

## Sports Science

Fittingly, sports science is one of our more competitive subject rankings, with ranks changing hands regularly. Success in this context is based on universities' performance in sports degree courses and research, rather than the standard of their sports facilities or their teams' victories. Since 2017, the table has been led by Birmingham, Bath – twice, Exeter and Loughborough. But for a fifth successive year Glasgow lifts the cup in our Sports Science table, its rank boosted by the highest entry standards of 216 UCAS points along with strong performances across the rest of the metrics in the ranking. Bath is runner-up, also for the fifth consecutive year, and benefits from top ten rates of student satisfaction with the broad undergraduate experience and a top 15 finish for teaching quality as well as graduate prospects that rank in the top four universities.

Third-place overall, Exeter leads the field for research in sports science by a clear margin, based on results of the Research Excellence Framework 2021. Following it for research quality are King's College London (11th in the table) and Bangor (24th).

The best sports facilities do not always equate to top outcomes in the academic discipline of sport science – but they can help, such as the laboratories in which performance, endurance and recovery are closely monitored. Loughborough, the most famous name in university sport, podiums in fourth place of our table overall. Though not an ingredient of our ranking, Loughborough's superb facilities are the training hub for countless elite sportspeople, and with Loughborough-linked athletes returning home from the Paris 2024 Olympics with 16 medals, if Loughborough University were a country, it would have outperformed nations including Brazil, Austria and South Africa.

Nottingham has placed second to Loughborough in the British Universities and Colleges Sport (BUCS) points table for the three years up to 2023–24. It has staged a spectacular return to form in our academic ranking too, where it places sixth this year (having plummeted to fourth from bottom last year) – lifted by much improved rates of student satisfaction, including a top-15 finish for students' evaluation of the broad experience. In our new National Student Survey analysis Lancaster (eighth overall), Teesside (=17th) and Buckinghamshire New (30th) are the top three universities for teaching quality, in descending order. For the wider experience Aberystwyth (=17th overall), Buckinghamshire New (30th) and Surrey (5th) lead the table.

Dr Adam Brazil, lecturer in sports biomechanics, University of Bath, says sports science connects learning to real world settings and “provides an exciting framework to explore scientific disciplines such as human physiology, biomechanics and psychology. Career prospects are vast and varied and you may find yourself pursuing a career as an elite sport practitioner, exercise rehabilitation specialist or academic researcher.”

Sport and exercise sciences have been one of the big growth areas of UK higher education over the past 15 years or so, and despite a 10% decline in applications to the subject in 2023, 74,810 still applied to it (20% more than four years before). The number of students accepted onto courses in 2023 declined less sharply, by 8%, and 16,170 enrolled on degrees. Many courses involve more science and less physical activity than some candidates expect, and the leading universities look for the sciences and maths at A-level. Having shot up our previous edition's 70-subject employment table to place 21st, sports science has sunk to 45th this year, based on 62.2% of graduates being in high-skilled jobs and/or furthering their studies within 15 months. Salaries stack up less favourably, in =53rd place.

## Sports Science

	Teaching quality %	Student experience %	Research quality %	Entry standards (UCAS points)	Graduate prospects %	Overall score
1 Glasgow	83	78.8	68.5	217	—	100
2 Bath	89.9	89.9	73.2	161	84.7	98.3
3 Exeter	81.8	84.9	84	161	81.2	96.1
4 Loughborough	81.2	85.3	66.8	161	86.6	95.7
5 Surrey	90	91.3	58	137	84.4	95
6 Nottingham	84.2	87	61	142	82.8	93.5
7 Liverpool John Moores	86.4	85.2	60.8	154	76.8	93.2
=8 Lancaster	94	90.7	55	142	72.7	92.9
=8 Coventry	92.3	89.5	24.8	135	87.3	92.9
10 Durham	83.1	80.4	61	168	75.5	92.8
11 King's College London	77.6	76.1	80.2	154	—	92.7
12 Manchester Metropolitan	86.5	83.2	51.2	137	83.9	92.6
=13 Birmingham	79.7	78.9	73.2	150	78.7	92.4
=13 Swansea	85.6	87.2	48.2	136	83.8	92.4
15 Chichester	89.9	84.5	33.2	129	87.6	92.3
16 Northumbria	86.4	85.4	60.5	150	74.5	92.2
=17 Teesside	94	90.6	35	136	78.6	92.1
=17 Aberystwyth	92.4	93.7	48.8	121	—	92.1
19 Aberdeen	82.8	78.9	30.5	187	—	92
20 St Mary's, Twickenham	89.2	85.2	46	118	83.1	91.3
21 Edge Hill	87.6	84	32.5	143	80.3	90.7
=22 Cardiff Metropolitan	85.8	82.8	43.8	139	79.2	90.6
=22 Leeds	72	70.8	65.8	150	84.5	90.6
24 Bangor	86.4	85.7	73.8	127	69.5	90.3
25 Portsmouth	85.5	82.3	57.5	126	76.8	90.1
26 Abertay	91.4	89.9	19.8	157	72.5	90
27 Brunel	81.8	81.9	50.5	132	79.5	89.8
28 Newcastle	80.3	78.7	50.7	145	77.5	89.7
29 Stirling	81.3	79.1	36.5	172	73.2	89.6
30 Buckinghamshire New	93.4	91.4	22.8	113	80.5	89.5
31 Brighton	86.5	82.6	45.5	119	79.5	89.4
32 Nottingham Trent	88	86.7	36.8	131	75.5	89.3
=33 Edinburgh	70.4	70.5	55	193	70.8	89.1
=33 Strathclyde	87.2	84.7	—	196	70	89.1
=33 Hertfordshire	88.5	82.4	48	112	77.7	89.1
=33 Ulster	82.3	79.6	43.2	143	76.6	89.1
=33 South Wales	89.6	83.7	45.8	117	75.9	89.1
=38 Greenwich	84.4	75	32.3	129	83.9	88.9
=38 Leeds Beckett	86.6	83.6	49.2	121	75.3	88.9
=38 Lincoln	91	85.1	30.8	127	75.4	88.9
=38 Worcester	88.5	86	15.2	122	84.1	88.9
=42 Oxford Brookes	88.5	81.8	37.8	121	78	88.8
=42 York St John	90.2	89.8	27.5	126	75.5	88.8
=44 Salford	85.7	78.7	37	139	75.8	88.7



# Sports Science cont.

	Teaching quality %	Student experience %	Research quality %	Entry standards (UCAS points)	Graduate prospects %	Overall score
=44 Roehampton	88.9	85.6	37.5	106	80.5	88.7
46 Sheffield Hallam	84.1	80.6	45.2	126	77.1	88.6
47 Bournemouth	82.2	78.4	41.8	123	78.2	87.7
48 Hartpury	90.6	83.6	15.8	128	75.6	87.3
=49 Robert Gordon	88.8	82.2	—	162	72	87.1
=49 Chester	85.9	86.7	15.8	134	75.8	87.1
51 Wolverhampton	93.4	88.7	25.2	108	72.1	86.8
=52 Central Lancashire	89	81.4	19.2	129	74	86.7
=52 Essex	85.6	84.1	32.5	138	68.6	86.7
54 Solent, Southampton	88.9	84.7	18.5	125	73.1	86.5
=55 Staffordshire	92.2	80.4	30.8	122	67.8	86.3
=55 West of Scotland	85.4	79.7	29	145	67.9	86.3
=55 Hull	86	78.8	47.2	140	62.7	86.3
58 Bedfordshire	84.9	79.8	22	112	80.2	86.2
=59 Gloucestershire	81.9	71.6	24.5	124	80.7	86
=59 Edinburgh Napier	74.8	75.2	23.5	158	75.4	86
61 St Mark and St John	89.8	86.2	20	122	70.1	85.9
62 Newman	92.2	87.9	13.2	112	—	85.8
63 Canterbury Christ Church	86	81.5	38	99	74.6	85.6
64 Kingston	92.1	85.9	38.5	116	61.8	85.4
65 Derby	89.7	85.3	—	122	75.4	85.3
66 East Anglia	88.9	89.9	—	143	67.4	85.1
=67 Wales Trinity St David	86.6	79.9	11.8	136	70.6	85
=67 Liverpool Hope	82.9	77.8	13.8	125	76.9	85
69 Kent	85	81.4	37.2	131	63.6	84.9
70 Winchester	84.8	79.6	20.8	113	75.3	84.8
=71 Birmingham City	88.7	85.5	—	132	70.8	84.6
=71 Middlesex	87.7	80.9	16	120	71.4	84.6
73 Huddersfield	83.3	73.4	22.2	130	70.9	84.2
74 Bolton	88.3	82.3	—	119	71.8	83.4
75 Anglia Ruskin	87.8	85.5	18.5	121	63.5	83.3
76 Northampton	89.3	84.9	5	107	69.7	82.9
77 Leeds Trinity	74.5	67.4	18	114	81.9	82.8
78 London South Bank	83.1	76.4	32.2	100	—	82.6
79 Sunderland	79.4	70.2	22	121	63.6	80.2
80 Suffolk	71.3	68	—	116	76.9	79.2
81 East London	83	75.2	—	114	57.3	77.3
82 Cumbria	80.3	63.9	—	121	61.1	77.1
Employed in high-skilled job	46%	Employed in lower-skilled job	24%			
Employed in high-skilled job and studying	5%	Employed in lower-skilled job and studying	1%			
Studying	9%	Unemployed	3%			
High-skilled work (median) salary	£25,000	Low-/medium-skilled salary	£20,500			

# Subjects Allied to Medicine

"Are you fascinated by the human body? A problem solver? A good communicator with a desire to change people's lives?" asks Dr Rachael Cubberley, head of the School of Allied Health and Social Care, Anglia Ruskin University. "From clinical to policy, strategic to education, allied health provides diversification opportunities throughout your career. A purpose-driven career, regulated by professional bodies, that can flex and adapt as your life changes is endlessly rewarding."

A wide range of degrees is encompassed within the Subjects Allied to Medicine table. They include audiology, complementary therapies, counselling, health services management, health sciences, nutrition, occupational therapy, optometry, ophthalmology, orthoptics, osteopathy, podiatry and speech therapy. Physiotherapy and radiography have rankings of their own. Not all the universities that feature in this table offer all of the subjects that fall under the broad "allied to medicine" heading, and performance in our ranking is naturally influenced by which specialisms are offered.

In a top three of Scottish universities Strathclyde returns to No 1 in the table, where it previously enjoyed a six-year run until two years ago. Strathclyde's strong performances across all five of the ranking's metrics include the third-highest entry standards and a top ten research rating. Last year's No 1, Dundee, slips to eighth place while Glasgow – which has the highest entry standards in the table with 205 points in the UCAS tariff – moves up one place into the runner-up spot.

The post-1992 universities represent more than half of the table, but only Glasgow Caledonian places in the top 10. King's College London sits 14th overall but its strength in research is unsurpassed, based on results of the Research Excellence Framework 2021. Manchester (ninth overall), Southampton (=22nd) and 16th-place Bristol follow it for research quality.

In our National Student Survey (NSS) analysis, Edinburgh Napier (=12th overall) is rated top for teaching quality by its students, in a ranking that sees Buckinghamshire New (35th in the table) and St Mary's Twickenham (=51st) fill second and third places respectively. For the wider undergraduate experience, also derived from the NSS, Buckinghamshire New is unbeaten, followed by St Mary's, Twickenham and Lancaster (fourth overall). Conversely, Brunel comes bottom for both.

Applications in 2022 saw a small increase in ophthalmics but after three years of increasing applications demand dipped in counselling, psychotherapy and occupational therapy. Applications also decreased within nutrition and dietetics, and in complementary and alternative medicine. The best rates of graduate employment are found jointly at Buckinghamshire New and Wrexham – where 97.4% of graduates were in high-skilled work or postgraduate study within 15 months – while 31 universities in total had at least nine in 10 graduates achieving the same outcomes. At just three, Middlesex, East London and Roehampton, this proportion falls below 70%. Their generally solid job prospects rank the subjects allied to medicine 10th in our 70-subject employment table (up from 24th last year) though pay falls outside the top half of subjects – with average graduate salaries of £25,655, placing the subjects 42nd.

# Subjects Allied to Medicine

	Teaching quality %	Student experience %	Research quality %	Entry standards (UCAS points)	Graduate prospects %	Overall score
1 Strathclyde	82.6	80.9	65.8	190	87.4	100
2 Glasgow	77.9	76.2	63.5	205	86.9	99.6
3 Glasgow Caledonian	80.4	76	61	190	91.6	99.5
4 Lancaster	88.8	89.2	55	147	91.1	97.6
5 City	90.8	89	58	136	91.4	97.5