Programme Specification

Programme award and title: MSc in Strategic Sports Public Relations and Communications Management

SCQF Level: 11  SCQF Credit Value: 180

Educational aims of the programme:
Concise (e.g. a few sentences), general statement of aims and broad purposes of the programme

This degree is a variant of the MSc in Strategic Public Relations and Communication Management. Specialist modules are provided: Strategic Sports Public Relations Planning, Strategic Sports Public Relations and Communications Management, Sports Public Relations and Communications Management Project, Sport Media Relations and Sport Marketing. It is intended that the degree will eventually be available on an on-line basis.

Public relations encompasses a range of professional roles such as stakeholder relations, issues management, corporate affairs, corporate communications, public affairs, communication management, crisis management and corporate social responsibility. The programme is designed for academically able students from a variety of degree backgrounds to develop the appropriate intellectual skills at Masters Level for a management level career in sports public relations. The programme aims to help students develop a critical appreciation of the role of public relations in society and to develop key analytical and professional skills in the context of the sports industry. It is intended that the programme will be submitted to the UK Chartered Institute of Public Relations (CIPR) for recognition.

Sports public relations is a diverse specialism encompassing agency and in-house work for sports organizations, governments and national associations, suppliers, international organizations including corporate bodies, sponsors and clients. It includes event bidding and management, business to business (expos), promotion, celebrity management and personal PR, risk management, sports tourism, corporate hospitality and sports participation programmes. The high profile nature of elite sport necessarily demands strategic public relations.

Intended programme learning outcomes:
Outline (e.g. one or two paragraphs) of what the student will know, understand and be able to do as a result of their learning, expressed in the categories below. Please consider the contribution made to the student’s personal development planning (PDP) and future employability.

Knowledge and understanding
• The sports business
• The sports-media complex
• Sports media including the wide range of platforms
• Media rights
• Sports Marketing
• Sports Management
• Sport as a form of communication
• Critical appreciation of the role of public relations in society
• Stakeholder relations
• Public relations and communication management theory
• The role of traditional and technological media in a globalised world
• Ethical issues and corporate social responsibility
• Organizational culture, identity, climate and behaviour
• Public opinion, publics and activism
• Persuasion, rhetoric and discourse
• Globalisation and inter-cultural communication
Subject-specific skills and other attributes
- Stakeholder analysis
- Public relations programming, research and evaluation
- Media relations skills
- Communications audit skills
- Issues management and crisis planning
- Application of public relations, communications, media, management and organization theories to interpret public relations cases, diagnose problems and propose solutions

Generic skills (e.g. information skills, communication skills, critical, analytical and problem solving abilities) and other attributes
- Interpersonal and team-building skills in multi-cultural settings
- Emotional intelligence, counselling, consulting and client-handling skills
- Research skills
- Presentation skills including those needed for press conferences and broadcast interviews
- Writing skills for reports and executive summaries, news releases and web-writing

Learning, teaching and assessment strategies:
Outline (e.g. one or two paragraphs) on overall approach taken to develop and assess learning outcomes, including any distinctive features

- A very wide range of teaching and learning strategies have evolved to meet the needs of public relations students and to enable them to achieve the learning outcomes. These strategies are combined in such a way as to provide a rich and varied experience. Assessment procedures are regularly reviewed and revised in relation to student output. Students learn to be flexible in their approach to learning and self-development since they cannot simply apply routines from undergraduate work. Examples of assessment have included: short and longer term self-directed projects culminating in videotaped presentations and formal business-style reports; 4 hours case based exams incorporating original materials such as newspaper articles and research reports; textual analysis of theoretical sources (exam) and organisational literature (annual reports); self-reflective analysis using a postmodern organisational theory framework focusing on an organisation of which the student has been a member; crisis press conference (occasionally international video conference); press release and feature articles; open book exam; content analysis.

- Specific to the MSc Sports Public Relations and Communication Management are: opportunities for crisis press conferences; portfolio work for elite athletes (sports bursars at Stirling); systems analysis of particular sports; practice-based assessment at live sports events and analysis and critique of current industry practice.

- Teaching is likewise varied incorporating lectures, seminars, workshops, case studies, small group tutorials, visiting speaker presentations, screening.

Professional/statutory body accreditation or recognition: The MSc in Public Relations was one of the first degrees in the UK to achieve formal recognition by the CIPR, which it did in 1989. Since then it has been reappraised regularly, and will shortly be re-evaluated through a panel visitation and the submission of quality documents. It is hoped that the MSc in Strategic Sports Public Relations and Communication Management will also be recognised in this way.
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