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.

Clickable index:

General questions about the program
Why study sport management at Washington State University? ................................................................. 2
What degree does the program confer? ........................................................................................................ 2
Who is this degree for? ................................................................................................................................ 2
Who are the program faculty? ......................................................................................................................... 2
How long is the program? ................................................................................................................................ 3
How much does the program cost? .................................................................................................................... 3
What are some funding options? ....................................................................................................................... 3
Is prior experience in sport management required? .......................................................................................... 3
Can I earn practical experience while in the program? ....................................................................................... 4
Are international students welcome? .................................................................................................................. 4
What are the “thesis” and “non-thesis” option for a degree? Which one is a better fit for me? 4
Will this degree prepare me for a doctoral program? ......................................................................................... 4

Questions about the application process
How do I apply? ................................................................................................................................................. 4
What materials are needed to apply to the program? ......................................................................................... 4
What are the program’s admission criteria? ........................................................................................................ 5
What if I do not meet the minimum admission criteria? ..................................................................................... 5
Are there prerequisites for admission to the program? ....................................................................................... 5
Who should write the letters of recommendation? ............................................................................................. 6
How to provide/submit the letters of recommendation? ................................................................................... 6
When are applications due? .............................................................................................................................. 6
I was admitted to the program but cannot accept enrollment this fall. What are my options? ... 6
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 Pacific-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 a Master of Arts degree 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 two years.

**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 2016 until Fall 2019), 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.

Are international students welcome?

Yes. In fact, more than 20 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

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.

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);
- Official transcripts;
- A GRE exam score (see www.ets.org/gre/ for details; WSU’s university code is 4705);
- A current resume describing at least the applicant’s educational attainments, professional experiences, and any experience specific to sport management;
- A statement of purpose, describing the applicant’s professional goals and how admission into the Sport Management program at Washington State University will help the candidate achieve them;
- Three letters of recommendation;
- The university application fee.

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.

**What are the program’s admission criteria?**

The minimum criteria for acceptance into the program are a cumulative undergraduate GPA of 3.00 (on a 4.0 scale) and a combined GRE score of 291 (with a minimum verbal score of 150 and a minimum quantitative score of 141). International applicants must meet the graduate school English proficiency requirements described at https://ip.wsu.edu/future-students/requirements/

Additionally, a committee composed of graduate faculty examines each application to determine the applicant’s fit for the academic program and their readiness to complete graduate-level work.

Due to the competitive nature of the application process and the limited number of students admitted to the program every year, the applicant’s meeting of the minimum criteria for admission does not, in itself, guarantee admission to the program.

**What if I do not meet the minimum admission criteria?**

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 are counted as meeting the minimum admission criteria.

In rare cases, students who do not meet the minimum admission criteria will be considered for full or Undeclared Graduate Classification admission. Such exceptions are decided by the graduate program faculty. 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.
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 can speak to 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 student 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 verifiable 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. They may submit additional professional letters of reference instead.

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 Graduate Studies Office at 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). Applications completed after the deadline will be reviewed on a space-available basis: students are encouraged to contact the Graduate Studies Office at gradstudies@wsu.edu to find out whether applications for the next academic year are still being considered.

I was admitted to the program but cannot accept enrollment this fall. What are my options?

Admission is valid for one term only. Students who decline it must reapply if they want to be admitted in the future. Only in rare cases does graduate program faculty approve deferred enrollment.