

Cardiff School of Sport
DISSERTATION ASSESSMENT PROFORMA: Empirical ²

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Programme:	<input type="text" value="SD"/>		
Dissertation title:	<input type="text" value="A Study Aimed to Understand Why Student's In Higher Education Drop-Out of University Level SPORT"/>		
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CARDIFF METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY
Prifysgol Fetropolitan Caerdydd

CARDIFF SCHOOL OF SPORT

DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF SCIENCE (HONOURS)

SPORT DEVELOPMENT

2013-14

**A Study Aimed to Understand Why Student's in Higher
Education Drop-out of University Level Sport**

**(Dissertation submitted under the discipline of
Sport Development)**

David Wynne Rushton

ST20005179

**A STUDY AIMED TO UNDERSTAND WHY STUDENT'S IN
HIGHER EDUCATION DROP-OUT OF UNIVERSITY
LEVEL SPORT**

Cardiff Metropolitan University
Prifysgol Fetropolitian Caerdydd

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Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Lucy Wheatley for her ongoing support and my interviewee's for taking part in the study.

Abstract

The current population of young adults (18-25 year olds) are not meeting the recommended amount of physical activity (ONS, 2011; DCMS, 2013). In comparison studies have found that there is a major drop out percentage, when young people leave compulsory school. With a majority of the young population being student in higher education (2.5 million out of 7 million), university institutes have an opportunity to address this issue and raise and retain the sport participation (Higher Education Statistics Survey, No Date; ONS, 2011). With a lack of literature surrounding sport participation in university students, it can become an issue to increase the participation rates within. Therefore this study aims to understand drop outs of university sport and identify the issues, so they can be developed. With many of the studies looking at the overall population when focusing on the young adults, rather than looking into a specific group, it makes it hard for sport development practitioners to develop these groups and make such interventions specific. Much of this study was to gain an understanding of the issues of drop outs in higher education students from university level sport in detail, therefore a qualitative approach was chosen, using interviews; the interview method gave a chance for the participants to clearly express their opinions (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007). The most important sources were the participants, who were all in their third year at university and had at one point dropped out of university sport at their time studying. The main reasons for drop out among the participants were: too competitive, no social aspect, lack of enjoyment, no development/ progression. The results linked with the literature (Craike, Symons, & Zimmermann, 2009; Enoksen, 2011), however, the social aspect of sport needed to be a higher priority within university support. Many of the participants had other priorities (e.g. studies) or have already played to a high level prior to university, but still wanting to be involved in sport to some degree, found it hard with some of the structure of the sport being too competitive and time-consuming. University sport seemed to be over-focused on quality over quantity, instead looking into getting more people included with enjoyment and social factors being priority. The results are specific to students, but can be related to other groups and ages. It seems that university sport needs to make social teams more established, so they can retain participation.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

It is becoming increasingly difficult to ignore many benefits that sport and physical activity can have on individuals; from the physical, mental and social, including the social and economic benefits which it holds for the country (Bailey, 2006; Berger, 1996; Bloyce & Smith, Sport Policy and Development: an introduction, 2010; DCMS, Playing to Win, 2008; DCMS, Creating a Sporting Habit for Life, 2013; Sport England Research, 2012). With the benefits of sport and physical activity being extremely positive, it would seem ok to assume that everyone participating to be a normal phenomenon, however, Sport England (2010) found that only around 50% of the population in the UK (United Kingdom) do not participate in sport or physical activity. Recent developments in lack of physical exercise have heightened the need for the increase in sport participation. It was found that due to physical inactivity, overweight and obesity, the NHS are paying £6 billion and this is set to increase (Scarborough, Bhatnagar, Wickramasinghe, Allender, Foster, & Rayner, 2011). It is clearly shown that there is an ongoing issue which needs to be fixed; other it will carry on worsening.

The government have released a number of sport policy documents to work in increasing sport participation these include Game Plan and Climbing Higher. As detailed in the Climbing Higher Document (2005), the government aim to have around 70% of the population participating in sport, with everyone doing 30 minutes of exercise, five times a week. Exercising for this amount of time every week, means the maximum amount of benefits are received (Bailey, 2006). However, only 40% of Men and 28% of women meet this requirement set by the government (ONS, 2011).

With the government setting targets to increase sport participation, it has been recorded that 70% of males under the age of 18 are hitting the required targets set by the government (ONS, 2011). Therefore, people are dropping out of sport and physical activity, motivation to participate can consist of intrinsic and extrinsic factors such as enjoyment or achievement (Bailey, 2006; Craike, Symons, & Zimmermann, 2009). Drop out is a current and on-going problem within the UK, with Sport England (2010) stating that participation is at its peak in the teenager years. Drop out is not unknown to the government, and they have recently released a policy (Creating a Sporting Habit for Life), which aims to increase the participation rates among 18-25 year olds, It states that over the next five years it will invest £1 billion of lottery money (DCMS, Creating a Sporting Habit for Life, 2013). Much research has been done on why young people drop out of

sport, they include: no enjoyment, other life commitments, too competitive and injury (Bailey, 2006; Chan, Lonsdale, & Fung, 2012; Craike, Symons, & Zimmermann, 2009; DCMS, Creating a Sporting Habit for Life, 2013; Dagkas & Armour, 2012).

It has been estimated that there are around 7 million 16-24 year olds in the United Kingdom (UK) (ONS, 2011), and with 2.5 million students (Higher Education Statistics Survey, No Date), universities have an opportunity to increase the participation rates of 18-25 year olds in the UK. Therefore, this study aims to understand why students in Higher Education drop out of university level sport. It has been identified that transition of life stages within a person's life can be a cause for drop out (Sport England Research, 2012); however, it not yet has been identified why students specifically drop out of university sport.

1.1 Purpose of the study

With athlete drop out being a complicated issue and being a highly researched topic (Enoksen, 2011), there is limited research into university sport. Although with the new 'Creating a Sporting Habit for life policy', the Active Universities initiative was released which is focused to raising the participation rates among students in higher education (Active Universities, 2012).

The main aim of the study is understand the reasons why students in higher education drop out of university sport.

This will be achieved by:

1. The reasons why students took up university sport.
2. Why the students dropped out of university sport.
3. What could be done to further prevent drop out in university sport and sustain participation.

CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Literature Review

This chapter contains a review of previous literature, related to the research topic: drop out from sport in higher education sport. However, it is vital to have an understanding of key concepts associated with drop outs in sport, which is sport development. Drop outs have an effect on sport development structure, such as the sport development continuum, which involves foundation, participation, performance and elite (Bloyce & Smith, 2010), therefore if a high percent of participants drop out of sport, it would inflict on the percentages of creating athletes. It is a general perception that the main aim of sport development is to increase mass participation among the general public. However, Hylton (2013) reiterates the complexity of sport development and argues that it is more of a term used to describe policies, processes and practices which form a feature of the work involved to create sporting opportunities. The depth that Hylton goes into of this idea of sport development shows its importance in sporting culture and the vital importance of structuring sport on a national level, not just getting people to play sport, rather than just attempting to increase mass participation.

The focus of sport development can be changed by the funding organisation; changes in government and associated priorities. This need not be deemed a negative; it is just dependant on the type of organisation. There are three major sectors: the public sector (government agencies such as Sport Councils); the commercial sector (profit seeking organisations) and then the voluntary sector (non-profit organisations) (Hylton, 2013). Sport Development identifies these sectors and their need of partnerships to hit goals. There are organisations which use sport for profit gains, Sport England, for example, states that partnerships are available and come with major benefits (2010). Therefore, Sport development officers need to make difficult choices as to which is the best option, if they are to achieve their goals, hence keeping people from dropping out of sport (Hylton, 2013).

Hylton also mentions that sport development involves policies; these policies lay the foundations of sport and are used to tackle issues (for example, sport drop outs), which are set by the government or sporting organisations (Bloyce & Smith, Sport Policy and Development: an introduction, 2010). The government has such an interest in sport is due to the wider benefits that sport can provide such as: national prestige, tourism, city regeneration, community development and health This is where the use of policies is so important to make sure everyone is on the same playing field (Hylton, 2013). A good

example is climbing Higher which is a policy of Sport Wales which is an attempt to increase participation rate in Wales which is 38% (Welsh Assembly Government, 2005). Thus, sport has more impact externally for society rather than individually for the person playing the sport to have fun.

2.1 Benefits of Sport

There are substantial reasons why students should not drop out of sport which several articles and books have argued passionately for. Lower *et al* states that physical fitness among students is a major problem on college campuses (A comparative Analysis of perceived Benefits of Participation Between Recreational Sport Programs, 2013). However, the study was done in America but it is likely to apply to British students. So an exploration of the current literature surrounding the benefits of sport for young people, is required to gain a greater understanding of the importance sport participation can bring. These benefits will include both physical and mental, and review current literature to see wider and narrower reasons why young need to stay active through this stage in life.

2.11 Physiological

Sport can provide a vast number of benefits, Janssen and Leblanc (2010) found that the more physical activity is done, the greater the health benefits become, more so with actual physical improvements. Lindsey (The Benefits and Satisfaction of Participating in Campus Recreational Sports Facilities and Programs Among Male and Female African American Students: A Pilot Study, 2012) in a study on 18-25 year old students found that general benefits include, weight loss and dependant on training type but increased strength. In addition, Bailey (2006) mentions that physical activity can reduce the risk of variety of diseases, such as heart disease. It is important to mention that inactivity is one of the main causes for death and disability in Europe (Bailey, 2006). However, with this concern, Janssen and Leblanc (2010) found that even the modest amount of exercise can have health benefits. Sport needs to be prioritised in people's lives, because the benefits not only affect them but the general population, for example, Sport England (2010) states that 60% of males and 50% of females could be obese by 2050, adding around £6 billion to the NHS's annual cost. This shows the importance of people taking up sport or physical activity.

2.12 Psychological

A large and growing body of literature has investigated the mental benefits of sport (Collins & Teresa, Sport and Social Exclusion, 2003; Dagkas & Armour, 2012; Coalter, 2007; Elling

& Claringbould, 2005; Hylton, 2013). Lower *et al* (2013), states that sport is still a great source for personal and social entertainment. In addition, Hylton (Sport Development Policy, Process and Practice, 2013) and Dagkas & Armour (Inclusion and Exclusion through sport, 2012) also state that sport is intrinsically beneficial and develops positively many different psychological areas. Such as, where Berger (Psychological Benefits of an Active Lifestyle: What we know and What we need to know, 1996) identifies the psychological benefits and classifies them into four broad areas: enhanced mood, stress reduction, more self-confidence and the sense of a higher quality of life.

2.13 Social

Sport and physical activity can help create social benefits to people's lives. It can be used to create social cohesion and integration, between people (Dagkas & Armour, 2012). The benefits which come from these are reduced crime, increased employability and community development (Coalter, 2007). The Government has realised this, and started using sport as a tool to develop social inclusion barriers, such as disability or young females etc. (Dagkas & Armour, 2012), an example of a social inclusion programme, is Communities First. These, sport programmes, have a significant investment returns; Sport England (2010) have stated for every £1 spent, young people are estimated at £7.35 of social benefit. This is through the savings to police and the community. Therefore, sport is not something to be ignored and representing the reasons to invest, not just for the health benefits.

2.14 Educational

As stated above, sport can offer benefits other than health specifically; therefore, both Coalter (2007) and Bailey (2006) suggest that it can assist in improving academic results. Sport England (2010) found that young people taking part in sport and physical activity can improve their numeracy scores by 8% compared to non-participants. In addition, sport can have an effect on underachieving young people, who if take up sport, can see a 16% increase in transferable skills, such as communication (Sport England, 2010).

2.2 Reasons in taking up sport

Discussing the reasons why people take up sport can benefit in finding out why they dropped out. Therefore, this section reviews literature around sport participation reason.

From the research many key themes were found, which were fun, enjoyment and social aspects (Foster, Hillsdon, Cavill, Allender, & Cowburn, 2005; Dionigi, Fraser-Thomas, &

Logan, 2012; Hylton, 2013). However, as it was discussed above, sport and physical activity can bring many benefits, Foster *et al* (2005) found that even though people knew about the benefits this was not the main reason for participation. In adults it was found that competition and challenges were higher than health benefits (Kilpatrick, Hebert, & Bartholomew, 2005). In addition, having confidence, so attending a fitness class for example, was highly associated with sport participation (Kilpatrick, Hebert, & Bartholomew, 2005). However, it can be related to age of the person, because Dionigi *et al* (2012) states that a person's motives to participation can be related to their stage in life, so age, job or family. In a comparison between adults and children which was done by Foster *et al* (2005), it was found that adults participated and continued because of the sense of achievement and having luxury time to themselves, whereas children took part for fun and enjoyment. This supports Dionigi *et al* (2012) statement in a person's stage of life. This could be the same in the reasons for a person dropping out of sport.

2.3 Dropping out of sport

It is important to identify the reasons why young people drop out of sport. However, it is vital to realise that athlete drop-out is a broad issue, which is complex with many factors effecting the process (Enoksen, 2011). Dagkas and Armour identify that it is important to look at the specific reasons for the athlete to drop out (Dagkas & Armour, 2012), they might have moved to another sport.

2.31 Reasons why young people drop out of sport and physical activity

From the research, many themes arose. Craike *et al* (2009) found that the sport becoming too serious was an issue because it reduced the enjoyment. Bernstein *et al* (2011), supports this, in that competitive sports can change the participants attitudes and perception, especially if the sport was previously focused on fun. The common interpersonal reason was too much pressure on the athlete to perform, from families and coaches, whereas the intrapersonal reason was the youth's perception of ability (Temple & Crane, 2012). Rottensteiner *et al* (2013) found that as the athlete got older, they had other things to do, such as studying or socialising. In addition, it was found that coaches and teammates have a significant effect on a young person's decision to drop out (Rottensteiner, Laakso, Pihlaja, & Kontinen, 2013). Life transitions impacted on the levels of drop out, for example leaving school, these were identified as crucial points in the maintenance of physical activity (Sport England Research, 2012). These stages are recognised as the time where drop out is most likely to happen (Foster, Hillsdon, Cavill, Allender, & Cowburn, 2005).

Dagkas and Armour support the reasons stated above, however they placed them in three groups for easy identification; Voluntary drop out (enjoyed it but wants to try something new), resistant drop out (wanted to participate but was unhappy), reluctant dropout (forced out of the sport due to injury or financial reasons) (Inclusion and Exclusion through sport, 2012). Fitting drop outs into these sections may assist in finding ways to get the person back into participating. The resistant drop out could be of a young athlete who wanted to participate but felt like it was getting too competitive. In addition Dagkas and Armour state that “Early Specialisation in sport may lead to drop out later in life” (Inclusion and Exclusion through sport, 2012), so coaches who push young people can lead them to dropping out.

Surveys conducted by Sport England, shows that just over half the population of over 16 year olds, do not participate in sport at all (Sport England, Active People Survey, 2012). Even more so, between the years of 2006 and 2012, 200,000 16-19 year olds dropped out of sport, this works out to be 33,000 every year (Sport England, An Executive summary, shapping places through sport, 2008). Organisations, such as Sport England are targeting young people, because of this issue drop outs in sport. One policy in such is the new ‘Creating a Sporting Habit for Life’ policy, which aims to increase the participation rates among young adults, aged 18-25 (DCMS, Creating a Sporting Habit for Life, 2013); this will be done through partnerships with schools, colleges, local authorities and universities. The data and initiatives that come from the Creating a sporting habit for life policy may help to break down these barriers which stop young people from continuing their interest in sports, ‘Sport England’ will invest £1 billion (DCMS, Creating a Sporting Habit for Life, 2013).

There are 3.856 million 16-25 year olds playing sport once a week (Sport England, Active People Survey, 2012), however with over 7 million 16-24 year olds in the United Kingdom (UK) this can be considered a low number (ONS, 2011). In a comparison, to 91% of children aged 5-16 participate in at least 1 hour a week of physical activity (Fraser & Ziff, 2009). It shows that there is a dramatic decrease in participation rates after compulsory school.

There were an estimated 2.5 million higher education students in the UK (Higher Education Statistics Survey, No Date). Higher education can have a major effect on sport development in the United Kingdom, by helping Sport England increase the amount of 18-25 year olds taking part in sport and decrease the dropout rate after compulsory school.

Sport England have already realised this possibility and have a aim to get three quarters of students in higher education to take up sport (Sport England, Higher Education, No Date).

2.4 Higher Education

In the previous section, it was identified that Higher Education can have a major effect on sport development in the UK. Therefore, this passage will include a review of the literature related to Higher Education Sport. The aim is to understand the standing participation levels of students in Higher Education, in addition to discuss any current issues which inhibit higher education affecting the standing participation levels of students. Then, to mention the opportunities that universities have to create active young people.

As mentioned before, Sport England aim to increase the percentage of 16-25 year olds playing sport once a week and reduce the drop out proportion (DCMS, Creating a Sporting Habit for Life, 2013). Through this an initiative was created called Active Universities, aiming to increase participation levels among students and to ensure they continue to play sport throughout their years at university (TNS, 2012).

The governing body for higher education sport is the 'British Universities and Colleges sport'. Their main aim is to use sport to enhance the student experience, and with over 4500 teams and 100 championships involved with BUCS every year (BUCS, BUCS Facts and Information, No Date). However, they state themselves that only 1 in 4 students participate in sport every week, this to them is the reason they exist (BUCS, BUCS Facts and Information, No Date). This shows more practical evidence in getting more students to participate. However, from current literature studied in the above passage it was found that a competitive nature can lead to drop outs (Craike, Symons, & Zimmermann, 2009), and with the amount of leagues and championships being run the higher education theme is on competitions. This could be the reason why not many students are willing to take part. BUCS have joined with Sport England to form a Sport Development Unit, and this could help tackle the issues (BUCS, BUCS Sport Development Strategy: 2013-16, 2013). However, this has just been recently developed and will need time to make an impact.

2.41 Participation

It is important to identify any current participation levels among students, assisting in creating a better understanding of the issue and how Higher Education Institutes can play a decisive role in sport development.

With Sport England's growing interest in 16-25 year olds, they commissioned a survey among students in English universities. It was identified that 65% of students participate in any sport related activity (TNS, 2012). In addition, it was found that only 36% were a member of a club, society or organisation to participate in a sport and only 29% who use the university sport provisions (TNS, 2012). There are a high number of students taking part in sport compared to national participation levels, however, half of them aren't involved with the university at all. The survey reported that, those who were living in university halls were more likely to use the provisions owned by the university. In most universities the 1st years will stay in halls, therefore, the higher years are not using the University for Sport. In addition, it was found that only 22% of students in the previous year took part in competitive sport (TNS, 2012). Therefore, from these figures the university are lacking in sport engagement with their students, specifically higher year groups.

The active universities initiative, which has been mentioned above released an 18 month report of delivering sport activities to students, they found many issues, most importantly potential measures for improvement. They included: changes in clubs to accommodate social members and new intramural leagues / teams (Active Universities, 2012). As mentioned above, only 22% of students in the previous year took part in competitive sport, therefore the measures for improvement suggested by Active Universities (2012), suggests that university sport could be too competitive. However, higher education is the final step towards full time work and universities have taken the vital role in educating these future generations (Hylton, 2013). Also with the new fee structure in place, the organisational objectives of universities will change and may lead to having only minimal focus on sport (BUCS, BUCS Sport Development Strategy: 2013-16, 2013). With the possible benefits of sport stated above, sport plays an important part in creating a high quality student experience. It can be understandable with the pressures to give a high quality student experience and keeping student retention (BUCS, BUCS Sport Development Strategy: 2013-16, 2013).

From the research done into drop outs around young people, it was found that a drop out theme appeared when they left compulsory school. Sport England, through a policy called 'Creating a Sporting Habit for Life', aims to increase the participation percentages in people aged 16-25. It was then found that with the amount of Higher Education students in UK, universities can play a vital role in sport development. However, after under-going research on universities, after the first year, students became increasingly disengaged in

university sport, even though over half of the student population take part in sport, British Universities have great potential to increase this percentage even further.

CHAPTER 3
METHODOLOGY

3.0 Methodology

A qualitative approach was undertaken to be used in the study. A qualitative approach was chosen as it seeks to bring out the emotions and opinions of the participants experiences (Gratton & Jones, 2010). The data was collected through semi-structured 1-to-1 interview, with open questions. In addition, an interview schedule was created to keep the interview specific to the study title.

This section justifies the appropriateness of the chosen methods for this study, in relation to the research problem. It will provide a critical reflection of the approach, choice and deployment of the methods, even ones which have not been adopted. Including the awareness of issues surrounding validity and reliability, this will then therefore see how efficiently the study can be replicated.

3.1 Quantitative and Qualitative approaches

Research is an investigation of ideas or topics related to a purpose; this is only the first step, the type of approach is crucial to obtaining the sufficient information (Clough & Nutbrown, 2007). The forms of research approach which can be undertaken are Qualitative, Quantitative or a mixed methods approach, whereby you combine the two (Gratton & Jones, 2010; Creswell, 2009).

Quantitative approaches allow researchers to analyse research that involves measurable quantities for example, numerical measurement, facts and figures (Gratton & Jones, 2010). This research works well when the matters to be studied are already known, which is doesn't well then in exploring new issues (Nykiel, 2007). However, the results can be reliable and can be compared to the whole population. However, this research seeks to understand the experiences of the participants and therefore quantitative methods are not appropriate.

A qualitative approach seeks to bring out emotions and opinions on a specific topic through a group of relatively small respondents (Dawson, 2009). This approach is closely linked to social studies, involving instruments such as interviews and focus groups; aiming to study qualities which are not quantifiable (Metzler, 2014; Gratton & Jones, 2010), for

example getting explanations in why people choose to take up sport rather than statistics. However, you cannot reach a large number of participants through this method, making the data specific and hard to generalise, with such as the general population.

You need to explore all options involved within each method and adopt the method that is most appropriate for the study. Moreover, sometimes both approaches can be used; this mixed methods approach is called triangulation (Dawson, 2009). Triangulation is about mixing of methods so that varied viewpoints can bring light to a topic, perhaps to validate the study; a more profound form is combining survey data with interviews (Thurmond, 2001). However, it is important to distinguish that mixed methods are not always adopted for triangulation purposes. In addition, this study aims to understand a perspective upon an issue, making a qualitative approach most suitable.

3.2 Research Design

There are many methods in collecting the data, such as focus groups, observations, interview and questionnaires (Clough & Nutbrown, 2007). The aim of the study is to understand why male participants (in this case, 3rd year students) dropped out of university level sport. Therefore, research indicates that 1-to-1 Interviews seemed most appropriate for this investigation; its purpose to gain the perception of the participant openly and to generate efficient data on the issue (Gratton & Jones, 2010). Interviews can be unstructured, structured or semi-structured each with their own impact on the outcome (Kumar, 2011). If structured interviews were chosen, it would give the interviewer control, keeping the discussion on task, however, the use of open ended questions and less rigid structure in the interview, gave freedom of the participant to bring about the feelings, perceptions, attitudes and experiences (Dawson, 2009). Therefore, a semi-structured interview was chosen, involving pre-prepared questions to initiate the discussion, also preparing probes to keep the conversation working (Mitchell & Jolley, 2010). The questions needed to be vague, this was to create a discussion about the topic, as stated by Kvale (2009); if you want to know how people understand their world and lives, just talk to them. However, a person may struggle to reflect upon an experience if they are anxious, therefore effecting the results (Polkinghorne, 2005). Although, this can be eradicated with good body position and creating a suitable environment (Gratton & Jones, 2010).

The key focus points of the questions consisted on their experiences in university sport, why they took part in the first place and why they dropped out. This was done through guidance of the tutor and mainly from the information gained through the literature review.

The literature review assisted in the structure of the interview to make sure all key points and reasons of the study were hit.

3.4 Participants

It is essential to get the correct sampling to improve the results of the study (Gratton & Jones, 2010). Therefore, to get the sampling right, Flick's (2008) theory of selective sampling was used, this involved being specific in the collection of cases required for the study. The criteria for the study involved being a 3rd year student, male and dropped out of university level sport. The participants were selected from Cardiff Metropolitan and as the researcher knew many of the sport students, they were easily attainable and available; this also assisted in making the participants feel relaxed because of the already established rapport. However, this can cause the interviewee's to tailor their responses during the interview to what the researcher wants. Therefore, as Kvale (2009) suggests the interview guide was given to the participants previous to the interview, this enabled them to think about their answers.

As this study is aimed in understanding why males students drop out of university sport; purposive sampling was used so the researcher could choose participants from a range of sports and still meet the requirements of the study (Flick, 2008; Gratton & Jones, 2010). Therefore, 8 participants were chosen, 5 rugby players, 2 footballers and 1 golfer, in addition because the pilot study was a success, the data received from it will be used in analysis.

The sampling selection has a sense of convenience to it, as the participants are easily accessible and located (Gratton & Jones, 2010). However, Creswell (2009) and Polkinghorne (2005) suggest that selective sampling can result in efficient data, because they meet a set criterion.

3.5 Pilot Study

Before the actual interviews were carried out, a pilot study was done with a student from Cardiff Metropolitan, who suited the interview criteria. The purpose of this was to test the procedure and the interviewer's ability to hold a discussion. As Gratton and Jones (2010) state, the quality of the research comes down to the interviewer. A confident interviewer will make the interviewee feel relaxed and enable them to talk freely about the issue at hand (Kvale, 2009). Also, it allowed the interviewer to ask the interviewee for feedback. However, after judging the interview with the individual the results, questions and structure of the interview showed that no changes were needed.

3.6 Data Analysis

All interviews were transcribed with the use of a Dictaphone onto a word document. Once this was done, themes were created from the collected data with the use of excel. However, throughout the interview process it was clear that particular themes were emerging. This therefore, led to a thematic analysis of the data, which is the most common form of analysis in qualitative research; it helps in recording patterns within the data and creates themes which are associated to the research question (Dawson, 2009). In addition, Gratton and Jones (2010), states that it is an effective way in bringing to light common themes throughout the transcripts. Each of the themes which emerged, were coded, this allowed the data to be analysed easier. It also allowed comparisons of the common themes which occurred from each of the participant.

3.7 Reliability and Validity

It is vital that reliability and validity are taken into account when undertaking a study, as Gratton and Jones (2010) mentions that they are two important notions which the worth of the research is based upon. Therefore, how reliable and valid the study is, can have an effect on the results. Cohen *et al* (2007), states that reliability is the similarity of the results if the study was to be replicated by another person. Whereas Validity is concerned with if the study is actually measuring what it intends to measure (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007).

In order to establish reliability, the same procedure for the interviews was carried out for each of the participants whereby they each received the same interview guide (Appendix D) and information sheet (Appendix B) prior. In addition, the interviewing environment was quiet, so the participant felt relaxed and allowed efficient recording. Therefore, using Cohen *et al* (2007) definition of reliability, consistency throughout the study was achieved and it allows the research to be conducted again if need be. In addition, the use of a Dictaphone to record the interview, this was consistent each time.

To try and maintain validity throughout the research, the researcher aimed to get the interviewees to answer truthfully (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007). This was done through the feedback from the pilot study, that all the questions were relevant and not repetitive. In addition, was placing the initial questions in a sequential order (Gratton & Jones, 2010). In addition, was privacy, ensuring the participants that there answers would be kept confidential. Flick (2008) states that having rapport with the interviewee can supply rich and true answers to the questions by the interviewer. With the researcher having

already established this, the validity of the results is increased. However, as stated previously the interviewee may fix the results for the researcher because of existing relations. The way this was done, was by asking the interviewee, if they were ok? Etc. this enabled them to feel comfortable.

3.8 Ethical considerations

Before each of the interviews took place, all participants signed a consent form (Appendix 3). This allowed the participants to understand why the study is being undertaken, the procedure of the interview (Metzler, 2014). It is vital to protect the rights of the participants involved in the study, such as ensuring all data is kept confidential between the researcher and them.

All participants were on a voluntary basis and this was confirmed prior to the interview, in addition that they had the right to withdraw from the interview at any time. The information sheet also informed the participant that their identities would be concealed throughout the study (Edwards & Skinner, 2009). Furthermore, the findings of the study were only viewed by the researcher and tutor, however the participants were allowed at any time through the study to defer or analysis information they gave.

CHAPTER 4
DISCCUSION/RESULTS

4.0 Discussion

From the literature review, it was found that drop out in sport is a problematic issue, with many areas for concern (Enoksen, 2011). Specifically, it was found that there was a major drop out percentage in young people after they leave compulsory school, this issue led to the creation of 'Creating a Sporting Habit for Life' policy (DCMS, Creating a Sporting Habit for Life, 2013). There is a high amount of 18- 25 year olds who attend university, showing that higher education institutes can play major role in increasing the participation rates among 18-25 year olds. Therefore, this discussion will review the results from the interviews conducted and use the literature review to discuss the aims of the study. The discussion has been organised in themes: reasons to participate in university sport, university joining process, issues in university sport, reason for drop-out and prevention ideas.

4.1 Reasons to participate in University Sport

The research suggests that fun and enjoyment are the main reasons why people take up sport (Foster *et al*, 2005). The common theme among the participants was that they played their sport before university and therefore wanted to carry on playing. For example interviewee 1 stated: *"Just because I love it. It's my favourite sport and I played it at home, so I thought I'd play it at university, seeing that it's the sport I'm best at"*. This finding agrees with the literature because the participants enjoyed their sporting experience prior to university.

Interviewee 3 stated that the reason he took up sport was because he *"wanted to play sport professionally"*. This is in agreement with the findings of Kilpatrick *et al* (2005) which showed that adults take up sport for competition purposes i.e. playing professionally. Interview 4 stated that he chose the university because of its rugby position. This indicates that competitiveness is a key motive for participation, especially where most of the interviewees stated that they had previously played to a high level, either for county or country.

A strong relationship between social aspects and sport participation has been reported in the literature (Coalter, 2007; Foster, Hillsdon, Cavill, Allender, & Cowburn, 2005; Kilpatrick, Hebert, & Bartholomew, 2005). The current study found that meeting people and socialising was important to them and a subsidiary reason in taking up university sport, for example interview 8 thought that it was his *"best chance, to go along and meet people"*.

No differences were found in relation to the literature, where Foster *et al* (2005) state that the need to have a social aspect in one's life can be a major motive to participate. However, Kilpatrick *et al* (2005) mention that if a person has low self-esteem it can prevent sport participation. It seems possible that these results are due to the new experience of university life, where people may move away from home and in this case will use sport to meet new people. This finding has important implications for understanding general university sport participation and can be used when designing interventions for students.

4.2 Factors which Contribute to Drop-out

All the participants mentioned issues of university sport from their experience participating; therefore this section will discuss these issues.

When conducting the interviews, the trials constantly came up in the discussion. The trials involved the coaches deciding on who were the best players to make up the teams for that season. The objective of this study is to understand why students drop out of university sport; however, the trials are the first part of their university experience and, as every participant mentioned them in detail, it therefore seems vital to discuss these findings.

The results of this study indicated a negative attitude towards the trial system; the main issues were: overcrowding, no game time, biased choices made by the coaches and organisation. Many of the participants found the process quite daunting, in particular the rugby players. One interviewee stated how *"...there were probably about 200 people – quite daunting!"* Hanton *et al* (2007) found that anxiety symptoms can be triggered if the performer does not feel comfortable and depending on the level of experience the athlete holds. Therefore, these results show that the current trial system which is in place may not be the most effective way in getting the players to show their ability in the sport. However, Lochbaum and Roberts (1993) found that some athlete's perception of sport experience was showing their superior ability; these types of performers would therefore be best suited in trials. Therefore, it seems that the trial procedure may not be best suited to most people and can trigger anxiety to perform, however, some athletes may benefit dependant on experience and perception of sport.

On the question of the issues surrounding the trial process, this study found that many of the interviewees suggested a biased approach by the coaches to the selection process. For example, in the pilot interview the participant stated: *"If you're an outsider you might not shine on a trial and that's blown your chances straight away"* In addition, interviewee 3

perceived that the coaches already had their eye on certain people and they would overlook everyone else and just put them in the lower team. This may not have been, because the participants had a negative experience it therefore may affect the way he perceives previous experiences (Amorose & Horn, 2000). Although, from reviewing the literature, it was found that many scouting systems look at a player's extrinsic qualities, so how they impact the game, whereas, they overlook intrinsic and future qualities of other players who may become talented in the near future (Ashworth & Heyndels, 2007). This could be the case within the university trials, where players who may have had certain traits such as hard-working, leadership etc. however, got overlooked by the coaches who only looked at a player's performance on that day, which made the other players lose out and drop-out of sport. When rather there is a need as Abbott and Collins (2004) found to place less emphasis on the talent identification and more on the opportunity to develop and showcase factors which underpin success. Therefore, making sure the trial system is a positive experience for players but relieving more importance on future development. Weiss and Fretwell (2005) found that coaches have an important role in the psychological development and achievement motivation. Even though, coaches can be a reason for drop out; there are only a certain number of teams and too many players, therefore, the coaches should motivate the players to use this as their advantage to work hard and hopefully move up further into the season.

Although it has been found that the trial system is negative, an interviewee recognised that even though he found the trial unfair and disorganised, it is necessary to get the trials done with the leagues starting in 2-3 weeks' time. It therefore is important for the coaches to try and provide a positive experience for potential players; Gil *et al* (2007) suggests, for optimal development and performance, efficient organisation is essential. These results were not very encouraging in giving the students a positive experience, whereas all the interviews stated that prior to university their sport experience had been positive.

All interviews stated that the trial system could be easily improved and some gave ideas towards achieving this. One interviewee suggested training instead of trials, he justified this by saying that it "*breaks you in, gets you to meet people and develops team cohesion*". Another interviewee suggested they could probably "*look at us over a period of about 3-4 weeks*", and then decide. From the research, it was found that there is a strong relationship between the team cohesion and team success (Carron, Bray, & Eys, 2002). In addition, a positive social aspect in sport participation can reduce the symptoms of anxiety (Hanton, Cropley, Neil, Mellalieu, & Miles, 2007). Therefore, if the trials were done over

time and done through training sessions, the chances are that identification of the best players will become easier. In comparison between the results and literature, it seems they contradict each other, with the trials being rushed and using an ineffective format, which leads to negative experience for the participants. In addition, Weis and Fretwell (2005) found two types of perceptions of sport; these are task and ego orientated. Trials would benefit ego orientated individuals who like to showcase their superior ability, and see success in sport by winning. Whereas, task orientated individuals view sport achievement as training and working hard over a period of time; training sessions would be better suited to these people. Therefore, these results show that trials can be a negative experience for some, because of anxiety and pressure to perform, whereas training sessions can be better in creating team cohesion early and can increase the chances for retaining sport participation.

The results of this study indicate that the ratio between staff and players was an issue, as one interviewee stated “...we only had one coach in fresher’s for about 140 lads...”. This was a common theme among the rest of the other interviewee’s, and it caused problems, as one interviewee said that “...he had so many people to please...”. This finding was unexpected and suggests that because of the lack of coaches, it made people feel disengaged from the coach as he couldn’t give everyone the attention they needed. The research suggests that coaches who provide high frequencies of positive encouragement and feedback compared to ones who ignore players’ successes will create an environment which will develop intrinsic motivation (Amorose & Horn, 2000). As the coach was unable to give enough attention to all the players this meant that some became unmotivated and therefore possibly led them to dropping out of the sport.

One interviewee stated that “there were hundreds of us there” wanting to play rugby, this then “left a few people unable to play”. This issue consisted of people not having game-time led to a number of issues, as one interviewee stated that it stopped him from going to training because he knew he wouldn’t get picked. He felt that the “university could have done a lot more to get more people involved”. Dagkas and Armour (2012) found that sport exclusion can lead to demotivation and lack of commitment of the participant. The results therefore can explain the reasons for why the interviewee felt like he didn’t want to continue attending the training sessions, he wasn’t being included.

Collins (2002) suggests that social inclusion among all players is vital in retaining sport participation. In this study, exclusion was found to cause drop out, as two of the

interviewee's felt like they didn't want to go back after the first season because they didn't want to get knocked back again. It is therefore likely that such connections exist between inclusion and drop outs, people are getting pushed or made to feel unwelcome it could lead to a drop out. The implication of this is that the perception of university sport would be deemed negative among students and would struggle to enhance the current participation rates among 18-25 year olds.

On the subject of coaches, this study found that there was a need of improvement in the coaches, issues involved not being supportive enough and lack of involvement in the social side and having favourites. It was found that the quality of people's experiences in sport has implications on their attitudes towards physical activity in later life (Chan, Lonsdale, & Fung, 2012). In addition, Chan *et al* (2012) suggest that in adulthood, the social influences from the coaches are mostly important for athletes' competence. This literature shows that the coaches need to be more supportive to increase a player's competence in their sport; however, they are not as needed for the enjoyment side, Chan *et al* (2012) mentions that the athletes' peers are vital for this. Kilpatrick *et al* (2005) found that adults participate for competition purposes; therefore, coaches becoming more supportive in the players competency can perhaps retain their participation.

As, it was mentioned above, peer influences are vital for enjoyment, one interviewee stated *that "we didn't really have socials"*. It was found that university sport's number one priority should be social (TNS, 2012). One of the interviewees stated that they chose to participate in sport to meet new people and to socialise; therefore if the sports are not having a social side then this could explain the reasons why only 36% of students are a member of a university sport club or society (TNS, 2012). As Bailey (2006) mentions fun and enjoyment are the key indicators for retaining participation rates. Therefore, lack of socials impacts student's motivation to continuing sport.

Frederick and Schuster-Smith (2003) found a positive correlation between sport competitiveness and level of interest and enjoyment; however, competitiveness became a negative theme among all the interviewees; which resulted in a number of issues: making unwelcoming to new players, too much focus on the first team and unfair treatment between teams.

One interviewee stated that he dropped out because he had done so much of it prior to university and became uninterested in the competitiveness. This particular participant mentioned that he played sport at college to a high standard, in relation to previous

literature; it states that early specialization in sport can lead to drop out (Malina, 2010). This was the case for another interviewee, who represented his country; he mentioned that once he came to university he just became uninterested. This therefore, supports the literature that specialising in one sport at a young age can result in drop out from that sport. Dagkas and Armour (2012) identify this as a voluntary drop-out, enjoyed it but wanted to participate in something new. It thus can be suggested that some students may come to university whom have already participated to a high level and therefore, are now uninterested in doing it all again. The implication is that if the student is not given another opportunity in another sport then they may drop out of sport all together.

One interviewee made it clear that once, the club had their set of players who they thought will win their games, other players got put down to the lower teams. In addition, he found it difficult to attend the trials in 2nd year after suffering a injury in the previous year, because he just didn't feel comfortable and that if you don't make an impact in the 1st year then you will struggle in future years. The literature, as mentioned above suggests that general competitiveness in athletes creates an ego-orientation to sport, which makes sport participation motivation intrinsic (Frederick & Schuster-Smith, 2003). It can thus be suggested that competitiveness, can make people focused on achieving for themselves and therefore, making it hard for people to get involved in this. This finding has important implications for developing ways to improve university sport, so universities can increase the sport participation rates. As it has been previously stated, the problem of sport inclusion, the coaches need to make sure all the players are included; this could be done through just knowing names for example.

Another important finding was that university sport can be quite demanding, as three of the participants mentioned that they dropped out because studies became a priority rather than sport. This explains that university sport is perhaps conflicting with the student's studies, it was found by Rottensteiner *et al* (2013) that as athletes get older, other things to do become priority such as studies. As the results link to the literature, it can therefore be assumed that studies can have a major effect on participation retention within universities. This can lead to a number of students dropping out.

One interviewee states that “...it's very demanding up here to be involved...”. This finding suggests that these players may want to play at a lower level to become more of a recreational player rather than to be involved in the demand that competitive sport can bring. Competiveness in sport can become too much and becoming a negative impact on

participants (Bernstein, Phillips, & Silverman, 2011); therefore, leading people to change their motive for sport participation from achievement to social. This now shows that the university need to establish and develop a larger social side of sport than they may already have, for the students who wish to play socially/ recreationally. In addition, the results could be also explained by the fact that life transitions, such as going to university can impact them psychologically, in such everything becoming too much (Sport England Research, 2012). As one interviewee suggested that the competitiveness in 1st year should “*come half way through*” rather straight away, this would assist in keeping sport as a positive instead of it becoming a hassle. It is possible, therefore, that universities do take consider that the students are in a new stage in their life and they need to be supported not pushed to their limits. An implication of this is the possibility that it could lead to drop out and a change of perception of the university and sport in later life.

It was mentioned that because of the competitiveness surrounding university sport, there was an unfair approach between the teams, one interviewee states that “*they would do specific sessions, like back sessions, or gym sessions, but that was only offered to the higher teams*”. Another interviewee mentioned that he was in the third team and the equipment was rubbish and coaches were lacklustre in comparison to the first and second team. It was found that within sport, there is a major need for equality (Rottensteiner, Laakso, Pihlaja, & Konttinen, 2013). The results showed that because of the universities aim to uphold their sporting reputation, they have a major focus on the higher teams leaving less attention put on the lower teams. One interviewee, actually states that “*a little bit more concentration on the lower teams, would benefit the first team*”, his justification for this was that the university need to keep the development going and for this to happen “*they need to start from the bottom and work their way to the top*”. It is therefore likely that such connections exist between the amount focus on one team among a number of teams and quality of sport experience. These results provide further support for the hypothesis that competitiveness can inflict sport participation rates.

Many of the participants generally had a negative experience while participating in university sport. One interviewee mentioned that “*I didn't enjoy it and I thought it was a waste of time and money*”, another interviewee stated that he didn't enjoy playing on bad quality pitches, these negative experiences led to them dropping out of university sport. Dagkas and Armour (2012) would class these drop outs as resistant drop outs, they wanted to participate but was unhappy. Bailey (2006) mentions that sport participation should be focused on enjoyment, and providing a quality experience. Both these

participates were part of the fourth football team, as it has been previously mentioned the higher teams were given more attention; this gave the lower teams a negative experience. These results are therefore shown us that this unequal approach to the teams, has led to drop outs.

4.3 Development and structure

Research suggests that opportunities need to be given within different teams such as playing in a higher level of standard side, because high abilities may appear due to the differentiation of environment or pressure (Barreiros, Cote, & Manuel Fonseca, 2014). The results of this study indicate that *“there was no progression up into the other teams”*, in relation to the literature this limits the coaches in development of the teams and of the athletes. Although, Ford *et al* (2011) found that talent development can cause problems, so for example, if a player comes in from another team it could cause issues in the team cohesion which may already exist. This could explain the reasons why player progression between the university teams is lacking. These findings suggest that, as stated previously equal focus needs to be inputted on all teams.

Hylton (2013) states that through partnerships, opportunities can be created; one interviewee stated that the university gave no opportunities in providing opportunities in other clubs, if they don't wish to play for the university. A possible explanation for this might be that the university don't want their students to play for other teams, due to competition purposes for example. It can thus be suggested that the university are limiting themselves in opportunities for their students. The implication of this is that when students become unhappy with university sport, they don't have the support to find another club to participate sport in.

4.4 Training and opportunities

A common theme arose from some of the participants as one of them stated that *“the training was a bit boring really”*, another stating that it was *“very disorganised”*. One interviewee stated that they *“...could have been more enjoyable and more inclusive”*, the findings of the study do not support the previous research, which articulates that the main reason for participation is fun and enjoyment (Bailey, 2006). A possible explanation for this might be that as it was previously stated there were a large amount of players involved in university sport, this then perhaps makes it hard to please everyone. These findings suggest that the university could have put more training sessions on to improve the overall quality, rather than to concentrate on quantity.

Another important finding was that the equipment and facilities were sometimes not a very good standard. One interviewee mentioned that they missed quite a lot of games because of the quality of facilities they played on. Another mentioned that one game they played a game of football without nets, in addition he mentioned the equipment was terrible. It was found that many factors affected a person's sport experience; any negatives could change the athlete's perception of the sport (Rottensteiner, Laakso, Pihlaja, & Kontinen, 2013).

CHAPTER 5
CONCLUSION

5.0 Conclusion

This dissertation has investigated university sport and the reasons why a group 3rd year students at Cardiff Metropolitan dropped out of university level sport. In this investigation, the aim was to understand why the students first took up university sport and then why they dropped out. In addition, all participants were asked in ways the university could develop their sport structure to prevent further drop-outs.

This study has shown that many of the participants took up university sport for different reasons. One of the themes was that they played sport prior to coming attending university, and was enjoying it; therefore they wanted to carry on. Much research suggests that why people take up sport is for the enjoyment factor (Foster, Hillsdon, Cavill, Allender, & Cowburn, 2005); it can also be key motive in retaining participation. Some of participants chose to play university sport because they aimed to play professionally and actually chose their higher education institute because of their quality and position in sport. Many adults can take up sport, especially if they have played for a while; will choose for the competition (Kilpatrick, Hebert, & Bartholomew, 2005). Even though, from a sport development perspective and to retain sport participation, fun/ and enjoyment should be prioritised. In addition, it was found that there was a strong relationship between social aspects and sport participation, with many of the participants stating that they took up sport so they could meet new people and socialise. With many of the participants being students and from different areas of the country, many came to university with no friends, so they used sport to create friendships.

It was also shown that the trial system was a negative experience for most of the participants. The issues included: unorganised, unfair, not enough playing time and bias approach in the selection. Much of the research suggests that organisation and time are key to creating team cohesion, which has strong relations with success (Ashworth & Heyndels, 2007). The results of this study indicate that because of the negative experience of the trials, the participant's perception of the university changed. As research suggests that a positive perception of sport can relate to retaining participation rates (Rottensteiner, Laakso, Pihlaja, & Konttinen, 2013).

This study has found many general issues which many of participants mentioned, they included: staff issues, too competitive, structure and development and training sessions. All these issues gave the participants, a negative experience in when participating; however, they all consisted of problems which could be fixed with some development.

One of the main reasons for why the participants dropped out of university sport was that some of the participants played to a high level prior to university, such as representing their country and then lost interest. Many studies have proven that the implication of early specialisation can have psychological effects (Temple & Crane, 2012; Barreiros, Cote, & Manuel Fonseca, 2014; Dagkas & Armour, 2012; Malina, 2010; Fraser & Ziff, 2009), which may lead to dropouts. The research suggested that diversification in sports, would increase confidence and self-esteem (Fraser-Thomas, Cote, & Deakin, 2008). This correlates with another study, which states that a high level of confidence relates to sport participation (Hanton, Cropley, Neil, Mellalieu, & Miles, 2007).

Other reasons why the participants dropped out of university were: exclusion, poor quality sporting experience (facilities, coaching etc.) and other priorities came up (such as studies). In conclusion, many of the participants aimed to play for social, therefore the universities need to ensure that social teams and activities are established more, to retain and increase participation.

5.1 Recommendations for Practice

As the objective of the study is to understand why the participants dropped out of university sport, it was also asked: *'How could the university prevent further drop outs?'*

The common theme which arose from all of the participants was to develop a more social approach to sport, rather having too much concentration on competition. One interviewee mentioned that to him it was "mainly about having fun", this was priority for most of the participants. Another finding from an interviewee was that "they should look at doing something a bit more sociable perhaps for players or people who can't commit to the demands". This finding supports that of literature, which mentions that sport participation and one of the main reason for take is social purposes (Foster, Hillsdon, Cavill, Allender, & Cowburn, 2005). In addition, Active University (2012) after they completed a year program, the report include that the sports need to have social as priority. As the results link to the

literature, it can be suggested that if university sport doesn't make social a priority then it cause a drop out.

5.2 Implications of the study

The aim of this study was not to judge or point out the negative points of university sport, but rather realise the problems which cause drop outs and then develop on this points to assist in retaining sport participation among 18-25 year olds. This study can assist practitioners within the field of sport development, to help retain and even increase participation among all the universities within the UK. This can be done were sporting opportunities offered with enjoyment and socialising as priority, but still trying to find that balance in giving it a competitive edge.

5.3 Limitations of the study

The study was focused on students who all attended the same university and course, which had a major focus on sport. Therefore, the results cannot be generalised with the rest of the student population, if funding and time constraints were not issues in the completion of the study, then a larger focus on interviewing individuals from different universities and courses in an attempt to make the results more general.

All the interviewees were males, making the results a bit bias in gender, where a group of females may have has a different perspective. If there had been more time than the researcher would have attempted to gain a more detailed approach from the female population.

5.4 Recommendations for Future Research

- To build on the results it would have been interesting to do a mixed methods approach, whereby the use of questionnaires put out to a large sample of students on a variety of courses and then to conduct interviews to discuss the questions asked in more detail. This would establish more grounded research.
- Rather than to look at university sport in general it could be quite significant to compare the main sports within the university for the main reasons for drop out and discuss any issues. This would assist in each sport structure learning from each other to develop and retain sport participation.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

ETHICS STATUS

When undertaking a research or enterprise project, Cardiff Met staff and students are obliged to complete this form in order that the ethics implications of that project may be considered.

If the project requires ethics approval from an external agency such as the NHS or MoD, you will not need to seek additional ethics approval from Cardiff Met. You should however complete Part One of this form and attach a copy of your NHS application in order that your School is aware of the project.

The document *Guidelines for obtaining ethics approval* will help you complete this form. It is available from the [Cardiff Met website](#).

Once you have completed the form, sign the declaration and forward to your School Research Ethics Committee.

PLEASE NOTE:

Participant recruitment or data collection must not commence until ethics approval has been obtained.

PART ONE

Name of applicant:	David Wynne Rushton
Supervisor (if student project):	Lucy Wheatley
School:	School of Sport
Student number (if applicable):	ST20005179
Programme enrolled on (if applicable):	Sport Development
Project Title:	A Study to Understand Why Students in Higher Education Drop-out of University Level Sport
Expected Start Date:	01/09/2013
Approximate Duration:	6 months
Funding Body (if applicable):	
Other researcher(s) working on the project:	
Will the study involve NHS patients or staff?	No
Will the study involve taking samples of human origin from participants?	No

In no more than 150 words, give a non technical summary of the project
The need to conduct more research into participation among young adults especially with a focus on third year students who may have dropped out of sports throughout their university experience. Current research previously done has more of a focus on the general adult population

but not on specific sectors which in this case would be higher education; this research would lead information about sport exclusion in adults within an organisation which prides itself in sports. Also finding out the contributions of having sport all around you for 3 years, both negative and positive. Questionnaires will be given to the students over the age of 18, in all schools of Cardiff Metropolitan through a mass electronic questionnaire which will go out to all students. In addition, paper questionnaires will be given out as a back-up so the project is not delayed. This will assist in finding statistics; however the main aim of this is to find suitable participants for interviewing. Once suitable interviews have been identified then up to half an hour interviews will take place with open questions. The aim of the study is to find out possible reasons why students have dropped out of university sport and then seeing possible ways to stop this from repeating itself.

Does your project fall entirely within one of the following categories:	
Paper based, involving only documents in the public domain	No
Laboratory based, not involving human participants or human tissue samples	No
Practice based not involving human participants (eg curatorial, practice audit)	No
Compulsory projects in professional practice (eg Initial Teacher Education)	No
If you have answered YES to any of these questions, no further information regarding your project is required.	
If you have answered NO to all of these questions, you must complete Part 2 of this form	

DECLARATION:	
I confirm that this project conforms with the Cardiff Met Research Governance Framework	
Signature of the applicant: David Rushton	Date: 01/05/13
FOR STUDENT PROJECTS ONLY	
Name of supervisor: Lucy Wheatley	Date: 01/05/13
Signature of supervisor: 	

Research Ethics Committee use only	
Decision reached:	Project approved <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Project approved in principle <input type="checkbox"/> Decision deferred <input type="checkbox"/> Project not approved <input type="checkbox"/> Project rejected <input type="checkbox"/>

Project reference number: Click here to enter text.	
Name: Click here to enter text.	Date: Click here to enter a date.
Signature:	
Details of any conditions upon which approval is dependant: Click here to enter text.	

PART TWO

A RESEARCH DESIGN	
A1 Will you be using an approved protocol in your project?	No
A2 If yes, please state the name and code of the approved protocol to be used ³	
Click here to enter text.	
A3 Describe the research design to be used in your project	
<p>The Study will be focused on 3rd year university students in Cardiff Metropolitan, using a qualitative approach of interview, an understanding of why these students dropped out of university sport will be gained.</p> <p>All participants will be over the age of 18, in their 3rd year of university on a sports degree, but most importantly at one stage in their university experience they would have dropped out of university level sport.</p> <p>For the interviews, eight participants will be chosen not including the pilot study, all will be semi-structured and all questions will be open, aimed to create a discussion around their experiences of university sport. In addition, all interviews will be recorded using a Dictaphone for reliability purposes.</p> <p>After the interviews are conducted, all data will be analysed using a thematic method, which involves themes being created when analysing the data. Right through the data analyse, all names will be coded.</p> <p>Hopefully, all this will come together to create an answer and what is happening with Cardiff Met sport.</p>	
A4 Will the project involve deceptive or covert research?	No
A5 If yes, give a rationale for the use of deceptive or covert research	
Click here to enter text.	

B PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE
B1 What previous experience of research involving human participants relevant to this project do

³ An Approved Protocol is one which has been approved by Cardiff Met to be used under supervision of designated members of staff; a list of approved protocols can be found on the Cardiff Met website here

you have?
Click here to enter text.
B2 Student project only What previous experience of research involving human participants relevant to this project does your supervisor have?
Working as part of the Sport Development staff.

C POTENTIAL RISKS
C1 What potential risks do you foresee?
None
C2 How will you deal with the potential risks?
-

When submitting your application you **MUST** attach a copy of the following:

- All information sheets
- Consent/assent form(s)

Refer to the document ***Guidelines for obtaining ethics approval*** for further details on what format these documents should take.

APPENDIX B
PARTICIPATION INFORMATION SHEET

Participation Information sheet

BACKGROUND:

This project will involve an attempt to find out the reasons to why students drop out of university sport and to find out ways for this not to repeat itself. With many studies identifying problems with the adult population in the decline of participation, no studies have looked into the problems faced with participation of students in university and with their being over 1.8 million students in the UK with the adult age range there could be possibly a chance to hit these reasonably accessibility group. For this to exist then a study needed to be conducted on students

The evaluation of the study will be done into a report and discussion.

Your participation in the project:

Why have you been asked?

The reason we need you, is because you are a third year student and study on Cyncoed campus but most importantly you dropped out of university sport.

If you agreed to the study:

Once you have decided to be part of this study, then at a time which best suits you in a quiet room, located on Cyncoed Campus, an interview will be conducted which will only take 20-25 minutes of your time, discussing you experiences during you time participating for the university.

The risks: There are no risks to you in taking part in this study.

In the results of the evaluation:

Your name will not be stated throughout the study, with a large sample aimed to be collected the data will be compared using themes.

What happens next?

You will find at the start of the questionnaire that there is a participation form which is for you to sign which means you are willing to give information towards the study.

Privacy:

All contact details which are given in will remain private but you do have a choice in what details you give of yourself to the study. Any further information required then contacts David Rushton on email at st20005179@outlook.uwic.ac.uk

APPENDIX C
PARTICIPATION CONSENT FORM

Participant Consent Form:

Title of project: Reasons for Sport Participation or non-participation across university campuses

Name of researcher: David Rushton

Participant to complete this section: Please initial each box.

- 1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for this study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.

- 2. I understand that the participation is voluntary and that it is possible to stop taking part at any time, without giving a reason.

- 3. I also understand that if this happens, our relationship with UWIC, or our legal rights, will not be affected.

- 4. I understand that information from the study may be used for reporting purposes

Name of Participant:

School:

Degree Course:

Signature:

Date:

APPENDIX D
INTERVIEW GUIDE

Interview Questions and Prompts

This study is to explore and understand the reasons to why students in higher education drop out of university level sport.

1. Could you explain your experiences of when you engaged in university sport?

Prompts;

- What was the relationship like with the players and coaches? Supportive, experiences etc. or did you not have a coach? What was the staff to player ratio like?
- Was it a positive or negative experience? And why?
- Did you play in any competitions or matches? Did you enjoy playing? And why?
- Did you have adequate equipment and facilities?
- Why did you decide to take up sport at university? Why that specific sport?
- Did you come to university to play sport? Why? Was the sport at Cardiff Metropolitan the reason you chose to come here? Why did you choose that specific sport?
- Have you previously played another role for a club? If not why? Did the university offer any opportunities? Could you consider playing a role in sport not just participating?
- Did you suffer from any injuries?
- What were the opportunities to participate in university sport like?
- What was the structure of the sport like? Did you agree with this?
- Reasons for starting?

2. Could you explain your reasoning's into why you dropped out of university sport?

Prompts;

- If Facilities? Is this an important factor for you? How could they be improved? Why?
- If were Unwelcoming? Why was this? Could explain further?
- If didn't have enough playing time? Why do you think you didn't have enough playing time?
- If staff was the reason? What was it about them which made them the reason? What could they do differently?

- If you thought the standard was too high? Did you feel like you didn't fit in? Did you play to a high level before university? Did they not group to talent or?
- Do you regret dropping out? What could be done to stop this from happening again to someone else?

6. Are you still currently engaged in your sport?

Prompts;

- Training? Are you enjoying it?
- Coaching? How does it compare to university sport?
- Officiating?
- Playing for a local club?
- If not, do you hope to do so? Why?

APPENDIX E
TABLE OF RESULTS

	Theme1 – University Joining Process	Theme 2 – Reasons to take up university sport	Theme 3 - Reason for drop out	Theme 4 – Issues in university sport
Participant 1	<p><i>“...there were probably about 200 people – quite daunting! In my position there were probably 15 players, in my exact position...”</i></p> <p><i>“If you’re an outsider you might not shine on a trial and that’s blown your chances straight away”</i></p>	<p><i>“...not purely for the fact that the rugby is brilliant, but obviously the social side comes with the sport as well.”</i></p> <p><i>“I came to university to play sport...”</i></p>	<p><i>“I picked up an injury in freshers’, I think that definitely – it didn’t ruin my chances, but put into my head that if you don’t get into the side in the first year, if you don’t set yourself in the first year, come second year, (which is why I stopped playing for UWIC) I thought if you’re not in the side by then, they won’t really look at you...”</i></p>	<p><i>Unwelcoming to new players – “They can be, I think once they’ve got their set group of players who they know are going to win their games, because that’s fundamentally what I think they want to do...”</i></p> <p><i>Providing other opportunities – ‘If you don’t want to play for UWIC, then I’ve got some contacts and I will try to get them to come and have a look at you’. Which was through another club, which was good from the coach, but I didn’t see it, to be perfectly honest...”</i></p> <p><i>Coaches – “They just need to be more supportive to their students and players.”</i></p> <p><i>“...I think they need to get more involved...”</i></p>
Participant 2	<p><i>“...was about 8 matches and because I think there was about 180 trial lists, you played that one match and then, from the 180 they selected 40ish, for another game, which you could say isn’t a fair trial, because some people only played about one half...”</i></p> <p><i>“The trials were unfair, because some players only got 30 or 45 minutes, and it’s hard, if the ball doesn’t come to you or you’re on a bad team...”</i></p>	<p><i>“Just because I love it. It’s my favourite sport and I play it at home, so I thought I’d play it at university, seeing that it’s the sport I’m best at”</i></p>	<p><i>“The main reason was the pitches on the Wednesday at BUCS, because the third team had to play down at Cae Delyn, which is the local pitch and the pitches were so bad and I just didn’t enjoy playing on a pitch that bad.”</i></p>	<p><i>Facilities – “...We didn’t have the greatest facilities so we ended up missing quite a lot of games...”</i></p> <p><i>Training – “...it was sort of informative... so the training was a bit boring really...”</i></p> <p><i>Coaches – “...Being students they were still young and didn’t have a lot of experience...”</i></p> <p><i>“...he didn’t really get involved much and he wasn’t really a leader.”</i></p> <p><i>Too serious – “...at UWIC football it’s taken very seriously... but I think it’s more about having fun and there are no finances involved, you just want to have a good time.”</i></p> <p><i>“...there was a new manager, who didn’t plan socials, so we didn’t have many socials.”</i></p>

	<i>"...obviously they've got the leagues starting in two or three weeks, so they need to get a team quite sharpish..."</i>			
Participant 3	<i>"From the first trial anyone could see that they already had their eye on people and at what sort of standard they'd already played, so they'd overlook everyone else and just put them in the lower teams."</i>	<i>"Because that's what I wanted, to play sport professionally. That's what, I suppose, a lot of people dream; to do that and that's what I wanted to do."</i>	<i>"Because I just felt like I would get overlooked again, and I didn't want to go through that again. I thought – no-one wants to put themselves up to get knocked back – and I thought after that I just felt that I wasn't wanted, so I thought I'd take myself elsewhere and see if I could progress elsewhere."</i>	<p><i>Coaches – "I just felt that some of the coaches had their favourites, so no-one else got a look-in.</i></p> <p><i>"Not really give them a chance to progress into the second or first teams"</i></p> <p><i>Game-time – "...there was only really one freshers' team and there were hundreds of us there. So obviously you're not going to be able to get everyone into that team, so that left a few people unable to play."</i></p> <p><i>"...I wasn't the best, I didn't get to play much, I didn't get to participate in rugby which stopped me wanting to go to training because I knew I wasn't going to get picked to play."</i></p> <p><i>"...I think the university could have done a lot more to get more people involved."</i></p> <p><i>Staff to player ratio – "...we only had one coach in freshers for about 140 lads..."</i></p> <p><i>Training – "Very disorganised...so it was never very individual specific, it was more everyone doing the same thing..."</i></p> <p><i>Main focus on first team – "...they would do specific sessions, like backs session, or gym sessions, but that was only offered to the higher teams...if the university is to keep up that reputation and keep its development going, they need to start from the bottom and work their way to the top."</i></p> <p><i>"I think maybe a little bit more concentration on the lower teams, would benefit the first team."</i></p>

Participant 4	<p><i>"..Every time you start playing rugby gain with new people, you always go straight into a trial, which I think may not be the best way of doing things. Training perhaps, maybe would be best"</i></p> <p><i>"Training breaks you in, you get to know people, particularly names and stuff, which generally helps. I suppose trial games can be quite good, just because it drops you in the deep end straight away, to see if you can cope with the pressure of playing without anyone you know, but training in particular develops team cohesion and stuff, so I think it's better."</i></p>	He previously played to at a high level and chose UWIC because of its rugby position: <i>"I chose some universities based on the rugby position..."</i>	<p><i>"...Academic work is more important because I want to get quite a good degree."</i></p> <p><i>"...the team cohesion wasn't the same as in the second year. I didn't have any friends playing, I had two friends who were playing, but then they started, 'No, I can't be bothered to play'. So then for a couple of games there was just me..."</i></p>	<p><i>Development/ system – "...there was no progression up into the other teams at that time in the year, nothing at all."</i></p> <p><i>Social – "...we didn't really have socials..."</i></p>
Participant 5	<i>"Well, I didn't expect it to be as much. I was always thinking three or four in my position, but I think I turned up and there were nine or ten. So that got difficult, but boys dropped out; I stuck at it..."</i>	<i>"I thought it was a very good way of meeting new people. Obviously coming here to university not knowing as many people as I do home; there was a group of us who did come up here together, but it was a way of meeting new people, socialising, maintaining fitness, keeping active – just overall general fitness."</i>	<i>"...my main reason for dropping out of UWIC rugby, so I could concentrate on my studies and not have to commit to the amount of training they demand from their players."</i>	<p><i>Opportunities – "I was hoping to do a bit of coaching up here but I know the school of sport in UWIC don't offer that for children..."</i></p> <p><i>Too serious – "...it's very demanding up here to be involved in the first and second team, there's a lot of demand for training..."</i></p>
Participant 6	<i>"...Having trials to do, I was happy to do that..."</i>	<i>"A: I played rugby at college to quite a high standard... Q: ... why you still took part? A: Yes..."</i>	<i>"I played rugby at college to quite a high standard that was probably why I didn't carry on with it because</i>	<i>Too serious – "Because of getting up early, because you're not really interested in really doing that, it's all about the social life."</i>

			<i>I had done so much of it and I just needed a bit of a break."</i>	<i>"...I still would want to play rugby but I wouldn't want all the training that comes with it."</i>
Participant 7	<p><i>"...it's quite a daunting process, because it was in the first couple of weeks, so I didn't know anybody and I think in our first year there were about 120 students all applying for rugby, so the main issue was that with just so many people there and it was competitive, it was the whole issue of trying to stand out."</i></p> <p><i>"...you're reliant on other people you don't know, you don't really mesh well and it affects your game."</i></p>	<i>"I'd been playing rugby for a few years previously, so it was just my chosen sport and a means to enjoy myself, the same as with my team back home. Enjoyment and enjoy the social as well, so I suppose it was going to be like a home from home where I was going to meet new people and it was a good opportunity to do that."</i>	<i>"If you commit to a team you've got to be there, you've got to train, you've got actually to be able to meet the demands."</i>	<p><i>Training - "(laughs ruefully) they were a little bit up and down..."</i></p> <p><i>"Some of them were quite laborious, they were quite similar..."</i></p> <p><i>"From a player perspective there were things which could have been more enjoyable and more inclusive."</i></p> <p><i>Too serious - "...you'd have to train, otherwise you're not going to get picked and then you're going to get frustrated because of not getting picked..."</i></p> <p><i>"...I think rugby at UWIC is taken very seriously."</i></p> <p><i>"Although you're making friends, you're also competing with your friends to get on the pitch."</i></p>
Participant 8	<p><i>Golf - "Not a trial as such, we played a round of golf with the captain and he picked a team based on who he thought was best."</i></p> <p><i>Football - "...I don't think the football trial system was very fair, because they literally gave us an hour to play a match, then they based their decisions on that performance."</i></p>	<i>"I've played it all my life, so I thought I might as well carry on. I wanted to be part of the society, obviously. Turning up to university, you want to make friends and be a part of a society, so I thought that was my best chance, to go along and meet people."</i>	<i>"I dropped out because before I came up to university, I was playing at a high standard and I just became uninterested."</i>	<p><i>Structure - "... it wasn't structured very well, because the captain was very friendly with some people and not friendly with others and he tended to pick people who were closer to him..."</i></p> <p><i>"...I'd say it could be developed a lot more."</i></p> <p><i>Funding - "... a lot more money needs to be put in for coaching, just basic things like track suits etc."</i></p> <p><i>Opportunities - "After the first trial that was pretty much it."</i></p> <p><i>"... I thought in such a prestigious sporting university, there must be some way I can play football. But no, in the end I just went back home and played at home."</i></p>

Participant 9	<p><i>"...there were loads of people it was just 11-a-side games, which were 30 minutes long. Sometimes it wasn't even 11-a-side, it would be 9 on 11 or something stupid, which wasn't much organised and then you'd play for 30 minutes..."</i></p>	<p><i>"I've always played football growing up, it was my main interest."</i></p>	<p><i>"I didn't enjoy it and I thought it was a waste of time and money."</i></p>	<p><i>Communication/Organisation</i> <i>"For one game the referee didn't turn up. So our coach had to referee it, and because we didn't have a ref, we had to give the other team the win."</i> <i>Coaching – "Once again there just was no motivation to it because the coach wasn't that good..."</i> <i>"There were 2 coaches, one of them didn't really have much experience, the other one had some"</i> <i>"I just think it's the general rapport that the coaches have with the athletes because like I said with the tennis centre, they were really getting everyone involved with everything, everyone was having fun and it was just really just a social thing."</i> <i>Equipment – "...the first and second team would be training and they would have really nice balls and be all organised with everyone just getting involved. Then they'd pack up and take all their balls with them and we would have really terrible balls, a limited amount of cones and really stinky bibs..."</i> <i>Unfair treatment – "...because it was the thirds and fourths there would be loads of people and they would all cram together. It was just a joke!"</i> <i>"...it's the thirds and fourths, so the firsts and seconds were training something like four times a week. Whereas we were training once a week..."</i> <i>Standard – "We didn't win for six games in a row; that was how bad it was."</i></p>
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