



INTERNATIONAL  
**NETBALL**  
FEDERATION

# INF Guidance Paper

## Netball and the University Sector



**In an ever changing world the International Netball Federation (INF) is aware of increasing pressure on Universities to ensure that the opportunities they provide best prepare their students for working life in a challenging and diverse environment.**

The transferability of skills learnt in sport when volunteering as coaches, officials, event leads and other such roles is well documented as is the wider impact on employability and lifestyle skills that such involvement can bring.

INF believes that Netball can be used directly and indirectly as a tool to enhance work place learning and this paper outlines some suggestions as to how this could be done within your University benefiting students, (not only those studying sport related subjects), and university staff alike. These include, but are not restricted to:

- Healthy Body = Healthy Mind through participation in fun sport & physical activity
- Developing Leadership, Coaching & Officiating Skills
- Applied use of knowledge & skills
- Enhanced employability
- Increased self-efficacy
- Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) & International Networks

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- **Healthy Body = Healthy Mind**

### **Opportunities to Play**

The obvious way Netball can contribute to University life is by providing students with the opportunity to play the sport and be physically active in a fun way, contributing positively to their health and work: life balance.

- Netball is a very social game
- One of the few team sports to attract a large number of female participants, with an increasing amount of mixed social netball also being played.
- The Rules of Netball make it truly inclusive in nature as the positions and playing zones mean that everyone touches the ball within a game ensuring they are involved and active throughout.

The sport provides a great opportunity to make new friends and build networks that will last way beyond student life.

### **Opportunities to Perform**

International Netball focuses on female athlete participation and as one of the largest female team sports it contributes to redressing the international inequity in participation levels as well as providing those involved the opportunity to progress through to elite levels of performance.

- The sport provides opportunities to empower females in a way that has far reaching benefits beyond Netball encouraging performers to believe they can achieve things they never thought possible.

Now that Netball is part of the FISU World University Games there are opportunities to travel the world through University sport and compete on the global stage, exposing students

to a range of countries and different cultures, which will help broaden their view of the world and understanding of different cultures through Netball.



In relation to playing Netball your National Netball Association or Regional Federation will be able to offer support and technical guidance on the programmes you run for novices through to high performance athletes. Advice can also be offered relating to what you may need to look for when appointing a coach(es) to university roles.

INF has a Basic Coaching Manual which is available electronically as a Pdf on request via [inf@netball.org](mailto:inf@netball.org)

- **Developing Leadership, Coaching & Officiating Skills**

Being involved in Netball can also provide students with the opportunity and experiences to develop a wide range of skills that can be transferrable into other areas of their lives e.g. leadership, teamwork, communication, planning & organisation etc

- Local clubs, Regional, and in some cases National Netball organisations would welcome people willing to share their skills on a voluntary basis allowing students/staff opportunities to gain hands-on experience and to further

develop their skills. This may be in a range of roles including:

- Chair
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- Marketing & PR Officer
- Technical Lead
- Events Officer

### Governance & Administration

There may be opportunities for students or staff to get involved in leadership positions at local, regional or national level whether in the longer-term by:

- joining the main Executive,
- or shorter-term
- on sub-groups or specific project working groups.

At Executive level some National or Regional Netball Associations welcome having external people on the Board to bring a different view point, either as a regular part of the group or on a co-opted basis.

### Events Management

Getting involved in organising and running events & tournaments is a great way to develop planning and organisational skills such as:

- project management
- time management
- communication
- managing people etc

all within the intensive period of planning and delivering an event.

Events could be anything from a schools festival through to international competition/tournaments.

### Coaching & Officiating

Learning how to convey messages and share knowledge and understanding with others from a range of backgrounds is an invaluable skill in its own right and not only helps improve your own game but also helps you develop skills that can be used in a range of situations beyond Netball.



Whilst not all National Netball Associations have their own qualification/awards programmes they will be able to signpost Universities to the recognised training courses to ensure the support/training, students/staff receive is of the recognised standard.

National Netball Associations can work with Universities to help identify where opportunities for practical experience exist and also advise on/facilitate training, in particular relating to the coaching & officiating.

### • Applied use of knowledge & skills

The perception often held is that students learn the theory but can't always transfer that to real life, and that research is just something done by academics with no connection to reality or of benefit to the working environment. This clearly need not be the case and Netball provides a great opportunity for knowledge and skills to be applied in a constructive and productive way.

## Applied Research

Connecting research to a netball organisation helps ensure the research questions are ones that require answering by the sport, meaning that the results are more likely to have a real life application and where appropriate the recommendations be implemented in a very practical way.

Some of our Members, particularly the larger National Netball Associations, have already linked up with Universities to carry out applied research.

For example, Netball Australia promotes work done by the University of Ballarat around injury prevention providing 'A practical guide to safe and effective landing in Netball'.

INF has worked with universities to back funding bids for research linked to a range of issues including Arthritis in sportspeople and Spectator Motivations.

## Impact Measurement

With many organisations taking a far more evidence based approach to planning, development and investment, making impact measurement, providing evidence of how effective programmes are being in achieving the aims and targets set all the more important to Netball organisations. Areas covered may include:

- Quantitative evaluation of programmes and their initial impact
  - Personal testimonies from participants and other beneficiaries and stakeholders
  - Case studies
  - Longitudinal studies relating to long-term impact and sustainability

Done to a high standard this could provide good project matter for students and staff alike, creating a long-term legacy for Netball.

## Applied Practice

As outlined above there are many opportunities for students and staff to take their knowledge and skills and apply them within Netball.

Additional areas where National and other Netball Associations/organisations may welcome support include things like:

- Marketing
- Website Design, and
- Fundraising etc.

As Netball is largely run by volunteers the transfer of Human Resource Management theory into how to best manage relationships is another area where theory can meet practice.



## Sports Science Support

This tends to be an area that a number of National Federations do not address due to lack of expertise and understanding. Some National Associations work with Universities or Institutes of Sport on aspects of sports science but many would benefit from education and input on this area, both generically and specifically relating to Netball.

There are many different aspects of Netball that could be investigated and skills applied on a range of levels covering varied areas of study.

If this is an area of interest to you please contact us via [inf@netball.org](mailto:inf@netball.org) and we can put you in touch with the appropriate National Netball Federation.



## ❖ **Enhanced employability & Increased self-efficacy**

### **Enhanced employability**

Being able to show how you have applied your skills, whether as a student or staff member is invaluable in today's jobs market and a way of enhancing learning. Being able to add such experiences to your CV and show that you have taken every opportunity to enhance knowledge and skills gained at the University in a hands on way will add value to any job application.

### **Increased self-efficacy**

Challenging themselves in new and varied environments, experiencing success within a work place setting will help enhance student's self-efficacy. Belief in their own competence and ability to do the job will encourage them to take risks and stretch themselves. This is particularly important in the empowerment of women helping to increase the number of females who move into leadership positions both within and beyond sport.

## ❖ **Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) & International Networks**

### **Linking with the local community**

Sport is increasingly a universal language and Netball has already proven to be an amazing tool for targeting a wide range of agendas. INF's award winning programmes have addressed agendas such as women's empowerment, disaffected youth, health and wellbeing and social inclusion.

Providing students and staff with the opportunity to apply their knowledge and skills outside of the University environment will not only benefit them but will also help to build productive and collaborative relationships with the local

community, including with those who may become future students.

This will also help continue to raise the profile and enhance the reputation of the University and your students/staff in a positive way as they are seen as making a proactive contribution to the local community

### **Building international networks through Netball**

The sport, particularly through the World University Netball Championship provides a great opportunity to connect with students and Universities throughout the world.

INF has worked with the UK Sport 'International Development Through Excellence and Leadership in Sport' (IDEALS) programme aimed at establishing high quality, progressive and co-ordinated sports leadership development exchanges for young people aged 20-35 between the UK and partner countries. This brings together British Universities, in this case The Wallace Group of Universities, and local providers e.g. Sport in Action, EduSport with the National Netball Association to support the development of sustainable netball programmes.



Both students and staff gain the opportunity to add value to their training/role, extend their global awareness and develop/enhance their leadership skills. Further information about IDEALS can be found at:

[www.uk sport.gov.uk/pages/ideals/](http://www.uk sport.gov.uk/pages/ideals/)

The International Federation of Netball Associations (INF) is eager to see Netball thrive in the University sector and see the FISU World University Netball Championships become a highly competitive world renowned event showcasing the very best of University sport.

Going forward INF will continue to look at other ways Netball can work together with Universities and the education sector to support the development of world class in-country education, training and continuing personal and professional development programmes for the Netball workforce.

If you would like to be put in touch with your National Netball Association and/or Regional Federation please contact INF via [inf@netball.org](mailto:inf@netball.org)

*We hope you continue to enjoy being involved in Netball.*

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