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UC acknowledges the Ngunnawal people, traditional custodians of the lands where Bruce campus is situated. We wish to acknowledge and respect their continuing culture and the contribution they make to the life of Canberra and the region. We also acknowledge all other First Nations Peoples on whose lands we gather.



UNIVERSITY OF  
CANBERRA

# GAME ON

UC SPORT STRATEGY 2021-2026



**"SPORT LIES AT  
THE HEART OF  
THE UNIVERSITY  
OF CANBERRA.  
IT IS PART OF OUR  
HISTORY, PRESENT  
AND FUTURE."**

*Paddy Nixon*





*message from* **THE**



# VICE- CHANCELLOR

**“ UC WILL BE AUSTRALIA’S LEADING UNIVERSITY FOR WOMEN IN SPORT AND A TOP 3 SPORTS UNIVERSITY IN AUSTRALIA, FOCUSING ON GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN IN SPORT, SPORT INTEGRITY AND BUILDING A CULTURE OF WELLNESS IN CANBERRA. ”**

Sport lies at the heart of the University of Canberra. It is part of our history, present and future.

Across all faculties, it links teaching, learning and research to our civic commitment, and it’s integral to the staff and student experience at UC.

Sport also embodies our UC values – integrity, collaboration, inclusion, innovation and entrepreneurship. It builds our community, connects cultures and regions, bolsters our identity, and promotes social justice, diversity, and physical and mental wellbeing.

UC is ideally and uniquely positioned in the nation’s capital to become one of the leading sport universities in Australia and our significant, ongoing investments will further grow our prominent position in the national sporting landscape.

In close proximity to federal, state and territory government departments, UC is at home in a city

designed for sport, and has built strong relationships with the ACT Academy of Sport (ACTAS), the Australian Institute of Sport (AIS), Sport Integrity Australia and Sport Australia.

We are already recognised nationally and internationally for sporting excellence, our relationships with peak sporting bodies and strong international collaborations – and our sportsmen and sportswomen compete with distinction at all levels, including at the Olympic and Paralympic Games, and in professional sport.

UC will be Australia’s leading university for women in sport and a top 3 sports university in Australia, focusing on gender equality and women in sport, sport integrity and building a culture of wellness in Canberra.

Here’s how we’ll deliver on that vision.

**Prof. Paddy Nixon**  
Vice-Chancellor

# A VISION TO INSPIRE. A PLAN TO ACHIEVE.

The University of Canberra is actively planning to become Australia's leading university for women in sport and a top 3 sports university in Australia. This sport strategy details how we will deliver on our ambitions.

## VISION

UC will be Australia's leading university for women in sport and a top 3 sports university in Australia.

We will be known for our focus on women in sport, diversity and inclusion and sport integrity. We will achieve this vision by engaging students, staff, industry partners, high performance athletes and teams and our local community in sport, mission-orientated research and exceptional student education and experiences.

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## MISSION

Sport will connect and engage students, staff and our community and region from community-based to high performance sport. We will promote and enable our values of integrity, collaboration, inclusion, innovation and entrepreneurship through sport education and research.

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## OUR AMBITION

By 2026, UC aims to be in the top-three ranked universities in Australia and top 50 in the world, for sport science.



# OUR STRATEGY

UC's sport strategy is built on three main ideas:

- We will harness the power of sport for social justice, equality, inclusion, integrity and wellbeing, by focusing our efforts on women in sport and translating our knowledge of elite athletic performance to foster community sport participation.
- The development of UC Sports Hub 2 will attract professional and community sporting partnerships and events, support cutting edge education and research outcomes, and create commercial revenue opportunities.
- We will share and promote our sporting stories to showcase our achievements; engage partners, staff, students and the community; and enhance our reputation.

These will cut across our five strategic pillars:

**Education**

**Research**

**Infrastructure**

**Partnerships**

**Community**







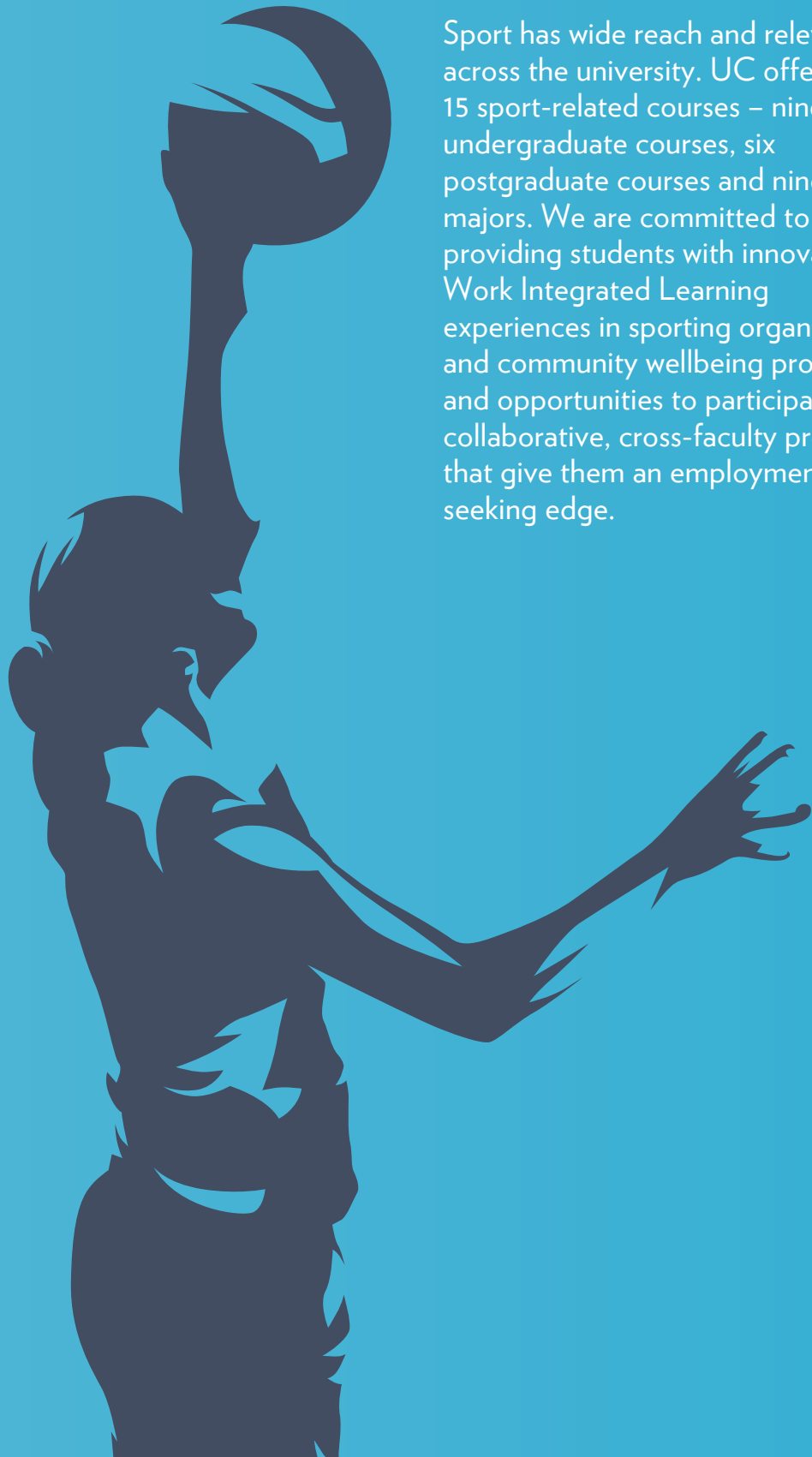


**BY 2026, UC AIMS TO BE IN THE TOP-THREE RANKED UNIVERSITIES IN AUSTRALIA FOR SPORT SCIENCE.**



# EDUCATION

Sport has wide reach and relevance across the university. UC offers 15 sport-related courses – nine undergraduate courses, six postgraduate courses and nine majors. We are committed to providing students with innovative Work Integrated Learning experiences in sporting organisations and community wellbeing programs, and opportunities to participate in collaborative, cross-faculty programs that give them an employment-seeking edge.



# KEY ACTIONS

We are committed to ensuring our curriculum reflects sport performance, organisation and leadership.

UC is a member of the Elite Athlete University Network, an AIS program that provides support and flexibility for elite athletes completing their studies, to help prepare them for life beyond sport.

A supportive and enabling environment will enable athletes to study all UC degrees, while an active campus supports health and wellbeing, as well as educational outcomes for all students.

We will support the sports industry to grow and develop women's sport and to create fairer more inclusive sport participation opportunities. We will offer education in sport integrity and sport leadership tailored to meet industry needs and the expectations of all Australians.

- Expand and promote the elite athlete office to ensure we deliver a guaranteed UC support package for elite athlete students.
- Design and deliver student recruitment activities that highlight and engage students with sport at UC.
- Develop and deliver sport related micro-credentials in areas of demand and expertise through UC Pro.
- Collaborate with the 50/50 by 2030 Foundation to develop micro credentials in women's leadership in sport.
- Embed additional industry specific qualifications into degrees (ie. strength and conditioning) to improve graduate employability.
- Leverage partnerships with UC sports teams, professional teams, and partners to support high quality Work Integrated Learning, student education and elite athlete student mentoring.
- Further develop sport curriculum within all faculties at UC.
- Increase the engagement of athletes from our professional teams, elite athlete students and sporting alumni with education of our students.

A large, dark silhouette of a basketball player in mid-air, performing a jump shot or layup. The player's arms are extended upwards, and their legs are bent. The silhouette is positioned on the left side of the page, overlapping the word 'RESEARCH'.

# RESEARCH

UC undertakes world class research in sport and exercise. Between 2017 and 2020, UC produced 381 publications, secured \$6 million in sport-related research funds, and attracted 50 PhD students across the five faculties – 22 of these were supported through scholarships. Our sport research had 400,000 views on the *ResearchGate* portal.

# KEY ACTIONS

University of Canberra Research Institute for Sport and Exercise (UCRISE) research informs the training, performance and management of many Olympic and team sports in partnership with government agencies, national sporting organisations and professional teams including the Brumbies (rugby), UC Capitals (basketball) and Canberra United (women's football).

Our research involves significant projects across high performance sport, sport and exercise medicine, environmental physiology, active brain (neuroscience), epigenetics and physical literacy.

Our research is also focused on sport integrity, injury prevention and increasing physical activity levels of children in childcare and primary school, as well as exploring the benefits of exercise for people recovering from cancer and those with mental health issues.

We will grow and develop our research in women's sport and high performance female athletes and ensure we translate our results to community sport, so everyone benefits. We will also strengthen our sport integrity research to investigate and promote sport that is fair, inclusive and free from corruption.

- Deepen our relationships with the AIS, national, state, and local sporting bodies to develop industry leading, impactful research that is translated into practice and policy.
- Ensure whenever practically possible that all our sport research designs include both male and female participants.
- Achieve 50:50 gender balance among our sport higher degree by research students and academic staff.
- UCRISE to identify, coordinate and support multidisciplinary research themes from across UC, that have a critical mass of researchers, high quality outputs and demonstrated impact.





# UC UNDERTAKES WORLD CLASS RESEARCH IN SPORT AND EXERCISE.



# INFRASTRUCTURE

UC's Sports Hub 1 was developed in 2014, a three-way partnership between the ACT Government, UC and the ACT and Southern NSW Rugby Union. It's home to Brumbies Rugby, UCRISE, and UCfitX (UC's fitness centre), as well as community sport organisations – and has seen UC secure a valuable partnership with Canberra United.





We are planning for Sports Hub 2 that will enable even greater research opportunities, which impact high performance and community sports programs, drive inclusion, positive sporting culture and community physical activity levels, and improve performance and participation – particularly in women's sport.

It will support a whole-of-life participation in sport and physical activity for all, with improved conditions to enable current and future paralympians to study, research, and train at UC.

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## KEY ACTIONS

- Develop the Sports Precinct identified on the UC Campus Masterplan including Sports Hub 2.
- Improve accessibility for community and students to our sporting facilities.
- Establish a large research gym that facilitates multidisciplinary collaborations, simultaneous data collection and generates income from access to sport consultancy services.





**SPORTS HUB 2 WILL  
GREATER RESEARCH  
AND INCREASED CA  
WOMEN'S SPORT.**





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H OPPORTUNITIES  
APACITY FOR**



# PARTNERSHIPS

UC has developed strong partnerships with high performance and community sporting organisations, ACT and federal government agencies that deliver invaluable education, research, branding and profile, and community engagement benefits.



## SPONSORSHIP AND OWNERSHIP OF HIGH PERFORMANCE TEAMS

UC's sponsorship and ownership of high performance teams competing in professional and national leagues, truly enhances our reputation as a leading sport university. We will maintain and expand our engagement with high performance teams including the ACT Brumbies, UC Capitals and Canberra United.

## RESEARCH AND EDUCATION PARTNERSHIPS

UCRISE maintains a successful education and research partnership with the AIS, and has the only joint professorial position and affiliated degree offering with the Institute in Australia. We also have joint-funded research staff who contribute to research activities like the athlete availability program.

We are developing an educational partnership with Western Sydney University and the NSW Institute for Sport at Sydney Olympic Park, which will leverage our reputation and expertise in sport to increase student numbers and access to elite sporting organisations, teams and individuals, as well as enhance our research opportunities. We have signed an MOU with Swansea University in the United Kingdom to develop joint degrees, student exchange and research programs.

## HIGH PERFORMANCE HUBS

The UC Capitals (basketball), Brumbies Rugby and Canberra United (football) use UC as their high performance training hub. This supports the pathways of local athletes, increases visibility of high performance female athletes and teams on campus, provides access to athletes for UCRISE research and supports the activation of sport facilities at non-peak times, creating an active campus.

UC will develop a holistic partnership strategy to enhance existing, and seek new partnerships that support our research and education endeavours, and the success of our high performance teams, as well as increasing impactful Work Integrated Learning and internship opportunities for students.

We are building and developing relationships with educational institutions and sporting organisations at all levels, and will develop the UC Sports Academy, with a focus on women and girls, and the ACT and region Sporting Schools UC Connect program.



# KEY ACTIONS

- Establish a strong relationship with Sport Integrity Australia.
- Establish two to three international sport partnerships, including Western Sydney University and Swansea University.
- Develop the UC Sports Academy (with a focus initially on women and girls) and the ACT Sporting Schools UC Connect program.
- Develop a sports tech incubation hub, similar to the Australian Sports Technology Network, potentially through a partnership with the Canberra Innovation Network and Swansea University.
- Expand and explore new elements to our partnerships with the AIS, ACTAS, and NSWIS.
- Maximise, maintain, and develop UC's suite of Sport Sponsorships.







**WE ARE BUILDING AND  
DEVELOPING RELATIONSHIPS  
WITH EDUCATIONAL  
INSTITUTIONS AND SPORTING  
ORGANISATIONS AT ALL LEVELS.**



# COMMUNITY

Sport plays an important role in connecting UC with the university community and the broader ACT and regional NSW communities; it also contributes to our civic mission to engage with communities, to support diversity and inclusion, and delivers tangible benefits for student wellbeing and satisfaction. The development of Sports Hub 2 will also be a community venue for the Canberra community.





## UC ALUMNI

UC's alumni include a host of high profile elite athletes, coaches and management professionals. Alumni are engaged through events, and opportunities to act as mentors and philanthropists. We will nurture and engage our alumni in teaching, research, partnerships and further education.

## CLUB SPORT AND UC STARS

We have 13 clubs operating under UC Sport, offering a wide range of participation opportunities for both students and community members.

The UC Stars brand created in 2019 brings UC student sport clubs under one banner. The clubs offer valuable real-world experience for students in leading and operating sporting organisations, with support and guidance from UC Sport.

UC has maintained a strong affiliation with local state sporting bodies. These affiliations provide opportunities for UC students to participate in sports that UC doesn't have the facilities to provide. Allowing all students the opportunity to engage in physical activity in a safe and inclusive manner. Maintaining close connections with the local bodies opens opportunities for UC students to start their own UC Stars sporting clubs sports with additional support from the University and their sports local body.

More than 70,000 community users visit UC sport facilities each year, including state sporting associations, specialist training programs, and junior sport clinics from a variety of sports, and other community members.

## SPORT PARTICIPATION

UC Sport offers a broad range of activities to encourage students' participation in sport, from social sport events and activities to Ressie Sport, intervarsity sport and University Games (National Divisions 1 and 2) and E-sports. It offers the chance to enhance student engagement, particularly within Indigenous communities.

Participating in sport has a positive impact on students' mental and physical wellbeing, as well as their sense of inclusion and attainment at university, and this translates to improved academic results and more connected future alumni. Hence UC is increasing its on-campus options for sport participation.

## DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Sport supports UC's ambition to be a sector leader in equity, diversity, inclusion and access through a range of initiatives including connecting to Indigenous communities through the UC sport regional roadshow, Family Day in Reconciliation Week, an Indigenous Athlete in Residence, support of Indigenous student athletes (through the Elite Athlete Program and UC 7s) and introduction of a UC Capitals Indigenous jersey and round, from 2018. We will utilise on and off campus sporting activities to connect and engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to increase knowledge and aspirations about future study and careers.

Our international students contribute to the diversity and vibrancy of campus life, sharing with us their cultures, values and interests. We will create sport programs that encourage participation by international students in sport including 3x3 basketball, badminton, Learn to Play AFL and water awareness.

# KEY ACTIONS

- Increase the number of on-campus options for students and staff to engage in formal social sporting competitions and informal sporting and physical activities.
- Complete the UC Sport Walk of Fame that acknowledges the achievements of distinguished alumni in sport and the sport industry.
- Make our sporting facilities easy to access and welcoming to community sporting groups and UC sports clubs.
- Engage our sporting alumni in teaching, research and mentoring our elite athlete students.
- Develop a nation-leading sport scholarships program.







**UC SPORT OFFERS  
A BROAD RANGE  
OF ACTIVITIES  
TO ENCOURAGE  
STUDENTS'  
PARTICIPATION  
IN SPORT.**



