



## MASTER OF SCIENCE (MSc) **APPLIED SPORTS COACHING (PT)**

Your coaching is the curriculum

### **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

#### **Why is it just a part time course?**

The course is only available part time, as most coaches will already be working and coaching, and we need to be careful to manage the overall load. It is essential to be actively coaching through the programme.

#### **Do I need to have an undergraduate degree already?**

No; there are two entry routes to the programme. The first is for individuals holding an undergraduate degree in a relevant area (e.g., coaching, sport & exercise sciences, physical education). The second is for individuals without a degree, but with extensive experience in coaching.

#### **What does the application process involve?**

The application consists of (i) a standard application form, and (ii) coaching qualifications and documentation of practice. Applicants are scored based on the length, breadth and depth of their coaching experience. Individuals holding an undergraduate degree in a relevant area must also submit their transcript. Individuals without a relevant undergraduate degree must also complete a written reflection on their coaching experience.

#### **Is the course open to coaches of all sports and levels?**

Yes; in our initial cohort we had representatives from 11 different sports: karate, triathlon, Gaelic football, hurling, gymnastics, athletics, rugby, soccer, tennis, basketball, and S&C. Our second cohort was almost as diverse, with new sports of rhythmic gymnastics, Special Olympics and swimming. Since then we have maintained a really nice mix of sports in each cohort. That diversity provides a fantastic learning opportunity. Coaches have an average of 10 years' experience, and are typically working across levels, and include children's coaches, development coaches and adult high-performance coaches.

#### **What is the timetable like?**

The course is predominantly delivered online via live/synchronous meetings. However, we will organize ~3 on campus sessions each semester also.

In terms of the timetable, the first two semesters have contact on Mondays through the semester. Semester 1 runs from Sept through to the end of Nov (with 3 more weeks optional individual contact/support in preparation for final assessment submission). Contact is on Mondays during normal working hours (9am-6pm) – it generally runs 9am-1:30pm on online days, and 9am-4pm on on-campus days, but this can vary depending on central timetables and where people are travelling from. Primary contact for Semester 2 runs from the end of Jan through to the end of March (this year scheduled from 9am-2pm); the semester continues through April, but again, most of that is assignment-related work. We encourage applicants to try to keep Monday's free where possible, because it is useful to be able to protect your time for the work required on the programme.

The next two semesters are more project based. The third semester will run through June-July; it will be slightly compressed because I want to ensure a break in August and there are lots of bank holidays in May/June. There are approximately 5 scheduled contact days around that time which will vary slightly each year depending upon guest speaker availability. We meet the cohort in Jan/Feb each year to work out the best schedule of dates for the summer contact. The fourth semester is Sep to Dec again; we go back to weekly meetings to keep in touch with everyone in a largely online schedule.

Over the fifth and sixth semesters you will be working on your dissertation/capstone project with a specific supervisor; meetings will be arranged between student and supervisor, and may be a combination of online/phone/in person meetings.

### **What is the typical time commitment?**

Time commitment to any course depends on an individual's circumstances, but we recommend being able to protect at least 16 hours per week. There are typically 4 hours contact per week (if online; 7 hours if one of the three on-campus days per semester). The remaining hours come from (a) approximately 4 hours preparation for the contact session (e.g., completing a task, reading or watching some resource), (b) 4 hours of independent study where you are pursuing a topic of personal interest or preparing for an assignment, and (c) 4 hours of your coaching (this can be planning, delivering or reflecting on your coaching). We count this time coaching as part of the course hours because some of your assigned tasks will be completed while you are coaching, as we want to [integrate what you are learning](#) with [your actual coaching](#) as much as possible. For example, the effective use of questions when coaching comes up early on as a topic on the first module; when coaching, you can observe your (and others if you coach as a team) use of questions: how many questions your athletes ask/what type of questions, etc. As with any course, the more you can invest, the more you stand to gain. However, we are aware that most people will be working, coaching and now studying, and so we advise protecting 16 hours per week as broken down above.

### **What modules will I cover?**

Detailed module descriptions are available through the Book of Modules (<https://bookofmodules.ul.ie/>) by searching for the below codes. There are some minor changes to these modules in progress, but you should get a sufficient overview of what we are trying to do from the learning outcomes in particular:

- The Coaching Process & Practice (SS6121)
- Reflective Practice for Sports Coaches (SS6122)
- Performance Analysis in Coaching (SS6132)
- Athlete and Coach Development (SS6143)
- Management & Leadership in Coaching (SS6131)
- Research Project Development (SS6151)
- Research Project 1 Sports Coaching (SS6142)
- Research Project 2 Sports Coaching (SS6133)

### **What kind of assignments will I have to do?**

We utilise a range of assessments. The first two semesters are chiefly portfolio based, where you are required to audit and reflect upon various aspects of your coaching practice. You will also engage in a variety of presentations, reports, and project-based assignments.

### **What are the fees for the programme?**

The latest information on fees can be found here: <https://www.ul.ie/gps/course/applied-sports-coaching-msc>

### **What employment opportunities are available?**

If you look at Irish Sports jobs listed on <https://www.irishsport.ie/jobs/> or <https://www.sportireland.ie/jobs-in-sport>, or equivalent sites abroad, you will often now see phrases like "Relevant third level qualification in sports coaching, development, sports management or related discipline" as a desirable or even essential characteristic. A Masters degree will be a valuable aid within the shortlisting for such roles.

**What has the student feedback been like?**

You can find a range of student comments about the programme [here](#), as well as a range of graduate profiles on twitter (e.g., "[being able to focus my own learning](#)"; "[the peer to peer learning was phenomenal](#)"; "[You will learn so much about yourself](#)"; "[how the course has helped with your current role](#)"; and "[advice for potential applicants](#)").

**Where can I find out more about the course?**

There are some other resources such as online blogs that may be useful (e.g., [my reflections on the first semester](#) and [the course as a community of practice](#)) and if you are on twitter, I try to post under the hashtag [#MScAppliedSportsCoachingUL](#) to give an insight in to the activities and guest speakers on the course, in particular. If you are on social media, here's [a flavour of what we explore](#).