

Ulster University Centre for Sport in Society Event



A Research Agenda for Recognising the Value of Sport and Physical Activity in Northern Ireland



15 April
10 -12pm



Ulster University
Belfast Campus

Advocates for sport and physical activity frequently highlight their benefits for health, communities, and the economy. Yet in Northern Ireland, these claims are often supported by fragmented evidence, outdated statistics, or anecdote rather than robust national-level data. In a context of limited public resources and increasing competition for investment, compelling evidence is essential. Strong data does not simply describe sport's value. It provides a competitive advantage when making the case for policy support and funding.

**Join us for an informative and interactive session
with Professor Simon Shibli BSc, PhD, ACMA**

Professor Simon Shibli is a leading expert in sport management and the economics of sport, serving as Professor of Sport Management at Loughborough University and formerly Director of the Sport Industry Research Centre at Sheffield Hallam University.



Key Topics

The under-recognition of sport in the system of national accounting

Traditional accounting approaches define sport very narrowly, excluding significant related sectors such as clothing, footwear, equipment manufacturing, tourism, hospitality, and construction. As a result, the true economic contribution of sport is systematically underestimated.

The role of a Sport Satellite Account

We'll discuss the EU-recognised Vilnius Definition (3.0) methodology and its potential to accurately capture sport's economic value in Northern Ireland.

Evidence that drives investment

Examples from across the UK and Ireland demonstrate the real impact of better evidence. The 2017 Golf Satellite Account, for instance, directly contributed to a sixfold increase in capital funding for the sport.

Participation, social value and health outcomes

Beyond economics, sport generates vast social value from improved wellbeing and reduced healthcare costs to stronger communities. However, Northern Ireland lacks a national estimate of this social value, representing a significant gap in the evidence base.

The need for a strategic research programme

The session will make the case that Northern Ireland needs a strategic research programme capable of capturing the full economic, social and health value of sport and physical activity. Developing this evidence base would allow policymakers, funders, and sport organisations to make stronger, evidence-informed decisions about investment, ensuring that sport's contribution to society is fully recognised.

Hosted by Ulster University Centre for Sport in Society

This event highlights our ambition to lead a coherent, impactful research programme capable of driving meaningful change and elevating the value of sport across Northern Ireland. Ulster University's Centre for Sport in Society is comprised of a group of multidisciplinary researchers whose internationally recognised work explores a wide range of themes and issues associated with the cultural, social, economic and historical significance of sport nationally and internationally. We are committed to research that asks critical questions about the role and impact of sport in society and that has real world impact.



REGISTER NOW

Places are limited so early booking is recommended

Event Partners

