students and staff through sporting activity.*
- *Promote the different types of social and recreational sport activities available, encouraging participants to join at any point, transitioning between activities as required.*
- *Use the power of social and recreational sport to improve mental health and general wellbeing of participants.*

Vision Aim 2: Experience - To provide a wide range of high quality opportunities and experiences for participants and deliverers within social and recreational sport activities.

Strategic objectives:

- *Support institutions to offer the widest range of recreational sporting opportunities possible*
- *Develop a workforce of coaches and volunteers to support programme delivery.*
- *Maximise partnerships with local and national organisations to facilitate increased participation.*
- *Establish a recreational sport network to share good sector practice, creating a bank to showcase successful case studies.*



Vision Aim 3: Wellbeing - To contribute to wider wellbeing of the university community and improving student experience.

Strategic Objectives:

- *To develop strong peer group networks and lasting friendships through the recreational sport programme.*
- *To maximise training and development programmes to provide appropriate workforce and contribute to student skill development.*
- *To deliver a varied programme that all students can identify and choose an appropriate access point to enhance their student experience.*

What will success look like in 2021?

We will have a joined-up approach to social and recreational sporting opportunities, providing HE members with the relevant information to create programmes of activity that meet the needs of their university community.



INTERVARSITY COMPETITION

The BUCS competition and event programme is a key area for many members. This area places direct focus on creating and evolving a world-class competition programme for the HE sector. Considerations within this include understanding the motivations of participants and institutions of entering the programme. This will be used to create, develop and enhance a wide range of competitive opportunities within a regional and national intervarsity framework that ensures an appropriate level of competition for all members, across all sports for all levels of participant.

Mission: Developing a visionary plan and identifying opportunities that will lead to the delivery of a modernised, sustainable and student-focussed intervarsity competition programme which offers students a positive sporting experience.

Vision Aims & Objectives:

Vision Aim 1 – Structure: To review and reshape the existing competition structure so that students can easily identify the playing levels on offer relative to their interest and ability, and to afford individuals/institutions the opportunity to make informed choices on where to invest their time, effort and resources.

Strategic Objectives:

- *To design/refine a BUCS 'framework' through which any sport accepted as part of the BUCS competition offer, can challenge its existing planning/practice methodology to assure the best possible 'fit' for student athletes.*
- *To produce an implementation plan and core principles founded in achieving sport specific solutions wherever appropriate.*

Vision Aim 2 - Content: To create student-focussed programme content which provides the best possible competitive opportunities, driven by findings from regular student and member engagement, and which offers positive and rewarding experiences from their choice of sport.



Strategic Objectives Vision Aim 2:

- *To undertake regular consultation which provides a baseline from which ongoing survey work on student/institutional views can be used to inform programme development priorities and ongoing insight or research needs.*
- *To work with Sports Advisory Groups (SAGs) to build a portfolio of student profiles and align, where appropriate, with National Governing Body (NGB) competition programmes/related terminology.*
- *To review and challenge the current recognition and reward system, ideally utilising a range of learning from within and beyond the student sport sector.*

Vision Aim 3 – Delivery: To establish the core principles, practices and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) which will ensure consistent standards of modernised competition delivery across the BUCS intervarsity competition programme, relevant to the level of play and aimed at creating proactive internal and external partnerships, working as a means of driving cost efficiency and effectiveness.

Strategic Objectives:

- *To develop guidelines which support the BUCS framework and work with SAGs to align the five identified 'domains' i.e. travel, facilities, rules/regulations, support and profile appropriate to each level.*
- *To increase the number of sporting agencies providing resources to support the growth and development of BUCS sport.*
- *To establish a prioritised list of research projects, aimed at enhancing the quality of the BUCS competition offer.*

What will success look like in 2021?

- *BUCS will have a more effective competition structure valued by members* and local/regional/national sporting organisations alike.*
- *The student-focussed framework will have been implemented across at least 15 sports.*
- *More students will be benefitting from an appropriate level of sporting competition.*



What will success look like in 2021 (continued)?

- *Institutions will be better able to make prioritised decisions about which activities to invest in, against clearer criteria and expectations.*
- *The competition programme impact, content and delivery mechanisms will be re-evaluated regularly, using the best available blend of member engagement/consultation, user data and identified best practice from across sport.*



PERFORMANCE SPORT

This area places focus on the development of Performance programmes and elite athletes within Higher Education institutions and across BUCS sport programmes. This includes understanding what 'Performance' looks like within the sector, and how the existing BUCS programme develops and contributes towards performance. In addition, the support provided to performance staff within member institutions is a key consideration, as is working with a wide range of NGBs, national and international performance sport stakeholders to increase the profile and recognition of HE Performance Sport.

Mission: Support an environment for performance athletes to develop whilst in Higher Education. This will also contribute to enhancing both BUCS and the British HE sector's reputation and profile, both domestically and internationally.

Vision Aims & Objectives:

Vision Aim 1: Positioning - Develop a clear role in relation to performance sport within the BUCS offer that is understood and supported by the membership.

Strategic objectives:

- *Identify a Performance Sport lead within the BUCS Office to lead the implementation of this strand.*
- *Establish a Performance Sport Working Group to help take forward the objectives identified within this area of the strategy.*
- *Appoint a performance sport representative on priority Sport Advisory Group's to ensure BUCS Performance Sport offer is relevant and in line NGB's performance pathway*
- *Create a network of performance sport leads to encourage knowledge sharing across the HE sector.*

Vision Aim 2: Partnerships - Develop partnerships with national and international organisations involved in HE performance sport.

Strategic objectives:

- *Work in partnership with key agencies to provide stronger advocacy for the importance of HEIs supporting dual career programmes.*



Strategic objectives Vision Aim 2 continued:

- *Work in partnership with TASS and Winning Students to develop coach and practitioner pathways.*
- *Audit of current practice of sports scholarships to encourage the quantity and quality of sports scholarships.*
- *Establish stronger PR links with EUSA and FISU to increase the profile of British athletes on an international level.*

Vision Aim 3: Opportunities - Develop opportunities for student athletes that allow them to compete at the highest level whilst at university.

Strategic objectives:

- *Develop a passport system for dual career scholarship athletes to gain access to HE facilities nationwide.*
- *Develop a research proposal to identify the needs and support mechanisms student athletes require to support a dual career whilst at university.*
- *Profile universities offering scholarship opportunities to potential students through the Complete University Guide and BUCS website.*



PROFESSIONAL & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

This area of the strategy will aid the professional development of both staff and students within the sector, through the provision and enhancement of relevant programmes and opportunities. Essential to this will be the development of professional working relationships with key workforce partners and stakeholders. A wide range of initiatives will allow all staff and students across a diverse range of roles within the sector to grow and develop, benefitting not only themselves but also HE institutions across the membership.

Mission: To provide increased CPD opportunities for all staff members and student officers within the BUCS membership - whilst increasing the provision that is on offer to the wider workforce that supports student sport.

Vision Aims & Objectives:

Vision Aim 1: Staff - To develop the people working in HE Sport and Physical Activity.

Strategic objectives:

- *To create a BUCS Training and Development Advisory Group to oversee the development of the BUCS CPD offer.*
- *To create a BUCS Mentoring Programme.*
- *To create a BUCS Leadership Development Programmes (including specific targeting of Aspiring Leaders and Women into Leadership).*
- *To develop the BUCS CPD offer including: increased number & impact of professional development networks, enhance the senior managers CPD programme, enhance the existing development CPD programme and enhance BUCS Conference.*
- *To map the expertise in the sector to create an active resource.*



Vision Aim 2: Students - To enhance the student experience and develop graduate attributes through taking part in HE Sport and Physical Activity.

Strategic objectives:

- *To research and articulate the impact of sport on student academic progression and employability.*
- *To develop an advocacy document for students to enable them to clearly articulate the skills developed through sport and physical activity and their value for employability.*
- *To develop increased recognition by university senior leaders, employers and students of the value of sport and the attributes that can be developed through taking part in sport and physical activity.*
- *To increase the range of opportunities, within BUCS programmes and member institutions, where HE sport and physical activity develops graduate attributes.*
- *To develop a BUCS student leadership programme for students involved in the management and delivery of HE sport and physical activity.*

Vision Aim 3: Wider workforce - To recognise and create opportunities for the development of coaches, volunteers and leaders in sport.

Strategic objectives:

- *To increase the recognition that Higher Education is a key location for providing the next generation of the sporting workforce.*
- *To develop a BUCS Volunteering strategy and increase engagement and opportunities within the BUCS events programme.*
- *To articulate the impact of Higher Education on the wider sporting landscape.*

What will success look like in 2021?

We will have a process of developing exceptional student & graduate leaders – that are employable within the sports sector and further afield. There will be clearly outlined training and development opportunities for staff and student leaders within the HE sector – developing the most engaged, qualified and accomplished HE sport staff in the world.



INCLUSION

Making Inclusion every day is a key driver for BUCS within the strategy. This area will look to ensure that all BUCS activities, programmes and opportunities are inclusive and accessible to all members, staff and students. We will develop specific tailored programmes for institutions and the wider membership by working with relevant stakeholders and partners, focus will additionally be placed on widening access to existing opportunities to ensure that students within all underrepresented groups are engaged in BUCS activity.

Mission: Creating the conditions across Higher Education which make inclusion and accessibility the norm for everyone taking part in sport and physical activity.

Vision Aims & Objectives:

Vision Aim 1: Strategy - Ensure inclusion is embedded in all BUCS strategies, policies and delivery.

Strategic objectives:

- Champion the development of long-term cultural change around inclusion across the HE sport sector.
- Establish a series of member networks to discuss key issues within inclusion in university sport.
- Ensure sport in Higher Education is the gold standard for inclusive sport.
- Drive and support appropriate campaign activity to raise the profile of inclusion across the sector and the work of BUCS and its members.



Vision Aim 2: Insight - Collate data to evidence the impact of effective interventions of inclusion in sport.

Strategic objectives:

- Create a robust evidence base on the impact of inclusive & accessible sport & physical activity opportunities for sector demographics, making this easily available for use by member institutions.
- Identify, collate and share examples of best practice with members to enhance cross-sector learning.

Vision Aim 3: Guidance - Provide universities with guidance around facilitating inclusive sport and physical activity.

Strategic objectives:

- Develop appropriate and accessible digital resources that support staff and students to develop inclusive sport and physical activity programmes, share research & insight and access broader guidance documents from inclusion partners and stakeholders across the sporting landscape.
- Work with BUCS' inclusion partners to develop relevant training programmes as required.
- Lead advocacy for BUCS members regarding inclusion across HE sport & physical activity.

What will success look like in 2021?

Higher education sport is respected across the spectrum as the standard bearer for inclusive sport from social and participative sport all the way to the podium.



PROFILE & INFLUENCE

With the HE sports sector continuing to grow and develop, in terms of programmes, workforce and wider infrastructure, this area focusses on the impact, exposure and recognition of this amongst both sporting and wider non-sporting stakeholders. The relationships developed within this area will be crucial to ensure HE sport and physical activity has strong influence and impact within the wider sporting landscape, whilst also ensuring HE representation links to relevant boards, organisations and programmes that can help contribute to the ongoing success of the sector.

Mission: To raise the profile of BUCS within the sporting landscape and wider British community and develop strategic relationships with key stakeholders and influencers, to recognise and highlight the impact of the sector and in turn secure current and attract sustainable investment for BUCS and its members.

Vision Aim & Objectives:

Vision Aim 1 – Profile: Build the case for HE sport and physical activity, using research and coverage of all strategy strands, to raise the overall profile of the sector and BUCS.

Strategic objectives:

- *Develop consistent brand, key messaging and values across the sector, to encourage connected communities and to promote members and BUCS outside the sector.*
- *Encourage research opportunities and develop BUCS data and insight processes, to provide evidence on the impact of HE sport.*
- *Work with institutions to profile and cover all strands of the BUCS strategy, to effectively highlight and communicate the entire BUCS offering – not just Wednesday afternoon sport and events, but also health and physical activity, social and recreational sport and inclusion.*
- *Increase visibility and profile within the national media, and pursue TV/broadcast opportunities to reach a wider audience. Acknowledge that this may require a leap of faith in investment.*
- *Enhance the event experience for BUCS members and students, through industry leading content and coverage of events, weeks of action and other initiatives, on new and enhanced digital channels (including a new BUCS website).*



Vision Aim 2 – Influence: Develop relationships and partnerships with stakeholders within and outside the sector, to effectively influence and ensure the value of the HE sport sector is recognised; and overall helps shape and impact the national agenda for sport and wellbeing.

Strategic objectives:

- *Use empirical research evidence to make the case within the sector to influence key university decision makers on the benefit that sport and physical activity can bring to the student experience, student satisfaction, degree attainment and employability - ensuring sport is at the forefront of university strategies.*
- *Influence government agencies on a local and national level outside the HE sector, promoting the value of HE sport and physical activity, to secure ongoing and new investment.*
- *Develop partnerships with other National Governing Bodies of sport, to secure the position of HE sport in the sporting pathway at all levels.*

Develop partnerships with key organisations that can yield external investment into BUCS and Vision

Aim 3: Commercial - Drive business development, using enhanced profile, influence and current assets to attract sustainable investment into the sector. Simultaneously identify new products, services and opportunities that will generate unrestricted commercial income streams.

Strategic objectives:

- *Actively source sustainable commercial income from government and commercial organisations, to support all strands of the strategy and delivery of the BUCS office functions.*
- *Work across all strategy strands, to identify opportunities to develop new products and services, which enhance the BUCS sporting offer and ensure financial sustainability. (For example: BUCS Super Rugby, eSports, BUCS Active, UNiVersal gym).*
- *Enhance existing BUCS events and sporting offer to ensure they are commercial sustainable.*
- *Implement a robust data capture process and CRM system, which enables BUCS to collect data on individual students and staff in order send targeted communication of BUCS activity and provide new opportunities to commercial partners.*
- *Modernise and develop the digital platforms which underpin BUCS through the BUCS Management System (BMS) project; to improve administrative efficiencies, enhance the online experience for members and students and develop new opportunities for commercial partners.*



What does success look like in 2021?

- *Sport and physical activity are the forefront of the majority of HE institutions in the UK and an integral part of the sporting pathway for relevant NGBs*
- *Broadcast deal – blue ribboned sports on major network*
- *Membership / data process – and targeted segmented comms*
- *Media coverage on national level*
- *Sustainable commercial investment into BUCS from a range of income streams*
- *Working with a diverse selection of partners, each supporting our work and contributing to BUCS delivering the best university sporting experience in the world.*



RESOURCING

There is evidently an increased ambition within this strategy, which will deliver significantly more added value to BUCS members, and require more resources. It will involve an increase in capacity and capability within the organisation, which could comprise a combination of additional inputs, including:

- Increased engagement of members, for CPD involvement outside their own campus, within:
 - Professional Network Groups
 - Steering groups, standing committees, sports advisory groups, etc.
 - Regional groups
- Increased partnership working including:
 - National Governing Bodies of sport, and other relevant national agencies
 - Sector professional bodies such as CIMSPA, BASES, plus PA networks, CSPs, UK Active
 - Commercial partners
 - Academic departments, business-related as well as sport
- Volunteers from outside the membership, including graduates or previous sabbatical officers with a desire to stay involved.
- Further development and strengthening of the Regional structure, its capacity and capability.

In order to generate additional resource BUCS will also look into the following:

- An increase in Member affiliations, and/or other fees
- Attract increased external funding from NGBs and sports councils
- Generate more commercial income

In reality it is likely to be a combination of all these different inputs, requiring an adjustment to BUCS' current business model. BUCS and its members will need to continuously look to the future in the context of the present changing landscape, and seek to future proof the organisation against infrastructure, funding, governmental and commercial changes which could significantly affect the business model and our ability to deliver this strategy.



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