Today’s global, local and future problems demand that if we are to serve communities we have to move beyond traditional strengths, co-produce and seek out complementary knowledge and expertise. As Scotland’s first independent Global and Local Sports Observatory the brief for the Academy of Sport is built around two premises: that sport has a part to play in addressing the challenges that face humanity in the 21st Century and that it has to be seen to be actively addressing such challenges by working with and in communities. The United Nations Agenda 2030 has provided sport with a mandate to actively contribute to social change. We are committed to such a goal.

**RESEARCH, EDUCATION, ADVOCACY AND ACCESS**

The University of Edinburgh serves as an open gathering place for the exchange of ideas, actions and sporting enlightenment.

**EXPLORE**  **ADVANCE**  **PROMOTE**  **ENGAGE**

The Academy of Sport contributes to the University of Edinburgh’s research capacity, community impact and engagement, the opening up of educational opportunity while providing a space for independent critical dialogue about the pressing questions of our time and where sport can and cannot be seen to be making a difference.
EXPLORE  Sport for development, diplomacy and peace.

ADVANCE  Social justice and sport for change.

PROMOTE  The use of data, evidence and digital literacy.

ENABLE  Sport for health, better life chances and environmental stewardship

BUILD  A networked, global and local sports observatory and gathering place.

ENGAGE  Communities, cities and settlements through sport.
SIX CENTURIES OF IMPACT

We are striving to create the most supportive environment possible so that students, teachers, researchers, scholars, learners, associates and activists can do what they do best — advance understanding through sport, create, disseminate and provide access to sports knowledge and support a commitment to sport for change. We have an obligation as public stewards of knowledge to ensure that the knowledge we generate is made available to and with broader communities.
VISION: That sport is recognized for excellence in research, education and advocacy that transforms lives and makes a real difference to society.

We will strive to enable and support international and local leadership in improving sport and its wider contribution to communities, health, international development, environmental sustainability and social justice. We will do this through innovation, the promotion of best practice, research, education, community engagement, advocacy and collaboration.

MISSION: The creation, dissemination and access to knowledge.

- Provide a space for dialogue about how sport can contribute to urgent questions facing people around the world.

- Widen access to the University of Edinburgh and activate the potential of sport to deliver outcomes that reach disadvantaged communities.

- Establish and advance a vibrant gathering place for sports research, education and advocacy

- Strive to influence not just the world of sport but the challenges and issues that face humanity.
MEETINGING TODAY’S GLOBAL AND LOCAL CHALLENGES

Excellence and Partnership

The complexity of today’s local and global challenges requires us to be critical and seek out complementary expertise from scholars and communities in other fields, parts of the University, communities and from quality partners whether they be international or local.

We value our partnerships with the University of Toronto, the City of Edinburgh, the National Library of Scotland, the Barcelona Foundation, the Commonwealth Secretariat and many others. Our work on sports diplomacy could not be as effective without working with collaborators outside of the University of Edinburgh. In establishing collaborations, we need to remain mindful of the need for both local and global networking.

Strategic Themes

This brief identifies thematic areas that engage the University community and our partners as they draw upon sport as a tool in contributing to ideas and solutions to some of the challenges that face humanity in the 21st century.

They can provide us with opportunities to support public priorities, public diplomacy and policy, and they dovetail with global efforts such as Agenda 2030, the 2017 Ministerial Kazan Agreement and other areas in which the international and commonwealth research community is currently concentrating resources and talent.

Responding to New Challenges

The themes presented here—Edinburgh Global, Edinburgh Local and Edinburgh Futures—are not meant to be exhaustive of all the excellent work going on nor are they meant to be prescriptive. Rather, they are meant to offer students, academic colleagues, practitioners, partners strategic pathways into interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary networks and collaborations. The themes are fluid and allow scope for tacking new problems as they arise. The themes are both contemporary and forward looking. The co-production of knowledge is valued.
Maximizing the contribution of sport to sustainable development, peace and social justice has long been a human imperative but there is still much more we can do to enable sport’s international mandate within agenda 2030, to foster common good and realize the international reach of sport and Edinburgh Global. The Global Sports Impact Report for 2016 covered 83 world championships and multisport games hosted in 119 cities and 38 countries. Sport connects cities. Governing bodies of sport have more country members than the UN. The 2018 Edinburgh Report commissioned by the Commonwealth Secretariat advocates for a stronger role for sport in development.

**SPORT:**

Our deeply committed work covers e.g. sport and social justice, sport for health, sport and the environment, education through sport sport and poverty. Our work with Bond University has enabled a better understanding of sports diplomacy and cultural relations. Sport can be both part of the problem and a resource of hope. 30% of governing bodies pay men more prize money than women. The Olympic Games have never been held in Africa. Any search for justice that is based upon identifying values that are viewed as so critical to the well-being of humanity that they come to be promoted as human rights needs to be enabled but what contribution has, does and could sport make to upholding human rights or forging a common good? We recognize and value the work of the University of Johannesburg Olympic Studies Centre and our partnership with the University of Toronto.
EDINBURGH LOCAL

Maximizing the contribution of sport to building and strengthening relationships between the University, the City of Edinburgh and our local communities requires a better understanding of sport and the city and our joint contribution to making cities and settlements inclusive, welcoming, safe, resilient and sustainable.

SPORT:

UN habitat guidance states that a minimum of 15 per cent of urban areas should be allocated as open green spaces and public facilities. Integrating opportunities for sport, physical education and physical activity throughout such spaces and across urban environments can have widespread and long-term impacts. We support the Homeless World Cup. The social impact of the Homeless World Cup held in Glasgow was estimated to be £349 million. Cities are living entities and Edinburgh Local can do more for the marginalized by developing, harnessing and strengthening community relations and engagement through sport. Sport provides an important opportunity for Edinburgh in particular and cities in general to connect with one another. Our innovative programmes can and have been used to advance digital literacy, financial literacy, health literacy within the City of Edinburgh and beyond. We host a dedicated Gaelic sports website and value working with Highlands and Islands communities and Bòrd na Gàidhlig. Our ability to deliver credit bearing courses in local football clubs has helped to open up educational opportunity. We are grateful for the support provided by Hibernian Community Foundation.
EDINBURGH FUTURES

Understanding, advocating for and evidencing change through sport can only benefit from forging interdisciplinary expertise. Sport permeates traditional boundaries, national borders, institutional walls and areas of expertise. Article 31 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child calls for all children to be able to participate freely in sport, recreation and leisure. A comparative analysis of young people in sport in Europe reported that one in ten had experienced repeated racism, a figure that doubles for young people from a migrant background. 1 in 5 people around the world connect with sport. Edinburgh Futures looks to the future, imagines solutions and has an opportunity to grasp sport’s global and local reach, build upon the part that sport plays in the lives of so many ordinary people but also more fully address the future challenges that face humanity in a changing world.

SPORT:

Looking to the future- how can sport contribute to the common good? Can you comprehend society fully and the disruptions that are shaking old certainties without understanding the future place of sport? How do you challenge a closed framing of culture that fails to offer a parity of esteem for the role of sport alongside other forms of culture? Can you harness the common language of sport to advance peace and foster human resilience? What part does sport play in the lives of migrants seeking to offer labour and a sense of worth? We need to know more about the environmental challenges for and through sport and repercussions of climate change. How can sports foster better cultural relations and how can it help governments grasp normative propositions?
STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

The following objectives provide guideposts or a framework for impact, study and dialogue over a four-year period from 2017-2021.

1. STRIVE TO PROVIDE AND SUPPORT GLOBAL & LOCAL LEADERSHIP

The Academy of Sport is on a path to contribute to our university ranking in the global top ten for our subject. We will benchmark our success against recognized metrics, measures and league tables. Partnerships will focus on international peer institutions in academia, the local community, private and social sectors that lead to excellent research, education and collaborative outcomes that add value to our University. We will partner with Universities ranked above us in world rankings and foundations and agencies that help us to deliver our mission and vision.

2. ADDRESS QUESTIONS OF LOCAL, GLOBAL AND FUTURE IMPORTANCE

Since its foundation almost 600 years ago, the University of Edinburgh has continued to grow as an institution that offers solutions to the challenges that face local and global communities. In contributing to and further enabling Edinburgh Global, Edinburgh Local and Edinburgh Futures through sport for change, this plan sets out broad themes and a framework to address urgent questions facing people around the world. We will strive to apply our research, education and public engagement to these challenges. Sport can play a powerful social role in addressing the problems we face by advancing solutions that are sustainable, equitable, that promote diversity and social justice and generate mutual understanding from within the communities that we work with.

3. ACCESS TO EDUCATION AND OPEN RESEARCH

Research, study and public engagement are inextricably linked. The Academy of Sport is open to promoting, nurturing and accelerating the integration of research, education and advocacy. Research activity, intensity and diversity should enhance the entire educational mission and position the Academy of Sport as a “go to” place for future students, researchers, innovators, communities, activists seeking to make a difference in and through sport. We are committed to public engagement, open research and widening access to study and research.

4. COLLABORATE AND COMMUNICATE WITHIN THE UNIVERSITY, THE CITY, SCOTLAND, UK-WIDE AND INTERNATIONALLY

We value collaborations with colleagues in Edinburgh and other institutions and organisations. We will actively seek out excellent collaborators wherever we find them. The output of The Academy of Sport must be greater than the sum of its parts. Our best work gets done when we come together with colleagues, the public, students in socially, culturally and intellectually vibrant environments.
SPORT MATTERS

Many of the outputs form the Academy of Sport partnerships are made available through a dedicated website which provides (a) free access to education resources and (b) is but one mechanism for establishing and promoting a platform for dialogue around sport matters.

The following themes are not exhaustive but reflective of areas of research, education, advocacy and access that have been enabled, advanced, promoted and or engaged with through our collaborative borderless approach to sport.

The normative proposition that sport provides beyond the sport sector has not been grasped globally or locally.

ACCESS TO QUALITY EDUCATION

Sport can be used to contribute to improved education outcomes; create quality learning environments, engage disenfranchised learners and deliver holistic education. Education through football in the form of Football More than a Game and Education Pass have facilitated access to University of Edinburgh education on a credit and non-credit bearing basis. Both were cited in the Scottish Governments 2018 inquiry into educational attainment and achievement of school aged children living in poverty.

DIPLOMACY

Sport provides opportunities for diplomatic intervention and relationship building that are often less aloof than some form of diplomacy. Sports diplomacy has been the ongoing focus of a series of papers, events, policy interventions and blogs that have considered – Sports diplomacy (a) under three USA Presidents; (b) and the Pyeongchang Winter Olympic Games; (c) through the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade; (d) as used by the current Chinese Government and (e) the case for sports diplomacy in advancing Scotland’s international strategy and relationship building efforts.

GENDER EQUALITY

Gender equality is SDG number 5 in which sport is viewed as having an effective and cost effective contribution to make through harnessing the role of sport in society; promoting female leadership; creating safe spaces to address gender issues and engaging men and boys. Our evidence briefing for FIFA evidenced the need for gender equality in relation to governance and access to resources while or historical researches produced the sports entries for the new Biographical Dictionary of Scottish Women. Our partnership with the University of Toronto has lead to showcasing Gender Audits of the Olympic Games; podcasts on: sport, sex and identity; and the joint 2018 Moray House – Academy of Sport Annual Lecture on Fresh
Winds of Equity for Sport presented by Professor Bruce Kidd. The podcast by Hala Ousta from the Scottish Football Association addresses football, diversity and inclusion while our brief on women’s voices from the street provides an insight into some of the challenges facing homeless women accessing street soccer. Our gender and racial audits of the Boards of Scottish Governing Bodies will be published shortly.

GOOD HEALTH AND WELL BEING

Sport can be used to maximize health and well-being benefits; address the economic impact of physical inactivity and harness the potential to deliver health education through sport. See the outputs from the Sport, Mental Health and Dementia symposia; the podcasts on the benefits of exercise after cancer diagnosis; translating active living into policy and practice; why we should sit less and walk more and whether physical activity is in fact the best medicine.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The growing and increasingly institutionalized field of Sport for Development and Peace suggests significant opportunities for the world of sport to make positive contributions to overcoming the most pressing social and environmental challenges of our time. Research in the social sciences shows that positive results are far from guaranteed. The time is right to move beyond the question of whether to use sport for international development and think more about how to do so in the most equitable and sustainable manner. There is a demand for SDP interventions across the global/commonwealth such as one of our findings from the Commonwealth Secretariat led commissioned report into SDP education provision and demand. The how and why of using sport to advance agenda 2030 is provided for in one of our recent podcasts as is the role of sport for peace in the middle east. The use of sport initiatives in promoting human rights in Palestine is provided for through an extensive sports insight researched for sport matters.

GAELIC SPORT

The Academy of Sport recognizes, promotes and evidences sports contribution to Gaelic culture through its dedicated section on Gaelic Sports Voices and Dialogue - Guthan Spòrs Gàidhlig agus Conaltradh. It provides access to a series of podcasts and briefing papers on football in the Western Isles, sport in Scotland, Scottish Sporting trophies, Camanachd - air a freumhachadh an Alba and sporting memories in the Western Isles. The section on Gaelic Sports Voices and Dialogue opens up a discussion about sport in Gaelic culture.
SPORT AND POVERTY

We need to do more. The biggest barrier to sport for young people living in poverty is cost. Leaving school is a cliff edge for general involvement in sport and access to clubs. Access to sport in cities and settlements requires safe, healthy, urban spaces for sport and recreation. Issues of urban poverty and inequalities, urban planning, pollution, environmental degradation and climate change, are linked to sustainable urbanization challenges. UN SDG’s call for at least 15% of all urban spaces to be secured as green, safe, accessible spaces for sport and recreation. Sport can contribute social mobility and raising the standard of living for some. How should NGO’s use sport to support human settlements? The Homeless World Cup founded in 2003 is a remarkable social intervention. Should sport and play be part of an integrated area approach to improving poor area conditions? Our evidence supported the 2018 Scottish inquiry into attainment and achievement of school children experiencing poverty. We need to work with others to do more.

SPORT AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Sport has a rich history of appealing to human rights and yet many national and international sports federations and governing bodies have still to embed and impact assess due diligence in relation to rights issues. There is a need for National Human Rights Associations to work more closely with National Sports Associations. UNICEF have advanced an understanding of best practice around the rights of the child in sport. In 2018 IHRB published a human rights guide for sports governing bodies while human rights principles have been strengthened within the bidding process for major sporting events. The interdependency of the right to sport and play has still to be optimized as a humanitarian tool which can support the ongoing forging of human rights and the common good within peace processes. The struggles against gender policing and testing in sport remain. The struggle for human rights through sport has been highlighted in our briefing papers but also our work coverage of The use of Sport Initiatives to Promote Human Rights in Palestine- see http://www.globaljusticeblog.ed.ac.uk/2018/06/12/the-use-of-sport-initiatives-to-promote-human-rights-in-palestine/

SPORT AND BREXIT

Our briefing paper on Sport and Brexit has informed the Scottish Government’s briefing paper for Ministers to be published by SPICE after the summer recession. The landscape of Scottish sport will be changed. Sport in Scotland is not immune from Brexit consequentials.
For centuries, University of Edinburgh students and staff and partners have been extending the boundaries of knowledge and striving to provide answers to some of the world’s most important questions. The task ahead involves a fourfold exercise - a sound grasp of evidence, analysis, the development of communities of best practice and a commitment to change.

What contribution should sport make to agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals? How can sport be part of a larger effort to build educational attainment? How can sport promote healthy people, healthy communities and better life chances? Can sport contribute to building societies that advance social justice, equality and dignity for all? Can sports education be boundless, borderless and open to all? Can we build better communities of best practice in sport, physical education and physical activity? Is it possible to build upon the popularity and global reach of sport to promote digital, financial and numerical literacy? Is sport a key avenue to helping cities talk to one another, develop influence and advance diplomacy and cultural relations? How do we help our communities better understand one another through sport? Can leadership, compassion and team building through sport help to advance effective governance or is the challenge of sporting governance such that it has no part to play? How can we assist the Commonwealth call for sporting governing bodies to engage more with Human Rights Associations?

Such a list of local and global challenges is not exhaustive but it invites students, postdoctoral fellows, sports writers in residence, practitioners, researchers and activists to aspire to help forge a common good through sport. If collectively we are going to realize a vision of sport having a part to play in addressing the challenges that face humanity in the 21st Century we need to work openly with and for communities through participatory research, study and other activities.

As the first independent, dedicated sports observatory and think tank rooted in Scotland these plans build upon past successes and provide a guide for the next four years.

See what we do: [www.ed.ac.uk/education/academy-of-sport](http://www.ed.ac.uk/education/academy-of-sport)

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