



7 May'08

Pam Whittle  
Glasgow 2014 Legacy Team  
Scottish Government  
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Dear Ms Whittle,

Scottish Universities Sport (SUS) welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Scottish Government's consultation process to ensure a 'lasting legacy for Scotland' following Glasgow's successful bid to host the Commonwealth Games in 2014. SUS and its members were very strong supporters of the 'Back the bid' campaign, and we are absolutely delighted that it delivered such a successful outcome. The sporting, health, economic, cultural and promotional legacies are clear for all to see, and we are sure the Games will play a key role in fuelling Scotland's future prosperity.

Our congratulations go to the Scottish Government, Scottish Commonwealth Games Council for Scotland, Glasgow City Council and the many others besides for mounting such an inspirational, professional and compelling bid ~ SUS will do all it can to support the 2014 Games effort before, during and after the event .

Many of Scotland's Universities will have provided institutional responses to the consultation process, so SUS will focus on the opportunities to deliver a lasting legacy around five key themes only, namely: Elite Sport, Sports Facilities, Physical Literacy, Health and School Sport; Volunteering and Internationalism.

Much of what needs to be done in support of the Games and their legacy has already been documented in the Government's National Strategy for Sport in Scotland *Reaching Higher*. This strategy's six themes/drivers of Increasing Participation; Providing the Pathway; Improving Performance; Well Trained People; Strong Organisations; and Quality Facilities will make a direct contribution to the achievement of the national outcomes sought from the 2014 Commonwealth Games. It is therefore important that the Scottish Government find the resources required to deliver the Actions set out in this document.

### **Elite Sport**

The 2014 Games must be underpinned by Government funding to support elite athletes whilst they participate in higher education.

Higher education institutions have a long, rich and distinguished tradition of producing and supporting talented athletes. Indeed, it is fair to say that universities have pioneered many of the modern day advances and approaches in performance sport. This has come from a quarter of a century's involvement in managing sports bursary programmes, leading the understanding and application of sports medicine and sports science, appreciating the need to balance work (study) and sporting priorities and by taking (long before it was fashionable) a genuine interest in the long-term development of the individual.

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Universities are modern, well managed and forward-thinking businesses which openly encourage and embrace the pursuit of excellence. This includes sport, and many HE institutions now boast cutting edge facilities (for training and competition), first-rate staff, innovative athletic development programmes and outward-facing involvements with key partners, including the Scottish Institute of Sport and its network of Area Institutes.

The recent SUS audit (2007) of activity reported 397 sports bursaries in Scottish Universities, which are largely funded from in-house resources. The 2014 Games represent a unique opportunity to better recognise the link between higher education and elite sport and build on established structures in order to improve Scotland's sporting performance. In addition to enhancing performance in the 2014 Games itself, there is the opportunity to put in place a legacy of improved support for elite sport at universities, ensuring a step change is maintained in the long term contributing to the national outcome of ensuring our young people are ready to succeed.

SUS recommends that the Glasgow Games must provide the catalyst to address the lack of a Scotland wide bursary scheme akin to that which operates in England. A pan-Scotland scheme would help counteract the attraction of English and US institutions as destinations for elite student athletes who are making the important transition between junior and senior competition. The University sector in Scotland is the ideal focal point for such an investment and early attention should be given to advancing the recommendations set out in the 'Elite Sport in Higher Education' report [sportscotland 2006].

A leading legacy would be for Scottish Government/National Sports Agencies to recognise and acknowledge Universities' expertise in sports medicine, sports science, strength & conditioning etc. More, to utilise the research and development potential of the sector in addressing key innovations in sport to gain competitive advantage ~ advances in technology, equipment, physiological understanding, bio-mechanical performance can all lead to improvements in sporting performance, and success. In short, better resource, harness and exploit the academic flare within Scottish HEIs to help sport ~ this would be a strong legacy. SUS recommends that the newly formed Scottish University Sports' Related Academic Group would be a strong partner with which to explore academic development opportunities [r.lloyd@abertay.ac.uk].

SUS would also encourage the Scottish Funding Council to offer greater flexibility in funding talented student sports performers to make it easier to allow study breaks to accommodate training camps and major events.

### **Sports Facilities**

Many of the best sport and gym facilities in Scotland are located in Universities (National Squash Academy at Heriot Watt; National Tennis and Swimming Academies at Stirling; National Hockey Academy at the University of Edinburgh) ~ these are underpinned by expert management and assured access arrangements.

This is why the Scottish Institute of Sport network has chosen to partner the University sector and utilise their facilities ~ the culture of academic excellence and sporting excellence are wholly compatible. SUS would endorse the role of Universities in hosting national/regional sports facilities, and encourage Scottish Government to consider Universities as the first choice in locating sports specific training and competition facilities ~ this offers the perfect ethos; management abilities; city locations and so forth. SUS would also contend, as it has done so before to Scottish Government, that this approach would reap far greater impact if progressed on a network wide basis ~ this would capture the might of the sector (facilities/services) and provide prospective student athletes with the greatest choice and flexibility around fusing their sporting and academic aspirations.

There has been a considerable investment made in University sporting infrastructure and residential settings that are high quality, well managed and extensively used by the wider community. The University sector should be considered an obvious location for training camps and partnerships associated with new national or local facility projects.

In this way Universities will be able to further reach out to their local communities. SUS advises that the Scottish Government should carefully examine the approach taken to the international promotion of training camp locations made by the London Organising Committee for the Olympic Games (LOCOG) and consider utilising a similar model for the 2014 Commonwealth Games.

### **Physical Literacy, Health and School Sport**

Universities are the country's foremost training and development agencies, including being a primary producer of PE teachers and other leisure professionals. SUS recommends that this resource could be further developed within the scope of the 2014 legacy to ensure those going on to teach, coach or work in the sports and leisure industries are equipped with the specific coaching knowledge to give school children the best possible introduction and exposure to certain sport in order to better capture the imagination of young people. By the same token, SUS is engaging with Skills' Active to ensure there is some degree of articulation between the content of academic degree programmes and the needs of the leisure industry ~ more concerted effort in this area is needed however. This could include more involvement by Scottish Governing Bodies of Sport in relevant syllabi and outputs from our sports related college and university courses.

There is huge interest and participation in sport/physical activity amongst university students<sup>1</sup> (60,000 gym users; 500 sports clubs; 4500 sports volunteers; 2.2 million user visits annually to HE sports facilities). The long term health benefits this provides could be enhanced by means of the 2014 Games to increase participation and to highlight volunteering opportunities both in direct support of the Games and more widely. This would make a significant contribution to both the outcomes of living longer healthier lives, developing responsible citizens and of building strong, resilient and supportive communities.

SUS' *Active Students* proposal (previously submitted to Scottish Government), promotes the extension of the Active Schools network into further and higher education. We wholly endorse this approach as it could provide a physical resource, an extra level of continuity and planning as well as a valuable bridge between the HE sector and local authorities. A network of University activity coordinators could deliver intra – mural sport at a participatory level, promote and develop volunteering opportunities and introduce a nationally coordinated approach to physical activity and health aimed specifically at the student population. SUS strongly recommends *Active Students* as an innovative, affordable, flexible and productive initiative for Scottish Government to champion.

### **Volunteering**

As well as career centred training, Universities also fulfil a unique role in generating volunteers in sport. The SUS audit (2007) conservatively estimates that over 4500 students undertake voluntary coaching, officiating, administrative or event management roles every year. This is a remarkable contribution and equates to well over half a million hours of sports volunteering annually. It illustrates the HE sector's proven ability to provide a plentiful supply of eager, energetic, bright and able young people (17-24 years) to undertake volunteering roles. SUS is determined to harness the sector's undoubted and unique potential in this area by developing a national strategy to assure the recruitment, training and deployment of more student volunteers into key areas of sport. This will generate 000's of new, up-skilled and young volunteers every year, who will be able to sustain HE and community sport programmes alike.

SUS has already communicated to Scottish Government on 'student volunteering' and we would re-iterate the proposed actions and approaches ~ SUS is firmly of the view that volunteering could well represent the ultimate 2014 Games legacy.

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<sup>1</sup> [SUS Audit 2007]

## **Internationalism**

The world-wide profile and exposure Scotland will gain from Glasgow 2014 is evident. Most Universities are active in developing international networks and this could provide a valuable vehicle for promoting further the 2014 games as well as forging new commercial, cultural and academic linkages across the Commonwealth. SUS is confident that its member Universities will have emphasised in their own submissions the opportunities Glasgow 2014 could bring in accessing the global market-place, and in creating new partnerships and exchanges. This could encompass Government funded scholarships for young Scots to take study tours abroad, or for Commonwealth Nations to target Scottish Universities for their further and higher education needs.

Scotland also enjoys an enviable reputation for hosting major sporting events, and SUS is sure Glasgow 2014 will be a further triumph. We recommend that Scottish Government continues to encourage Scottish Governing Bodies of Sport, and other organisations, to seek and secure more prestigious sporting events for Scotland.

## **Finally**

SUS welcomes the opportunity to comment on the legacy consultation and stands ready to support the delivery of the 2014 Games in any way we can. In the mean-time, more information on SUS and our activities can be found by visiting [www.susport.org.uk](http://www.susport.org.uk).

Yours sincerely

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Chair, Scottish Universities Sport