Fit for College
Fit for Work
Fit for Life

Every Student Active

A strategy for sport and physical activity in colleges 2015 to 2020
Introduction

Further education colleges provide high quality technical and professional education and training for over three million young people, adults and employers.

Colleges are inspirational places to learn, with education and training delivered by expert teaching staff in industry standard facilities. From basic skills to postgraduate degrees, colleges offer first rate academic and vocational teaching in a range of professions.

This document sets out a strategy for the development of college sport and physical activity. Although the economic climate has affected college funding and staffing levels since 2010, sport and activity has remained vibrant. Over 400,000 students are active every week, college staff commit many voluntary hours to provide a mix of opportunities at all levels, and since 2012 Sport England’s Active Colleges programme has helped colleges offer varied opportunities.

This strategy:

› sets out a high-level vision and aims for the future of college sport and activity
› identifies objectives and potential actions for colleges, sport, health and community organisations
› identifies the behaviours, attitudes and motivations of groups of students

This strategy is supported by a series of briefing documents which provide more detailed guidance, evidence, targets and annual plans.

Colleges organise 546 sessions and events per year, spread over 55 different activities.

72% of students who take part in college sport are studying non-sport courses.

Colleges offer an average of 20 sports, of which 15 are onsite.
Our vision

What?
Every college student participating regularly in sport or physical activity.

Why?
Sport and physical activity are essential components of college life, providing significant advantages in terms of education, employment and health.

Three strategic aims, focussed on outcomes

We will use sport and activity to...

▶ provide quality **educational** outcomes for college students
▶ boost **employability** skills and support the local economy
▶ improve **health** outcomes for students, staff and wider college communities
Scope of the strategy

The vision is long-term and highlights how active, vibrant colleges positively shape lives and make a vital contribution to the economy.

The strategy has a broad scope. It covers everything from health-related activity to performance sport, together with the development of a workforce for all job roles within the sport and leisure industry.

The strategy is inclusive, covering college students, staff, and wider communities regardless of gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, faith or ethnicity.

No single organisation can implement the whole strategy and different organisations and individual colleges will determine their own role and priorities within the broader scope.

“\nWe want students to be effective, responsible, well-informed members of society. Getting involved in sport and keeping fit and healthy is a huge part of this. I don’t have a personal background in sport but I’m convinced, as Principal, about the importance of physical activity and sport in young people’s lives

Eddie Playfair, Principal, Newham Sixth Form College
Objectives

There are two sets of strategy objectives, one for colleges and one for the organisations that work with them. The two are combined in the table on pages eight and nine.

Using sport or physical activity to...

Education
1. Promote colleges and aid college recruitment
2. Add value and help students progress
3. Increase the attendance, engagement and enjoyment of students

Employment
4. Develop a range of employability skills and promote character education
5. Support economic growth

Health, welfare and wellbeing
6. Improve physical and mental health of staff and students, reducing the costs of sickness absence
7. Enhance social cohesion
8. Support personal development, behaviour and welfare of students

Why is sport and physical activity important for colleges?

Various studies and reports have highlighted that sport and physical activity contribute to:

› Improved academic performance\(^1\)
› Enhanced employability skills and increased earnings in later life\(^2\)
› Improved attendance at college\(^3\)
› Improved social behaviour and peer relationships, which lead to reductions in disruptive behaviour\(^4\)
› Enhanced physical and mental wellbeing for staff and students, increasing self-esteem and reducing anxiety\(^5\)

This strategy aims to address the current shortfall in participation amongst college students. Around 50% of FE students are active once per week for 30 minutes or more, compared to 60% of 16 to 18-year-olds in schools (Active People Survey 2014).
A focus on students, communities and sport organisations...

Insight from Sport England into the lives of young people, together with AoC Sport’s data, explores behaviours and attitudes to sport and physical activity.

50% currently inactive:
This group are likely to be turned off by the language of sport and unlikely to participate unless there are direct benefits relevant to their lives. Inactivity is higher amongst disabled people, with more than 70% not taking part.

50% currently active at least once per week (Active People data)

20% currently taking part in college-organised activity:
This group want to go at their own pace, want experiences to be fun, and may be willing to try different activities, particularly if they are student-led or with peers/ friendship groups. They have varying attitudes to sport; some are positive but need an easier route, others see the benefits but don’t always enjoy activity. The offer needs to be convenient and right for them.

10% currently active and interested: studying sport and / or competing or performing regularly:
These students have a positive attitude to sport and are usually active and engaged, but have the potential to drop out if work or other commitments become more pressing, if the sport offer becomes too expensive, or if peers stop playing. This group are most likely to be engaged in competitive sport.

Cross-cutting objectives - applying to all:

Promote a cross-college culture of activity, changing behaviours

Increase the quantity and outdoor spaces, enabling
The diagram below explores the different cohorts of students, their attitudes and behaviours, and the strategic objectives that flow from each.

Objectives

a. **Reduce inactivity**: provide sessions that are relevant to the chosen vocation or destination of inactive students, easy to access, enjoyable and sustainable.

b. **Sustain and increase regular activity**: provide a social, interactive, personalised and flexible offer to encourage activity and keep participants engaged.

c. **Celebrate and support sport**: promote successful role models, support talented performers and provide appropriate talent pathways.

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**students, staff and college communities:**

- Quality of indoor and every student to be active
- Provide a workforce of activators, administrators and motivators to help increase levels of relevant activity
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AIMS</th>
<th>OBJECTIVES</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>To use sport and activity to...</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Improve health and social outcomes</td>
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**FOR STUDENTS AND COMMUNITIES**

For the **50% of students** who are currently inactive:

- **a. Reduce inactivity:** provide activities that are relevant to the chosen vocation or destination of inactive students, easy to access, enjoyable and sustainable.
  
  Priority actions...
  - Multi-agency and cross-college planning to embed activity into Study Programmes
  - Fitness for the vocation programmes

For the **50% of students** who are currently active but inconsistently, and the **20% of students** taking part at college:

- **b. Sustain and increase regular activity:**
  Provide a social, interactive, personalised, fun and flexible offer to encourage activity and keep participants engaged.

  Priority actions...
  - A range of diverse student-led physical activity programmes
  - Research to evidence the link between activity and recruitment, attendance, engagement and progress
  - Support mainstream colleges to provide inclusive activities

For the **10% of students** currently active and interested: studying or performing:

- **c. Celebrate and support sport:** promote successful role models, support talented performers and provide appropriate competition and talent pathways.

  Priority actions...
  - Sport Study Programmes, industry links and employer bodies
  - Provide an appropriate inter-college competition pathway in line with National Governing Body (NGB) frameworks
  - Academy programmes and support for elite athletes

**FOR COLLEGES**

<p>| Cross-cutting                                                        |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Promote a cross-college culture of activity                         | Increase the quality and quantity of indoor physical activity             |</p>
<table>
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<th>...boost employability skills and support the local economy</th>
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<td>4. Develop a range of employability skills and promote character education</td>
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**Priority actions...**
- Develop college-employer and community links (facilities, work experience for non-sport students)
- Use disability sport programmes to support community integration

**Priority actions...**
- Active travel plans
- Mental health interventions
- Staff health programmes
- Projects to support the “Prevent” agenda

**Priority actions...**
- County Sports Partnerships, volunteering and informal inter-college competition and festivals / College Games
- Work based placements in schools, clubs, community programmes: officiating, administration, event planning

**Priority actions...**
- Develop and sustain a paid activity/enrichment workforce in every college
- Intra-college festivals or competition between sites or departments
- Health-related fitness programmes

**Priority actions...**
- Improve the quality of the work experience element of sport Study Programmes
- Increase quantity and quality of college-employer partnerships to support students moving into the sport and leisure industry
- Develop sport and leisure skills competitions and integrate into World Skills

**Priority actions...**
- Specific nutrition and health advice for talented performers
- Research to evidence the health outcomes for students in college academy programmes

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**objectives for all:**

- For all students and communities
- Provide a workforce of activators, administrators and motivators
- Cross-cutting objectives for all:
  - Promote a cross-college culture of activity
  - Increase the quality and quantity of indoor and outdoor space
  - Provide a workforce of activators, administrators and motivators
Benchmarks and targets

Each organisation involved in supporting and implementing this strategy will set its own targets to meet individual priorities. National benchmarks and targets are shown below.

A. Reduce inactivity...
   - Increase the number of sessions available to disabled students (currently five per college)
   - Colleges to set their own targets for reducing the number of inactive students across college

B. Sustain and increase regular activity...
   - Increase the number of female students participating in college activity nationally from 51,000 to 56,000
   - Increase the percentage of colleges working with CSPs to ensure volunteer placements grow from 38% to 50%
   - Colleges to set their own targets for number of events (national average currently 546) and number of sports (currently 20)
   - Identify a new qualitative measure relating to developing positive attitudes towards physical activity

C. Celebrate and support sport...
   - Colleges to set their own targets for the number of female academies, following a review of demand and existing gender balance
   - Increase the number of sports included in AoC Sport competition programme from 14 to 19, aligning them with NGB pathways

Cross-cutting for all students and colleges...education, employment and health

   - Increase the percentage of colleges with a cross-college sport, physical activity and health strategy from 46% to 55%
   - Increase the percentage of colleges with indoor space that is open for both college and community use from the national benchmark of 75% to 85%
Partnership working

Effective collaboration, partnership working and a network of relationships are essential to achieve the aims set out in this strategy.

AoC Sport will co-ordinate the activity, and encourage effective partnerships between organisations.

Two key principles underpin the partnerships and implementation of this strategy:

› a focus on student needs, with an emphasis on learning and the educational ethos of colleges
› equality and inclusion for all

Organisations involved

“Sport matters in a college because it improves behaviours and interactions with other people. Without sport it would be incredibly difficult to role model the values of the college in such a clear way

Jeanette Dawson, Principal Bishop Burton College
Role of AoC Sport

AoC Sport is the lead organisation for college sport and physical activity. We promote, support and deliver college sport and physical activity:

**Promote:**

We champion the education, employment and health benefits of participation in sport or physical activity.

**Support:**

We are the trusted voice for college sport and physical activity, driving improvement, attracting funding for the sector and shaping the further education sporting landscape.

**Deliver:**

We design and deliver competitions, activities and advice to meet the needs of students, member colleges and external agencies.

Examples of how we will fulfil our role in delivering the strategy are shown in the table opposite. We encourage other organisations to identify their own part in achieving the vision.
<table>
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| ..for 50% of students currently inactive: **reduce inactivity** | • Research and distribution of evidence to show link between activity and progress measures  
• Policy briefings to colleges, NGBs, CSPs and others  
• Present to college quality and curriculum networks | • Support colleges to open up facilities for community use / develop new facilities  
• Share good practice on Fit for Work schemes | • Pilot projects with health partners to target areas of low participation  
• Work with the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills on mental health pilot projects |
| ...for 40% currently active but inconsistent: **sustain regular activity** | • Support colleges to use national sport data and benchmarks to analyse and refine current provision  
• Deliver a training and events programme for college staff and external organisations | • Partnership projects with CSPs relating to volunteering and work placements  
• Deliver training and events | • Policy updates and briefings to sport development and student services staff |
| ...for 10% of students consistently active and interested: **celebrate and support sport** | • Facilitate curriculum advisory group and curriculum networks  
• Delivery of cups and leagues  
• Delivery of Regional and National Championships | • Planning and delivery of Fitness Trainer competition and work to develop new skills competitions and integrate into World Skills | • Case studies relating to how academy or volunteering programmes impact on health and wellbeing / social cohesion |
Next Steps

Colleges and all organisations with an interest in either increasing physical activity levels directly, or using sport as a tool to achieve wider outcomes, are encouraged to use this document as a guide to forming their own plans and programmes. Further resources will be produced to support the strategy as follows:

› Examples and research demonstrating how sport and physical activity has had a positive impact on education, employment and health outcomes.

› Further exploration of the groups and segments of different cohorts of students, their motivations and behaviours and the interventions most likely to increase participation levels.

› Specific detailed briefings relating to low participant groups, for example females and people with a disability in support of the English Federation of Disability Sport “Charter for Change”.

› Specific guidance documents for colleges and different organisations relating to various work areas for example: Study Programmes, apprenticeships, competition, volunteering, participation, health programmes and academies.

This strategy will be refreshed in 2017.
Endnote


2. Association of Colleges (2013) and Sheffield Hallam University. The impact of student engagement in sport and employability.


5. WHO (2011) Global Recommendations on Physical Activity for Health: 5 to 17-years-old.

