



Sports Clubs Strategy 2017-2020

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This Sports Strategy was created by the FTO Sports Lead 2016-17 for GCU Sports Clubs. This is the first Sports Strategy created for GCU Students' Association's sports clubs and will be carried out by the Sports Council, FTO Sports Lead and the Students' Association.	

Introduction

Welcome to Glasgow Caledonian University (GCU) Students' Association's Sports Strategy 2017-2020. This document outlines our vision, aims and objectives for the next 3 years, which coincides with GCU Students' Association's strategic plan, 'The Bigger Plan 2020'.

The Bigger Plan 2020 was created by its key stakeholders, particularly GCU students, who established four key themes which the Students' Association will focus on over the next four years. These key themes are Belonging, Empowering, Partnership and Innovation, with the tagline "Be part of something... Bigger". GCU Students' Association is an award winning organisation who exists to represent and enable GCU students to enhance all aspects of their student experience. Its vision is that "GCU students will have an outstanding experience that will live with them forever" and it prides itself in its core value of Diversity, Community, Participation, Fun, Support and Leadership.

Within the organisation, one of the most popular and recognised aspects is our Sports Clubs. GCU Students' Association currently has 33 active sports clubs with over 600 members. Sport at GCU varies greatly, from high achievers to casual and recreational sport played by a range of students from varying backgrounds. All sporting activities at GCU are student-led and run and individuals can use these experiences to develop on a personal and professional level. With over 16,000 student members, GCU Students' Association recognises the vast differences in sport across these student groups and values participation and inclusivity in sport above performance and competitive success.

GCU Students' Association is committed to continuing and developing the support we provide to our sports clubs and engaging with student members through this process. This includes documenting the work that goes on and including this in our sports club impact reports that are published once a year. We also aim to publicise and recognise our volunteer's achievements within their clubs and the local community by focusing on storytelling and communicating these stories out to the rest of the membership and the wider GCU community. GCU Students' Association is affiliated to British University & Colleges Sport (BUCS) and Scottish Student Sport (SSS), and work with many different organisations that provide facilities and resources to sports clubs at GCU.

This is the first Sports Strategy created for GCU Students' Association's sports clubs, therefore, providing them with a strategic direction and vision for the first time. By doing so, our sports members will feel a greater sense of belonging and can "Be part of something... Bigger."



Analysis

A SWOT Analysis and consultation with the Sports Council was conducted to fully understand the current various aspects of sport at GCU Students' Association, specifically identifying its potential. In addition, benchmarking was carried out across other institutions in Scotland which are similar in size and resources. This research was conducted in the form of a questionnaire and the evidence gathered was on institutional practice relating to sport in Scottish universities, more specifically student club sport (See Appendix 1). This analysis developed the vision, aims and strategic areas of the Sports Strategy.

SWOT Analysis of GCU Sport



Vision

“To create an inclusive sporting community providing the support and opportunities to develop our sports clubs, in order to enhance the overall experience of our members.”



Aims

- 1) To increase **participation** by providing a range of opportunities, support, and resources to allow for an inclusive and sociable sporting community.
- 2) To maintain a high level of **performance** in competitions and events.
- 3) To improve our club **infrastructure** in order to enhance their ability to grow and develop.
- 4) To support clubs by providing necessary **resources** so they are accessible, affordable, and have the opportunity to progress.
- 5) To focus on **developing** each of our sports clubs individually.

Strategic Areas

From the aims and overall vision of the strategy created through the analysis process, five key strategic areas have been developed to provide focus for our sports clubs over the next three years. These are *Participation, Performance, Infrastructure, Resources, and Development*. Within all of these strategic areas are actions and measures which will provide focus and allow the Students' Association and Sports Council to track progress.

1) Participation

GCU Students' Association believes that participation in sport is a higher priority than excellence in sport and will therefore focus on providing a range of opportunities, support and resources to allow our sports members to fully participate in their respective clubs. This will include ensuring that, where appropriate, each sports club has access to weekly club training to ensure that they have the opportunity to be part of a club and gain experience in their chosen sport(s). There will also be additional opportunities for our members to participate within and out of their sport i.e. through competitions, social events, and sport friendly activities. Another way to ensure participation is through sport's USP of one membership applying to all clubs. This valuable aspect of our funding model will encourage our members to participate in multiple clubs, or at least have the option to do so.

Moreover, our sports clubs at GCU prides themselves in being a tight knit community, commonly described as a "sporting family". To further encourage participation, the Sports Council will take lead on ensuring that our sports clubs continue to hold weekly social activities and events (e.g. fundraisers in the sponsored bar or sports tournaments) which will give a chance for sports clubs to support and interact with one another.

GCU Students' Association and the Sports Council will also ensure that our sports clubs are inclusive and are perceived to be inclusive to all its members. This includes having Sports Council lead on at least one Inclusivity and Diversity Campaign throughout the academic year (e.g. rainbow laces to support the LGBT+ community). Sports Council will also nominate one of their members to sit on GCU Students' Association's Equality and Diversity committee to represent sport, ensure the input of sport in the association's Equality and Diversity policy and maintain sports involvement in Equality and Diversity activities. In addition, there will be a new role within each sports club committee known as a 'Sports Participation Officer' who's role is to encourage inclusion within their sports club, with a strong focus on Fresher's retention.

GCU Students' Association Strategic Plan

With regards to "The Bigger Plan 2020", this strategic area contributes to the strategic theme of **Belonging**. Through participation, all current, new and prospective members will be welcomed into inclusive and diverse clubs and this will help achieve the 2020 belonging objective to "support sports clubs to increase the inclusivity of their activities to reach out to students from the full diversity of our membership to build student communities".

Actions:

- One inclusivity and diversity campaign per academic year (minimum of 3 carried out between 2017-2020).
- One Sports Council member on the Equality and Diversity committee each year.

Measures:

- Each club committee to assign an additional role named the 'Sports Participation Officer'.
- There will be a minimum total of 700 memberships each year and this figure will increase by 2% year on year.

2) Performance

GCU is very successful in a variety of competitions and students represent the Students' Association in sport all over Scotland, and occasionally across the rest of the UK. Many competitions are coordinated by BUCS but some student groups also participate in many other leagues, competitions, and one off events where they represent GCU. Although excellence in sport and competitive success is not a key priority of the Students' Association, it still believes that the necessary support and resources should be given to all competitions and events that students participate in regardless of the effect it has on any league tables. In return, GCU Students' Association expects our sports clubs to focus on maintaining a high team performance with regards to ensuring that they complete all fixtures and have a zero walkover figure. Each team will also be encouraged to focus on improving their win percentage and will aim to increase this figure year after year.

Students represent GCU and GCU Students' Association when participating in competitions and events and should behave in a way that is respectful of others and will not bring the University or Students' Association into disrepute. This includes the behaviour of groups, individuals, and associated individuals, and relates to the consumption of alcohol and behaviour whilst representing GCU.

GCU Students' Association Strategic Plan

With regards to "The Bigger Plan 2020", this strategic area contributes to the strategic theme of **Empowering**. Through performance, GCU Students' Association staff will be developed to ensure they have the "right talent and skills" to provide the necessary support and resources to sports clubs so that they can perform in competitions and events, leading to a high level of performance year on year.

Measures:

- There will be zero walkovers per club.
- There will be an increase in win percentage across the clubs.

3) Infrastructure

GCU Students' Association is dedicated to improving our sports clubs infrastructure so that they have the ability to grow and develop. In order to achieve this there will be a simple accreditation scheme in place, named the 'Exemplary Sports Club Award'. Within the 'Exemplary Sports Club Award' there will be several requirements which each sports club will be expected to achieve in order to be recognised as a sports club of an acceptable standard. A club who carries out all the requirements of the award will achieve a 'star' beside their clubs name and this will be shown on the GCU Students' Association website. Sports clubs who achieve the 'Exemplary Sports Club Award' will receive priority in booking a stall for the Fresher's Fayre and will receive front cover publication in relevant GCU Students' Association articles. By doing so, it will help persuade new members and prospective students to join the club and it ensures that the clubs are obtaining the necessary level of support and training from the Students' Association. The measures within the 'Exemplary Sports Club Award' which will improve the sports clubs infrastructure include:

- Registering the club annually and completing the required 'Club Packs' in order to develop the committee roles and handover period.
- The clubs committee must attend at least two '121 meetings' with an SA staff member per academic year.
- The clubs committee must apply good financial management and ensure their club accounts show a surplus by the end of each trimester.
- A club who has new committee members must attend introductory committee training once in the academic year.
- At least one club committee members must enrol in the Student Leaders Programme.

GCU Students' Association Strategic Plan

With regards to "The Bigger Plan 2020", this strategic area contributes to the strategic theme of **Empowering** as sports clubs have the ability to "take positive actions" in shaping the infrastructure of their clubs in order to grow and develop.

Actions:

- The majority of sports clubs will have achieved the 'Sports Club Standard Award'.

4) Resources

GCU Students' Association recognises the importance of providing our sports clubs with the necessary resources so that they are accessible, affordable, and have the opportunity to progress. GCU Students' Association will ensure, where possible, that clubs have the necessary funding for facilities, transport, affiliation, and other costs so that clubs are not restricted in their ability to function. In addition, they will ensure that clubs accounts are accessible and that clubs have access to good equipment storage.

In order to not limit our clubs with the resources they receive, our sports clubs will also have access to the University's Common Good Fund where they can apply for additional funding

which will enhance clubs to undertake projects that fit with the University's mission for the common good.

Sports clubs will now apply for their funding from the new funding model, as decided by the Sports Council 2016/17. This new funding model consists of two parts. The first part comprises of a 'Sports Membership Fee' of £15 which members must pay in order to become a sports member. From this fee, 85% goes to the Focus Sport Development pot and the remaining 15% will cover insurance, facilities, and transport. The second part of the funding model is the 'Club Joining Fee'. Individual sports clubs will decide on the price of their joining fee which will be capped at £40, with a minimum price of £10. This is the main source of funding which clubs will receive and can spend it accordingly. The 'Club Joining Fee' will apply for a full academic year and cannot be changed once set in trimester 1. One trimester membership will still apply with the 'Sports Membership Fee' remaining the same (at £15) but the sports club will reduce their joining fee by 50% for Erasmus and PGT students.

GCU Students' Association Strategic Plan

With regards to "The Bigger Plan 2020", this strategic area contributes to the strategic theme of **Innovation** where sports clubs have the necessary resources in place so that they have the ability to try new ideas. By doing so, the Students' Association can "continually innovate and develop our activities to meet student's needs".

Actions:

- Sports clubs will have applied to the Common Good Fund.
- All Sports clubs will be provided with the basic resources to allow them to function.

5) Development

GCU Students' Association prides themselves in developing their volunteers. This is highlighted in the most recent success of the Students' Association achieving the Investing in Volunteers Accreditation which is the UK quality standard for all organisations which involve volunteers in their work. This is also highlighted in the numerous training opportunities for members across the whole organisation. In particular, there is the Student Leaders Programme which is a unique programme that is designed to help students identify the competencies (skills, knowledge and behaviours) they need and to reflect on what they should do to be a more effective leader.

In order to develop our sports members, a new Focus Sports Programme has been created. Each year, Sports Council will choose between 4-6 clubs who will be the focus sports of that year. The sports clubs will apply to become a focus sport and these will be chosen by council based on a criteria where there is a fair range and representation of sports with an even male: female sports club ratio. The clubs chosen as the Focus Sports will receive extra

funding which is included in the new funding model. They will also have a development plan in place and longer 121 meetings with the Students' Association staff.

GCU Students' Association Strategic Plan

With regards to "The Bigger Plan 2020", this strategic area fits in with the strategic theme of **Innovation**. This is a new and unique Focus Sports Programme which will give the opportunity for sports clubs to "innovate and develop" by providing them with more focus, training, funding and support.

Measures:

- 4-6 sports will take part in the Focus Sports Programme per year.
- A minimum of 12 sports clubs will have gone through the Focus Sports Programme by 2020.

Summary

This Sports Strategy provides a fitting direction for sports clubs at GCU over the next three years leading up to 2020. The strategy provides an appropriate vision based on the current situation of our sports clubs at GCU along with measurable, realistic and attainable aims given the size and level of resources of GCU Students' Association. Within the strategic areas identified within the aims, Participation, Performance, Infrastructure, Resources, and Development, the outlined series of actions and measures are what GCU Students' Association and Sports Council will be committed to working towards over the duration of the strategy and will use these a guideline to monitor progress and completion.

By conducting this strategy, for the first time at GCU Students' Association, our sports clubs will have a clear purpose, direction and vision which they can strive towards, helping achieve the Students' Association overall strategic plan, "The Bigger Plan 2020". As a result, this strategy will help create an inclusive sporting community which has the necessary support, resources, and opportunities in order to develop and improve all aspects of our clubs. Ultimately, this sports strategy will lead to an enhanced overall student experience where sports members of GCU Students' Association feel a greater sense of belonging and can "Be part of something... Bigger".

Appendix 1

Sports Club Benchmark Questionnaire Summary

Sports Assistant 2016-17

The purpose of the administered questionnaire was to gather evidence on institutional practice relating to sport in Scottish universities, more specifically student club sport.

This evidence has given useful information relating to the infrastructure implemented within other institutions and has allowed the Sports Policy Lead and Activities staff with a remit for sport to work toward the creation of a new sports policy document from 2017-2020.

Thus far there has been a 57% response rate from targeted institutions. Below these responses have been summarised and all relevant themes have been noted.

Question: Explain the format of your sports membership and the cost attached.

This question as expected carried a varying degree of response.

All institutions however had the same process that students must by a 'Sports Union' membership to participate in sports clubs; however the club itself can then charge an additional membership fee which can range from £20 to £100+.

Question: Do you pay for use of University owned facilities?

This question produced a more generalised theme regarding participant response. **75% of Institutions** who responded **did not have to pay for the hire of University owned facilities** for use by their Sport Clubs.

Could this be an area for possible campaign, thus reducing facility costs contributing more money to development projects in sport at GCU?

Question: Please describe the process involved in the allocation of sports funds.

Responses varied and included the following systems:

Allocation of club budget worked out by Union Staff, the allocation considers all of the following (NGB affiliation, league entry, vehicle hires etc.) Clubs also have opportunity to apply to more strategic funds throughout the year for Coaching and Development, Equipment, Facilities and Extraordinary. **(Block grant system calculated for running cost of club annually)**

Application process each year in which an application must be submitted to the SU Finance Convenor. Application includes sections for – Travel, Entry Fee's, Coaching Costs, Course Costs, Accommodation and Equipment. A finance committee including two student reps (in and outgoing president) and 4 staff members who work within sport review the applications and decide on the %

of each section that the club will receive (100%, 50%, 20%, 0%). **(Annual application process, grant of funding controlled more by staff than students)**

Two different Club Accounts (Grant and Fundraising). Each year teams competing in BUCS automatically get all transport, facilities and officials paid for. Teams who do not compete in BUCS have facility hire covered and must apply for a transport grant. All sports must apply for a grant for any needs out with the aforementioned (for example equipment). Clubs can also use fundraising account for club revenue and purchases for club activities. **(Automatic grant to clubs and application process).**

The university allocate a specific grant for club sport within the union. (Limited answer but RGU receive separate budget for all sport out with union grant.)

Question: Please explain the training you provide to your committee members?

All unions provide committee member training at the beginning of term. This training provides key information on the running of the club for committee members.

Institutions hold refreshers days or seminars throughout the year and also arrange for specialist guest speaker/trainers. For example concussion training and strength and conditioning training.

Presidents training day at start of year also hosted by some institutions – this is a must attend event!

Question: Does your institution have a Strategic Plan for Student Sport?

Only 1 of the respondent institutions had such a plan (UofG) and this was kindly shared with us.

1 other institution was currently in the process of creating an overarching sports strategy to incorporate all current policies and strategic aims which will be in place by 2018.

Question: Does your organisation have a Sports Development Office?

All respondents either answered yes to this or shared that they were currently in the process of recruiting for this position.

The responsibility of this position varies within each institution; however all have the task of ensuring sports clubs continue to grow and sport continues to grow and become more sustainable. Some are tasked with increasing participation in sport at university including the building of rec programmes.