



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH  
Academy of Sport

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. *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 21<sup>st</sup> Century and that sport 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 contribute to social change and social justice. We are committed to such a goal.

### KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE, RESEARCH, EDUCATION, ADVOCACY AND ACCESS

An open international think tank and gathering place to meet, exchange knowledge and make a difference today.



### SUSTAIN EXPLORE ADVANCE PROMOTE ENGAGE

The Academy of Sport is aligned to the University of Edinburgh's strategy 2030. With key partners **Moray House School of Education and Sport, Edinburgh Global and Edinburgh Local** we work to make the world a better place. We cannot do this alone. Together we can aspire to make sports knowledge, research, study and advocacy work for more people, more often and in more communities.



**EXPLORE**

**Sport for development, diplomacy and peace.**



**ADVANCE**

**Social justice, sport for change and widening access.**



**PROMOTE**

**Data for good and digital literacy.**



**ENABLE**

**Sport for health, better life chances. and environmental stewardship.**



**SUSTAN**

**A networked independent think tank and gathering place.**



**ENGAGE**

**Communities, cities and settlements through sport.**

# SIX CENTURIES OF SPORT

The first University of Edinburgh playing fields were allocated in 1591 by the City Council who provided a “College Pitch” on the Burgh Muir. In 1824 Edinburgh Law student John Hope founded the first organized football club in the world. Building upon a remarkable heritage of involvement with sport the Academy of Sport was born from a desire to serve communities locally and globally. We are now at the heart of an international and local sporting landscape with *the Academy of Sport* providing a home for ideas, solutions, students, staff, sporting communities and organizations and partners to gather. We are striving to contribute to creating 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.

**VISION:** That sport plays its part in addressing the challenges that face humanity in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and is seen to be actively addressing such challenges by working with and in communities.

**Purpose:** As part of a world-leading University and network we are here to advance sport for change. Between now and 2030 we will do this through:

- Providing a space for dialogue and outputs that supports social and civic responsibility through sport.
- Widening access to study and activate the potential of sport to deliver outcomes that reach, work for and with disadvantaged communities.
- Enabling knowledge exchange, education and advocacy.



# MEETINGING TODAY'S GLOBAL AND LOCAL CHALLENGES

## Global and Local 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 and communities to form quality partnerships globally and locally.**

We value our global and local partnerships with, for example, the University of Toronto, FC Barcelona Foundation, the Commonwealth Secretariat, **Moray House School of Education and Sport**, Edinburgh Global, The Homeless World Cup Foundation and The City of Edinburgh.

## Strategic Themes

This brief identifies thematic areas that engage the University community and our partners as they draw upon sport as a tool contributing to ideas and solutions to some of the challenges that face humanity in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. They can provide us with opportunities to support public

global effort, Agenda 2030 and local efforts such as educational attainment and access and other areas in which the global and local 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, global and local networks and collaborations. The themes are fluid and allow scope for tackling new problems as they arise. The themes are both contemporary and forward looking. The co-production of knowledge is valued.



## EDINBURGH GLOBAL

*Given the serious challenges we face, we all must commit to working to ensure that our current and future leaders at every level put human rights at the heart of the decisions they make. That includes leaders in the world of sport.*

*--Mary Robinson, Former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and Chair of the Centre for Sport and Human Rights*

### **SPORT:**

Sport is a space that does and can facilitate international engagement. 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, foster common good and realize the international reach of Edinburgh global through sport. Our knowledge exchange and advocacy has supported the Black Lives Matter Movement and an evaluation of the impact of COVID 19 on grass roots sport. We are working with low-income countries and helping nations realise the potential of sport as a soft power cultural asset. Our deeply committed work covers e.g. sport and social justice, sport for health, sport and the environment, education through sport and sport and poverty. Our work with International Cultural Relations and the British Council has enabled a better understanding of sports diplomacy and international cultural relations. We have supported the Canadian research and advocacy for gender equality and indigenous rights to sport. 30% of governing bodies pay men more prize money than women. The Olympic Games have never been held in Africa. Any search for justice should evidence what sporting outcomes uphold human rights or forge a common good?





## EDINBURGH LOCAL

*“Edinburgh University rightly deserves much acclaim for being a world-renowned teaching and research institution. Striving for this success, however, has not come at the expense of supporting local communities. The Academy of Sport ‘Football: More than a Game’ highlights how a highly successful university can work in partnership with local communities. The initiative is research informed knowledge exchange that widens access at its best”– External Examiner 2020 – Loughborough University.*

## SPORT:

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. 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, throughout such spaces and across urban environments can have widespread and long-term impacts. 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 and cities in general to connect with one another. Our innovative programmes have been used to advance digital literacy, financial literacy, health literacy. We host a ground breaking dedicated Gaelic sports website and value working with Bòrd na Gàidhlig, Hibernian Community Foundation, Spartans, & the Homeless World Cup Foundation.





## EDINBURGH FUTURES

Understanding, advocating for and evidencing change through sport can 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 reflect upon, 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 repercussions of climate change and how the concentrated efforts of a wide range of cross-disciplinary perspectives can reveal a way forward for environmental challenge and change through sport.





## **STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES**

The following objectives provide a flexible framework for impact, study and dialogue that builds upon our work since 2014 and guides our work over the next four years.

Partnerships will focus on international peer institutions in academia, the local community, private and public sectors that lead to excellent knowledge exchange, accessible education and collaborative outcomes that add value to local and global communities and our University. The objectives are important because they provide a focus, a belief that our work can make a difference, and that co-production, co-participation and believing in mutuality can help harness the incredible talent that the University of Edinburgh can enable in the service of humanity and society through sport.

### **1. WE WILL WORK ACROSS BOUNDARIES TO DELIVER KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE AND SPORTS INNOVATION.**

We will strengthen our ability to generate new sports knowledge and further enable, Moray House School of Education and Sport, Edinburgh Global, Edinburgh Local and Edinburgh Futures through sport for change. We will partner with sports industry leaders to facilitate knowledge exchange. We will address social and global challenges including sports contribution to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

Sport can play a powerful social role in addressing the problems we face by evidencing and advancing solutions that are

sustainable, equitable, that promote diversity and social justice and generate mutual understanding from within the communities that we work with.

### **2. WE WILL WIDEN PARTICIPATION IN TEACHING AND LEARNING THROUGH OUR SPORTS OFFERING**

We will play our part in contributing to opening access to education through sport. Our belief is that research, study and public engagement are inextricably linked. We are at the forefront of digital offerings through sport. The Academy of Sport is promoting, nurturing and accelerating the integration of research informed teaching and advocacy. Knowledge exchange activity, should enhance the entire educational mission and position us as a “go to” place for future students, researchers, innovators, communities, activists seeking to make a difference.

### **3. WE WILL DELIVER SOCIAL AND CIVIC RESPONSIBILITY THROUGH REALISING OUR VISION.**

We will collaborate within the University, the City, Scotland, the United Kingdom and internationally. We strive to play our part in making the world a better place through sport being seen to support and enable social and civic outcomes. We will use the popularity of sport to build public engagement and be a good and welcoming neighbour. We will continue to create a vibrant space for students, staff, local and global communities to meet, excel, foster independent critical dialogue and advocacy.



We will actively seek out excellent collaborators wherever we find them. The output of The Academy of Sport and partners must be greater than the sum of its parts. Our best work gets done when we come together with colleagues, the public, students, partners in socially, culturally and intellectually vibrant environments to co-produce and support outputs and voices.

**Interview female street soccer player:** *“I want to feel like I have control in an aspect of my life again... At the moment soccer gives me this. Street Soccer believed in me until I could believe in myself” Academy of Sport Research 2019*

*“To have Mel Young as chair of SportScotland and founder of the Homeless World Cup and so many other sporting leads in Scotland, actively engaging with us at the University, because of their direct association with the Academy is very valuable. **The Academy of Sport** models how to bring science, widening access strategies (that truly work) partnerships, student and staff mobility, together in pathways that directly lead to helping the University contribute to the SDGs What with your work with Barcelona FC and the MOOC Football More than a Game which is such a wonderful entry into believing that education is the love of shared knowledge for the sake of the future” Assistant Principal University of Edinburgh.*

*“You are doing brilliant things” Charlotte Street Partners.*

For centuries, University of Edinburgh students and staff and partners have been 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.

Any 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 21<sup>st</sup> Century and to be seen to be actively addressing such challenges then we need to work openly with and for communities through participatory knowledge exchange research, study and impact.

We have an obligation as public stewards of knowledge to ensure that the knowledge we generate is made available to and with broader communities.

<https://www.ed.ac.uk/education/academy-of-sport/about->



