

Staffordshire University

Faculty of Health

'Sport and Exercise' and the 'Centre for Sport, Health and Exercise Research'

Staffordshire University is organised around four Faculties and two Schools. The Sport and Exercise programme area is located within the Faculty of Health, alongside three other areas, (a) Life Long Learning, (b) Social Work and Advice Studies and (c) Pre Qualifying Health Care. Sport and Exercise programmes are mainly delivered by Staff at the Stoke campus, along with Social Work, whilst Pre Qualifying Health Care and Life Long Learning are delivered at Stafford, Shrewsbury, Lichfield and Telford.

Sport and Exercise presently has 20 full-time academic staff, five part-time staff (including three professors, one reader and two principal lecturers), and three research officers who work closely with four technicians and two administrative staff (provided from a pool of Faculty of Health staff). These staff are all located in the Brindley Building, Leek Road, Stoke-on-Trent.

Sport and Exercise has a long and established experience in the design and delivery of sport related courses. The origins of the present set of undergraduate and postgraduate awards can be directly traced to the BA Sport and Recreation Studies Award launched in 1981. This was developed from the BEd (Hons) Physical Education teacher training course delivered at the Madeley School of Physical Education which started in 1949.

Over the last five years the Sport and Exercise programme area has diversified its core business from a reliance on full-time on-campus undergraduate students to a more balanced portfolio of; 0 level (in partnership with SURF), undergraduate (Ug) and postgraduate (Pg) awards; delivered using face-face, blended and distance learning methods; appealing to both part-time and full-time students. The Ug awards were revalidated in 2008/9 and the Pg awards revalidated in 2009/10 and Sport and Exercise's portfolio of subjects ranges from physical education, to sports therapy and clinical biomechanics, and have been developed with support from professional bodies such as the British Association of Sport and Exercise Sciences, The British Psychological Society, and the Society of Sport Therapists. This process of diversification has necessitated; a long term commitment to the development of expertise in distance learning, close collaboration with local partners and industry, and the support of research active staff. Consequently scholarship is strong, and has provided opportunities to validate innovative new courses and for students to become involved with and benefit from academic expertise. Staff also work closely with the local and regional sport and physical activity industry which feeds into students' experience, securing, for example, placements as well as external income for the University.

The Faculty of Health has three Research Centres one of which is the Centre for Sport, Health and Exercise Research (CSHER). Since 2001 the CSHER has provided strategic direction and management of research activity in Sport and Exercise. The majority of Sport and Exercise's academic staff are actively engaged in research and this work has provided opportunities for students to become involved with and benefit from academic expertise. Colleagues from the Faculty of Sciences and in particular the programme area of Psychology also contribute to the CSHER and to our postgraduate awards. Eighteen staff within the CSHER were submitted to Unit 46 of the 2008 Research Assessment Exercise.

The results recognised the internationally excellent research being conducted by the CSHER covering Physical Activity and Health; The Psychological Aspects of Sport, Health and Exercise; and the Social Aspects of Sport, Health and Exercise. In the submission, 40% of research was graded at 2* and 20% was graded at 3* so overall the majority of the research was graded as international or internationally excellent in sports-related studies. Research informed teaching on our Pg awards is embedded via the involvement of research active staff on all BL and DL awards.

Information from students, internal colleagues, external examiners and key partners, and from on-going reflection and discussion with Sport and Exercise's management team, indicates that our future direction should be to maintain our recently diversified portfolio and thus to continue to; a) grow applied practice-based Ug courses but maintain overall enrolment across the awards; b) maintain enrolment to part-time Pg DL courses and develop CPD based courses; c) further develop partnership with schools and colleges; d) collaborate with key professional bodies, e) develop links between course curricula and local community needs, and f) support and maximise the benefits of a research culture.

Things to know about 'Sport and Exercise' and the 'Centre for Sport, Health and Exercise Research

- We currently have over 700 students on our undergraduate and postgraduate awards
- Our awards are recognised by professional bodies relevant awards are accredited by the British Association of Sport and Exercise Sciences, The British Psychological Society and the Society of Sport Therapists
- 90% of Sport and Exercise students were satisfied with their experience at Staffordshire University
- In 2009/10 we are enjoying a 45% increase in student applications
- Research in CSHER guides and informs our curricula development and delivery
- We have six full-time PhD students
- From 2001-2008 staff in the CSHER published over 150 peer reviewed journal articles and in 2008/9 secured half a million pound from research and enterprise activity
- We run our own staff development and research seminar series the centrepiece of which is the Basil Ashford Memorial lecture