

**Washington State University**  
College of Education  
*M.A. in Sport Management*

**Frequently Asked Questions**

Additional questions about the application process, requirements, or any other aspect of the degree program can be directed to assistant department chair, **Dr. Simon Ličen**, at [simon.licen@wsu.edu](mailto:simon.licen@wsu.edu).

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## General questions about the program

### Why study sport management at Washington State University?

Washington State University is an internationally-renowned public research university, classified as a Doctoral University with a very high research activity in the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education.

In athletic terms, Washington State University is a member of the Pac-12 Conference, which is the foremost collegiate athletic conference in the western United States. It has an excellent University Recreation department with vast fitness facilities, strong intramural and club sports programs, and first-rate outdoor recreation programming. The sport management program collaborates closely with both Athletic and University Recreation departments, and is involved with other important university initiatives.

### What degree does the program confer?

Graduates earn the degree of Master of Arts in Sport Management.

### Who is this degree for?

A master's degree in sport management prepares future professionals in the field of **professional sports events and organizations, intercollegiate athletics, and campus or community recreation.**

**Graduates of other degree programs** (business, communication, exercise science...) will be educated about the fundamentals of managing events and organizations with an emphasis on the specifics that are exclusive to sport and recreation.

**Students with an undergraduate degree in sport management** will deepen their knowledge about the field and will learn to situate sport organizations within broader societal contexts.

**Professionals who want to advance their careers** and choose to return to school to do so will be exposed to time-tested fundamentals that help manage sport organizations effectively and efficiently.

Perhaps most importantly, this degree is for students who grasp the complexity of contemporary sport and are eager to engage with the subject matter at a deeper, more analytic level and in a strategic and systemic fashion. The four core curricular areas (communication, law, management, and marketing) cover the main functions of sport organizations and relate to content areas taught in elective courses.

A graduate degree has become an informal (and, increasingly frequently, formal) expectation for professionals pursuing **careers in intercollegiate athletics or campus recreation.** A 2014 survey conducted by the Sports Business Journal showed that 80 percent of athletic directors (and nearly 90 percent of those hired since 2009) had earned an advanced degree; a master's degree in sports administration/management was the single most common advanced degree held by athletic directors.

### Who are the program faculty?

**Expert researchers and professionals** with experiences in sport and recreation events and organizations acquired on three continents. Former program heads and directors, internationally-

renowned speakers and instructors, and book authors. Their professional profiles can be found here: <https://education.wsu.edu/gradprograms/sportmanagement/people/>.

Additionally, some elective courses are taught by top adjunct instructors and experts from nearby institutions.

### **How long is the program?**

The program consists of a minimum 34 credit hours. Most full-time students complete the program in four semesters or approximately 21 months.

### **How much does the program cost?**

The graduate school website provides detailed information about the cost of attendance, tuition costs and other related financial information: <https://gradschool.wsu.edu/student-finance-page/>.

### **What are some funding options?**

Most students in the sport management program are able to secure a **graduate assistantship**. These appointments may include a tuition waiver, a monthly stipend and health insurance to students who engage in teaching, research or professional service.

Over the past three years (from Fall 2017 until Fall 2020), over 85 percent of full-time students in the program had secured a graduate assistantship to fund their studies. Most often, they secured positions in the Department of Athletics, University Recreation, as teaching assistants in the Sport Management program, or other units on campus.

Students hoping to secure a graduate assistantship are encouraged to contact the unit in which they seek placement. These are competitive positions, and some are advertised at the national level. As a courtesy, the Sport Management program and the Office of Graduate Education forward information about openings to applicants and students who express an interest in them, but **we do not guarantee** graduate assistantships to admitted students.

More information about graduate assistantships and a list of some openings can be found at <https://gradschool.wsu.edu/scholarships-fellowships-awards/>.

Students can also earn donor-funded **scholarships**. Their amount typically ranges between \$1000-\$2000 and more. To be eligible for a scholarship award, students must apply through the Student Financial Services website: <https://financialaid.wsu.edu/scholarships/>.

Some Washington State University **employees** may be eligible for a **tuition waiver** under article 60.73 of the Business Policies and Procedures Manual: <https://policies.wsu.edu/prf/index/manuals/60-00-personnel/60-70-tuition-waivers-fall-spring-semesters/#eligible>.

### **Is prior experience in sport management required?**

Experience in sport or sport management is not an admission requirement, though given the teaching style of some instructors, having minimal experience in sport (even as a participant or volunteer) may help the student absorb course content more thoroughly.

## **Can I earn practical experience while in the program?**

Most students become involved with the university athletic department, recreation department, or community sport organizations through graduate assistantships or volunteer opportunities.

## **What is the program's gender balance?**

Over the past three years, 43 percent of our students were female.

## **Are international students welcome?**

**Yes.** In fact, about 25 percent of our students over the past three years were international. They provide a vital contribution to the program's intellectual and professional climate.

## **What are the "thesis" and "non-thesis" option for a degree? Which one is a better fit for me?**

"Thesis" and "non-thesis" refer to the two types of culminating experiences in this degree program.

Students on the **thesis** track prepare and defend a master's thesis. This is a piece of original scholarship written under the guidance of a tenure-track faculty advisor and defended in front of a faculty committee.

Students on the **non-thesis** track complete their studies by sitting for a comprehensive exam. This exam involves a practical case or hypothetical scenario; students must address it by integrating and applying knowledge from the four core curriculum areas: communication, law, management and marketing.

The two tracks are equivalent. The thesis track is typically recommended to students who want to delve into a subject for greater depth of learning into a desired professional field; students who are strong writers; or (and) students who consider eventually pursuing a doctoral degree.

## **Will this degree prepare me for a doctoral program?**

**Yes.** In the past five years, four program alumni went on to pursue doctoral degrees.

## **Questions about the application process (UPDATED)**

### **How do I apply?**

By filling out the application at the WSU Graduate School website:

<https://gradschool.wsu.edu/apply/>.

Then, fill out the supplemental information form found at:

<https://education.wsu.edu/documents/2015/10/2013-sports-management-supplemental-application.pdf>

and send it to [gradstudies@wsu.edu](mailto:gradstudies@wsu.edu).

## **What materials are needed to apply to the program?**

A complete application consists of:

- ❑ The general WSU Graduate School online application;
- ❑ The supplemental Sport Management program application (to be submitted to [gradstudies@wsu.edu](mailto:gradstudies@wsu.edu));
- ❑ Official transcripts;
- ❑ A current resume describing the applicant's educational attainments, professional experiences (including part-time and student work), and highlighting any experience specific to sport or sport management;
- ❑ A statement of purpose describing the applicant's experiences, preparedness for graduate school, professional goals and how a master's degree will help achieve them;
- ❑ Three letters of recommendation;
- ❑ The university application fee.

Additionally, applicants may submit copies of official GRE, GMAT, LSAT or other standardized tests scores, as well as other materials (e.g., proof of notable academic or professional achievements) that may support their application.

International applicants may need to submit additional materials including proof of English language proficiency; visit <https://ip.wsu.edu/future-students/applications-forms/> for a full list of requirements.

## **Which applicants are admitted to the program?**

Applications are reviewed holistically by a committee composed of graduate program faculty. Candidates who are deemed a good academic and professional fit for the program and ready to complete graduate-level work are offered admission on a space-available basis.

The minimum criterion for acceptance into the program is a cumulative undergraduate GPA of 3.00 (on a 4.0 scale). International applicants must also meet the graduate school English proficiency requirements described at <https://ip.wsu.edu/future-students/requirements/>.

Students whose undergraduate cumulative GPA is below a 3.00 may request the GPA of their last 60 graded semester (or 90 quarter) credits is counted. If that GPA exceeds 3.00, they meet the admission criterion.

In rare cases, students who do not meet the minimum GPA are considered for full or Undeclared Graduate Classification admission. Students who wish to be considered for such exception should include a statement explaining the circumstances and why they believe they will be able to maintain a graduate-level GPA above 3.0 if admitted to the program. Such provisionary admission has certain implications for the student's enrollment and financial aid eligibility.

## **Are there prerequisites for admission to the program?**

There are no specific course prerequisites for admission to the program. In consultation with the student, the academic advisor may recommend a student completes selected undergraduate coursework before enrolling in a graduate course offered by the program. This is done to ensure the student's success in the course and in the program.

## What should I write in the statement of purpose?

- a) A summary of how your academic (and, if relevant, professional) experiences have prepared you for graduate school. This summary should clearly indicate how your qualifications and abilities will allow you to successfully complete a master's degree.
- b) A discussion of your current or anticipated career trajectory, or of potential career paths you are exploring. This portion of the statement should explain why you are interested in a particular career or industry sector, and indicate how a master's degree will further these interests.

The suggested length of this statement is approximately 500 words.

When preparing the statement of purpose, please avoid generalities and platitudes: we applaud the fact that most applicants are passionate about sports and are hard-working, responsible individuals, but this information is not usually helpful in making admissions decisions.

## Who should write the letters of recommendation?

Of the required three letters of recommendation, two should be prepared by former university instructors or other people who have direct knowledge of the applicant's academic qualifications and potential to succeed in graduate school. A third letter can be written by professionals, job supervisors and others who can address the applicant's potential to succeed as a graduate students and as a professional in the sport industry.

Letters written by high school teachers or principals are generally not considered adequate to address the applicant's academic potential to succeed in graduate school. "Character" letters without veritable references to the candidate's academic and/or professional potential are generally not considered.

Applicants who graduated from a university more than five years prior to applying to the program are excused from submitting academic letters of reference. Instead, they should submit professional letters of reference addressing the applicant's ability to make sense of new or incomplete information, synthesize different types/sources of information, clearly communicate ideas in writing, simultaneously manage multiple projects and deadlines, work and think independently, work in a small group, and ability to speak/present in front of a group.

## How to provide/submit the letters of recommendation?

Applicants provide the **names and contact information** (including e-mail address) of their references during the application process. The automated application system then solicits reference letters directly from the references. In alternative, the reference may submit the letter via e-mail directly to the Office of Graduate Education at [gradstudies@wsu.edu](mailto:gradstudies@wsu.edu).

Students do not customarily submit the reference letters in the application process.

Applicants are encouraged to contact their references in advance to confirm they are willing to submit a letter in a timely fashion. Applications are not complete until all three reference letters are received.

## When are applications due?

The priority application deadline is January 10 (to be admitted in the fall of the same year).

### **When will I find out if I am offered admission to the program?**

The review of applications submitted by the priority application deadline starts soon after January 10. These applicants are usually notified about the outcome of their application around mid-February.

### **Do you review late applications?**

Late applications are reviewed on a rolling basis if space is still available. Late applicants are encouraged to contact the Office of Graduate Education at [gradstudies@wsu.edu](mailto:gradstudies@wsu.edu) to find out whether applications for the next academic year are still being considered.

### **I am offered admission to the program. Now what?**

Applicants who are offered admission after having applied by the priority application deadline are asked to accept the admission offer by April 15. After this date, their spot may be offered to other applicants.

Late applicants are provided correspondingly later acceptance deadlines.

### **I was offered admission but cannot enroll this fall. What are my options?**

Admission is valid for one term. Students who are unable to attend in the semester they are admitted must reapply if they want to be admitted in the future. In some cases, program faculty approve deferred enrollment. Students should contact the Office of Graduate Education at [gradstudies@wsu.edu](mailto:gradstudies@wsu.edu) to request such consideration.