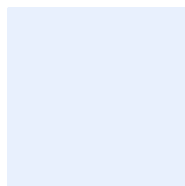
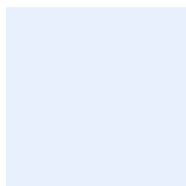


Working for Sport Aston



**Athena
SWAN**
Member



Sport Aston Background Information

Sport Aston is a department within the Chief of Operations and Estates division of the university. The department is responsible for the management and operation of the university's campus sports facilities which are situated on the university's campus at Aston Triangle and at the Aston University Recreation Centre in Great Barr. These facilities consist of:

The Sir Doug Ellis Woodcock Sports Centre incorporating 25m pool, Sauna and Steam suite, 2 Sports Halls, 2 Squash courts, 110 station Gym with free weights area, Women Only Gym, 2 Dance/Martial Arts studios and a meeting room/multi-purpose room.

Aston Students Village Floodlit Synthetic pitch- 3G Pitch for 8-a-side and 5-a-side games.

Gosta Green Floodlit pitch- 3G pitch for 5-a-side games.

The Aston University Recreation Centre which incorporates 6 grass Football and Rugby pitches, Cricket pitch and floodlit pitch for competitive Hockey and recreational Football. There is also a pavilion with changing for 22 teams and bar and catering facilities.

Sport Aston is also responsible for the development of sports and physical activity opportunities for both staff and students. The department also offers a service to external customers which is managed commercially in order to provide a more cost effective service to Aston students and staff.

Sport Aston's main purpose is to provide a high quality and affordable service aimed at maximising opportunities for participation in sport and recreation by students, staff and the surrounding community.

In order to achieve this aim Sport Aston seeks to maximise every opportunity to generate income to maintain a level of charge for facilities which is within the financial means of students and staff. Critical to the organisation's success is the ability to maximise income from external users charged at market rates at times when the facility is not being used by

students and staff who pay lower rates. A balanced programme, with a mixture of internal and external and pay and play activities interlinked with time allocations for contracted block bookings, is a fundamental element of Sport Aston's programming policy.

The department was originally formed in 1974 as the Department of Physical Recreation with responsibility for Gem sports centre and a number of other activity rooms around campus which were used for different sports including Archery and Martial arts.

The department was part of the Student Services division under the responsibility of the Secretary and Registrar. In 1980 the university took over ownership of the recently closed Woodcock Street Baths and public laundry from Birmingham City Council.

The university made use of funding from the UK University Grants Committee (forerunner to HEFCE) to convert the gala pool of the former Woodcock Street Baths into a four Badminton court sports hall and to restore the 1902 former Ladies swimming pool with a new roof.

From 1980 Woodcock and Gem sports centres continued to form the university's campus sports provision. In 1991 a sand-based synthetic surface adjacent to the Gem sports centre was created and this facility provided opportunities for participation in 8-a-side and 5-a-side Football, Hockey training and Tennis during the summer. This facility was closed down in 2008 in advance of the creation of the new Aston Student Villages project and replaced by the current floodlit 3G pitch which was opened in 2010.

In 2010 the Woodcock Sports centre was closed to facilitate a £7M refurbishment programme which, in addition to structural repairs to the building and replacement of mechanical and electrical services, created a new state-of-the-art 110 station gym, new wet and dry changing rooms, 2 new dance studios, refurbished sports hall and swimming pool and a new Sauna and Steam facility.

Since the completion of this refurbishment in 2012 Sport Aston has been targeted to deliver the campus sport services at an operational surplus. In the spring of 2013 a new sports hall next to the existing Sir Doug Ellis Woodcock Sports centre was opened to replace the sports hall, squash courts and changing rooms that have been provided since 1974 at the Gem sports centre. Gem was subsequently demolished as part of the second phase of the ASV project.

Sport Aston exists to provide sporting opportunities for the students, staff and surrounding community. As an important support service for the university, and as a non-core activity (unlike the academic departments and library), Sport Aston is now tasked with providing its service at an operating surplus for the university.

Sport Aston has benefitted from major capital investment in its campus sports facilities in recent years and its financial objectives recognise the requirement to operate at a minimum of break-even and, if possible, to contribute towards depreciation costs of the capital investment.

The attached five year plan demonstrates the financial targets agreed through the university's budgetary process

Sports Aston	Actuals	Actuals	Budget	Plan	Plan
	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Income	960	1026	1028	1058	1080
Pay Costs	622	653	704	718	732
Non Pay Costs	202	214	189	194	200
Operating Surplus	136)	159	135	146	148

Resources available for marketing are comparatively modest when compared to levels of expenditure which other commercial leisure operators are able to commit. Sport Aston invests £68,000 in marketing its services. This budget includes the salaries of the Sports Marketing and Development Officer, the placement position of the Sports Marketing and Development Assistant and materials and advertising budget.

This expenditure represents approximately 8% of Sport Aston's overall expenditure budget. An important development in recent years has been the increasing importance attached to marketing and in particular the replacement of the position of Sports Development Officer with a new position of Sports Marketing and Development Officer which has greater

emphasis upon the marketing function. Resources for marketing have also been increased in recent years with the employment of a placement student engaged on a nine month fixed term contract to assist the Sports Marketing and Development Officer.

Sport Aston recognises the importance of a range of marketing techniques aimed at raising awareness of potential customers;

1. Internally within the university
2. Externally to the local business community
3. Individuals from the wider community
4. External sporting organisations.

The key area for business development following the refurbishment works has been increased membership sales for the new gym and also increased levels of business for the swimming pool area taking into account the installation of new sauna and steam facilities. The key target areas for Sport Aston in terms of membership sales are Aston Students (68% of business), Aston Staff (3% of business), affiliated memberships – Alumni, Birmingham Science Park and other students (13 %) and external community members (14%).

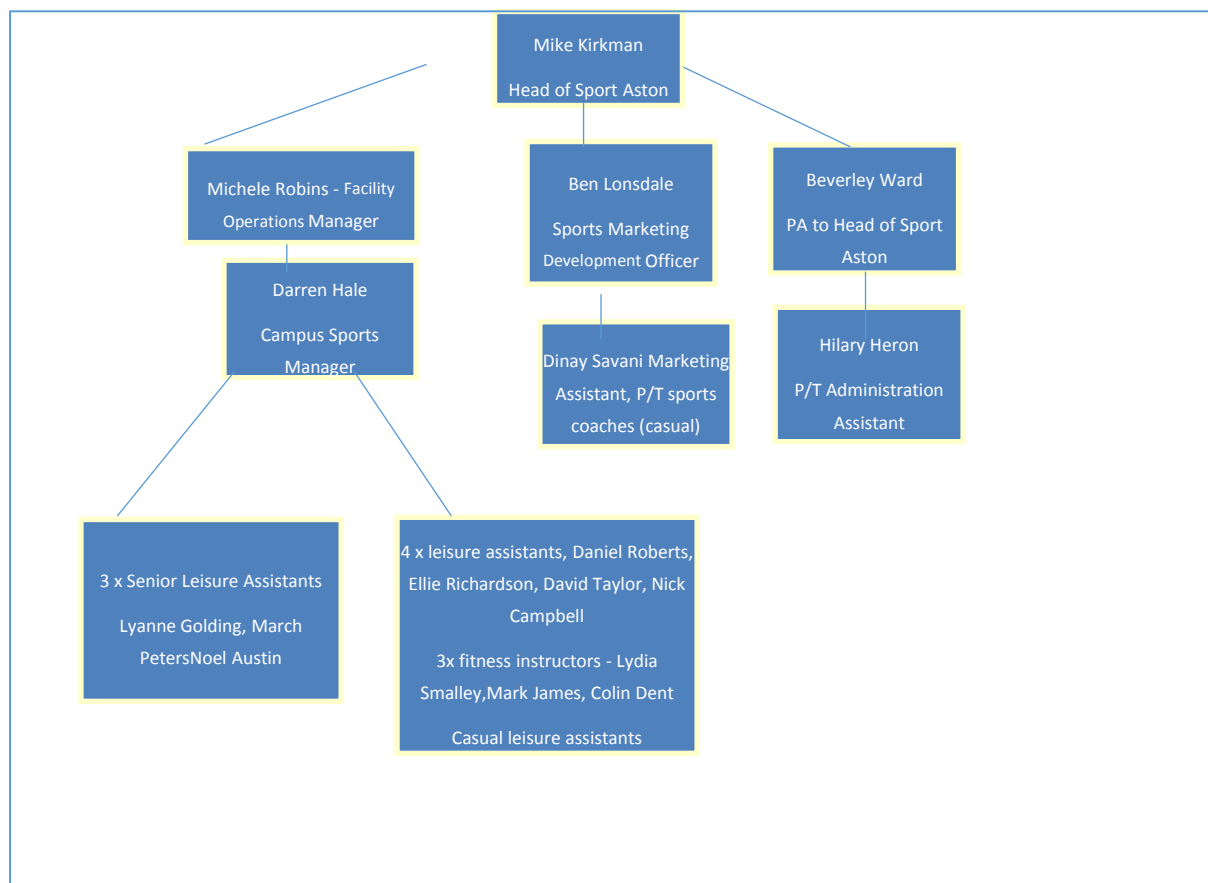
In addition to the financial targets that Sport Aston has to meet there are also other performance indicators which are relevant. For example, the competitive clubs within the Student Union enjoy an agreement whereby the allocated number of hours of peak time use on an annual basis is provided at no cost to the Athletic Union. In the current academic year this equated to 63 hours per week which is effectively a direct subsidy of just under £45,000 per annum spread over the first two terms of the academic year.

This is a fundamental element of the service which Sport Aston provides for students demonstrating the contribution which the department makes to the overall student experience at the university.

In addition to the student and staff target market, Sport Aston needs to maximise usage and income from the other target markets including external users from the local business community and other sporting organisations. In order to achieve successful implementation of this strategy Sport Aston has to operate as a commercial leisure operator. The charges that are levied for external use are based on market sensitivity and are intended to cross-subsidise discounted charges that are applied to students and staff usage. .

Sport Aston recognises its role in assisting the university to achieve some of its wider strategic aims, particularly in relation to community engagement. As part of this plan Sport Aston invests time within its programme to manage an annual event for primary school children from the locality who can engage in a multi-sports activity day where the children, who come from predominantly inner city school with poor sports facilities, engage in a range of sporting activities. This event, which is held over two days, links in with the university's student and staff volunteering scheme which is part of the university's Community Engagement strategy.

Sport Aston's staffing establishment for Campus Sports consists of 15.60 FTE plus trained support staff to cover operational position and sessional instructors who teach exercise classes, learn to swim and coaching for a wide range of sports disciplines.. An organisational chart is shown below.



Sport Aston is committed to providing on-going professional development to all staff employed in the organisation with the principal aim of assisting them to reach their maximum potential. Sport Aston's philosophy concerning professional training and development of staff is that there is a clear commitment to provide the necessary tools for staff in order that they can perform their duties to the highest level in order to provide an excellent customer experience for visitors to the campus sports facilities.

Sport Aston utilise the university's professional development review process (PDR) to establish training/development needs necessary to fill any skills gap which may be present for any individual

Formal review meetings take place in July/August on an annual basis each year and a training matrix for the department is established following completion of all the review meetings. Each member of the Sport Aston management team is responsible for conducting PDR review meetings with their direct reports.

The Head of Sport Aston is part of this process and undertakes PDR reviews for the line managers and also oversees the written summaries from the PDR meetings which those managers conduct. Managers are encouraged to revisit the PDR review notes for each member of staff on a regular basis throughout the year to ensure that agreed action plans and training requirements are proceeding in line with the plans identified.

There are a variety of resources available to Sport Aston to support the professional development of staff. This includes the allocation of revenue budget funding to support the direct cost of external training for staff and this is prioritised by the management team early in the financial year in order that adequate resources can be targeted to support the demand.

Additionally Sport Aston is able to take advantage of the university's in-house staff development resource. The university provides a wide range of programmes delivered through various methods including in-house trainers and external providers.

There are regular weekly training sessions for all contracted Leisure Assistants and Fitness Instructors. These sessions are led by the Facility Operations Manager and Campus Sports Manager and include a wide range of training activities ranging from practical lifeguard training/emergency procedures through to sales campaign training and evaluation.

An essential component of Sport Aston's training and development plan surrounds an annual team building event held in the summer towards the end of the academic year where the whole team go away together as a unit for an overnight stay. During the course of two days the team engage in a series of performance reviews and forward planning sessions interspersed with other activities and a social programme. Since 2012 the team have held away weekends in Forest of Dean and Snowdonia National Park. The weekends are always well attended and are highly valued by the staff concerned.