Master of Science in Strength, Conditioning and Coaching

Handbook

April 2026

Introduction

Master of Science in Strength, Conditioning and Coaching

The Master of Science in Strength, Conditioning and Coaching is designed for professionals and aspiring practitioners in the fields of sports science, physical education, and athletic coaching. This program is ideal for individuals who wish to deepen their expertise in strength and conditioning, with a focus on applying advanced techniques and evidence-based practices to optimise athletic performance. The course targets coaches, trainers, and sports professionals seeking to enhance their coaching methodologies and leadership skills.

Entry requirements

Education Requirements

Applicants ordinarily hold an EQF 6 degree qualification. Applicants with a strong record of successfully completing EQF 6 coursework may apply to co-enrol in the MSc while they complete their undergraduate programme. Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is considered for applicants with relevant experience or other forms of learning.

Language Requirements

English language competency at IELTS 6.5 (or equivalent) is required of all applicants.

Instructional design

Teaching: The programme is delivered entirely online, integrating both asynchronous and synchronous learning experiences. Asynchronous components include pre-recorded lectures, curated readings, self-paced assignments, and study materials hosted on a virtual learning environment (VLE). Synchronous components include live sessions with instructors, discussion forums, group activities, and collaborative learning spaces. Pedagogical approaches include video demonstrations of movement and coaching techniques, structured coaching simulations, real-world case studies, video-based athlete observations, interactive coaching design tools, movement analysis platforms, virtual training design workshops, reflective analysis tasks, digital labs, peer collaboration, and virtual mentoring.

Assessment: Each module employs a mix of regular formative assignments and one final summative assignment. Formative assessment includes collaborative design tasks, reflective exercises, and participation in forums and discussions. Summative assessment includes written assignments, practical design and planning tasks, research projects, case studies, data analysis reports, and project presentations.

Degree structure

The degree consists of 9 compulsory modules totalling 90 ECTS, all at EQF 7 level.

Module	ECTS	Level
Human Movement Foundations	10	EQF 7
Coaching Science	10	EQF 7
Strength and Power Development	10	EQF 7
Speed, COD and Agility Development	10	EQF 7
Planning & Periodisation for Performance	10	EQF 7
Metabolic Conditioning	5	EQF 7
Long Term Athlete Development	5	EQF 7
Research Methods in Strength, Conditioning and Coaching	5	EQF 7
Strength, Conditioning and Coaching Research Project	25	EQF 7

Module Descriptions

1. Human Movement Foundations

This module explores the foundational concepts of human movement through applied biomechanics, functional anatomy, and core physical principles as they relate to athletic performance. Students engage with video demonstrations, structured coaching simulations, and reflective analysis tasks to explore the complex relationships between internal movement mechanisms and external environmental constraints. Through real-world coaching observations or simulations, students evaluate movement patterns, adapt technical models, and apply critical problem-solving approaches in their own professional context.

Learning Outcomes

1. Lead and supervise athlete movement development using informed movement strategies grounded in applied biomechanics.
2. Contribute to interdisciplinary coaching plans that integrate anatomical and movement knowledge within a team or organisational setting.
3. Manage and evaluate movement-focused training interventions within a remote coaching environment.

2. Coaching Science

This module examines the science and art of coaching as a dynamic and context-sensitive process central to athlete development. Emphasising leadership, interpersonal communication, and evidence-based skill acquisition strategies, students explore how coaching influences performance across diverse contexts. Students engage with virtual case studies, video-based athlete observations, and interactive coaching design tools to develop adaptive strategies, facilitating collaborative decision-making and professional reflection.

Learning Outcomes

1. Design and implement evidence-based coaching interventions responsive to diverse athlete needs and contexts.
2. Lead collaborative decision-making in multidisciplinary coaching teams.
3. Manage coaching environments and mentor athletes using reflective and adaptive coaching practices.

3. Strength and Power Development

This module explores the science and application of strength and power training to enhance athletic performance. Students examine force development in relation to task constraints and athlete needs, with a focus on physiological adaptations, programming strategies, and individual response variability. The course uses video analysis, interactive exercise design tools, and real-world coaching simulations to build capabilities in designing and managing effective training programmes.

Learning Outcomes

1. Design and implement evidence-based strength and power training programmes adapted to individual athlete needs and task constraints.
2. Analyse and manage physiological adaptations and individual response variability in training.
3. Evaluate training effectiveness using data-informed approaches and adjust programming based on continuous feedback.

4. Speed, COD and Agility Development

This module focuses on the development and transfer of strength and power into dynamic athletic movements such as sprinting, agility, and change of direction. Students explore the biomechanical, neurological, and contextual factors that influence locomotor performance in sports. The module uses movement analysis platforms, technical model breakdowns, and virtual training design workshops to enable students to develop and critique individualised programmes.

Learning Outcomes

1. Design individualised speed, agility, and change of direction programmes grounded in biomechanical and neurological principles.
2. Critically evaluate locomotor performance using data-informed tools and technical analysis.
3. Lead interdisciplinary collaboration to optimise dynamic athletic movement development in context-specific scenarios.

5. Planning & Periodisation for Performance

This module equips students with advanced knowledge and applied skills to strategically design, implement, and adapt planning and periodisation frameworks that optimise performance and manage fatigue across training and competition cycles. Students engage in the creation and critique of training plans based on macro, meso, and micro cycles using digital platforms for remote athlete monitoring, planning simulations, and collaborative coaching environments.

Learning Outcomes

1. Design strategic periodisation and planning frameworks aligned with performance goals and athlete development stages.
2. Lead decision-making in managing fatigue and recovery across training and competition cycles.
3. Adapt and critically evaluate training plans using digital monitoring tools and collaborative coaching approaches.

6. Metabolic Conditioning

This module develops students' advanced understanding of metabolic conditioning and its application in field-based, sport-specific contexts. It explores the physiological principles of energy system contribution across various exercise intensities, durations, and sport formats — especially intermittent team sports. Students design and implement metabolic training programmes using remote data collection, virtual simulations, and collaborative analysis of movement demands and physiological responses.

Learning Outcomes

1. Design sport-specific metabolic conditioning programmes informed by energy system physiology and movement demands.
2. Apply field-based assessment and remote data collection tools to optimise energy system development.
3. Lead interdisciplinary collaboration in developing accessible metabolic training strategies for diverse contexts.

7. Long Term Athlete Development

This module examines the critical frameworks, principles, and challenges of long-term athlete development (LTAD), with a focus on youth and paediatric populations. It equips students with the interdisciplinary perspective necessary to implement developmentally appropriate and evidence-informed coaching strategies, with emphasis on biological maturation, bio-banding, psychosocial development, and planning aligned with long-term performance goals.

Learning Outcomes

1. Design developmentally appropriate LTAD programmes accounting for biological maturation, bio-banding, and psychosocial factors.
2. Lead collaborative planning that aligns athlete development with long-term performance goals and well-being.
3. Evaluate and adapt LTAD strategies based on individual developmental trajectories and contextual factors.

8. Research Methods in Strength, Conditioning and Coaching

This module develops advanced competencies in research design and critical inquiry within the context of strength and conditioning. Students explore and apply both quantitative and qualitative methodologies to real-world coaching challenges, emphasising evidence-based practice, ethical research conduct, and methodological rigour. Students design original research studies, critique existing literature, and use digital tools for data collection, analysis, and dissemination.

Learning Outcomes

1. Design and conduct rigorous research studies using quantitative and/or qualitative methodologies.
2. Critically evaluate research literature and apply evidence-based findings to coaching practice.
3. Lead research integration in high-performance settings using ethical conduct and appropriate data dissemination.

9. Strength, Conditioning and Coaching Research Project

This capstone module enables students to integrate and apply the research, analytical, and practical competencies developed throughout their programme. Students independently design and conduct an applied case study grounded in contemporary challenges in coaching and strength & conditioning, showcasing the ability to evaluate research methods, apply knowledge of physiological systems, and critically engage with evidence-based practices.

Learning Outcomes

1. Independently design and conduct an original research project that addresses contemporary coaching challenges.
2. Integrate research, analytical, and practical competencies to develop evidence-based solutions.
3. Evaluate research methodologies and physiological principles to demonstrate critical engagement with professional practice.

Internships policy

Internships must be a genuine extension of the student's academic programme, providing opportunity to apply theoretical knowledge to substantive projects directly related to their field of study. Internships consisting primarily of administrative or routine tasks will not be approved.

Every internship must have a defined start date, end date, and formal learning plan with objectives agreed in advance by the student, the host organisation, and the relevant college. Responsibilities and task complexity should increase over time. Each student must be assigned a named supervisor within the host organisation who holds relevant expertise and is responsible for providing regular guidance and feedback.

Woolf prioritises paid internships to ensure equitable access regardless of socioeconomic background. Unpaid internships may only be approved where they constitute a genuine learning opportunity and do not displace the work of a paid employee.

Programmatic standards

Day-to-day management sits with the relevant college. Each college must have a designated Woolf contact responsible for vetting and approving all host organisations and placements before any internship may proceed. Colleges are responsible for matching students to approved positions.

Students must complete pre-internship preparation before commencing a placement, which may include CV writing, interview support, and other instruction as necessary. Virtual internships are encouraged to

widen access beyond geographical constraints; support systems must address the challenges of remote work, including cross-timezone communication and fostering professional belonging.

Programme effectiveness must be evaluated on an ongoing basis. Formal evaluations will be collected from students, host supervisors, and academic advisors, and will inform curriculum design and programme improvement.

Grading Scheme

General Marking Criteria and Classification

Marking of student work keeps in view the scale of work that the student can reasonably be expected to have undertaken in order to complete the task.

The assessment of work for the course is defined according to the following rubric of general criteria:

1. **Engagement:**
    - Directness of engagement with the question or task
    - Range of issues addressed or problems solved
    - Depth, complexity, and sophistication of comprehension of issues and implications of the questions or task
    - Effective and appropriate use of imagination and intellectual curiosity
2. **Argument or solution:**
    - Coherence, mastery, control, and independence of work
    - Conceptual and analytical precision
    - Flexibility, i.e., discussion of a variety of views, ability to navigate through challenges in creative ways
    - Completion leading to a conclusion or outcome
    - Performance and success of the solution, where relevant
3. **Evidence (as relevant):**
    - Depth, precision, detail, range and relevance of evidence cited
    - Accuracy of facts
    - Knowledge of first principles and demonstrated ability to reason from them
    - Understanding of theoretical principles and/or historical debate
    - Critical engagement with primary and/or secondary sources
4. **Organisation & Presentation:**
    - Clarity and coherence of structure
    - Clarity and fluency of writing, code, prose, or presentation (as relevant)
    - Correctness of conformity to conventions (code, grammar, spelling, punctuation, or similar relevant conventions)

Definition of marks

97-100

Work will be so outstanding that it could not be better within the scope of the assignment. These grades will be used for work that shows exceptional excellence in the relevant domain; including (as relevant): remarkable sophistication and mastery, originality or creativity, persuasive and well-grounded new methods or ideas, or making unexpected connections or solutions to problems.

94-96

Work will excel against each of the General Criteria. In at least one area, the work will be merely highly competent.

90-93

Work will excel in more than one area, and be at least highly competent in other respects. It must be excellent and contain: a combination of sophisticated engagement with the issues; analytical precision and independence of solution; go beyond paraphrasing or boilerplate code techniques; demonstrating quality of awareness and analysis of both first principles or primary evidence and scholarly debate or practical tradeoffs; and clarity and coherence of presentation. Truly outstanding work measured against some of these criteria may compensate for mere high competence against others.

87-89

Work will be at least very highly competent across the board, and excel in at least one group of the General Criteria. Relative weaknesses in some areas may be compensated by conspicuous strengths in others.

84-86

Work will demonstrate considerable competence across the General Criteria. They must exhibit some essential features of addressing the issue directly and relevantly across a good range of aspects; offer a coherent solution or argument involving (where relevant) consideration of alternative approaches; be substantiated with accurate use of resources (including if relevant, primary evidence) and contextualisation in debate (if relevant); and be clearly presented. Nevertheless, additional strengths (for instance, the range of problems addressed, the sophistication of the arguments or solutions, or the use of first principles) may compensate for other weaknesses.

80-83

Work will be competent and should manifest the essential features described above, in that they must offer direct, coherent, substantiated and clear arguments; but they will do so with less range, depth, precision and perhaps clarity. Again, qualities of a higher order may compensate for some weaknesses.

77-79

Work will show solid competence in solving problems or providing analysis. But it will be marred by weakness under one or more criteria: failure to fully solve the problem or discuss the question directly; some irrelevant use of technologies or citing of information; factual error, or error in selection of technologies; narrowness in the scope of solution or range of issues addressed or evidence adduced; shortage of detailed evidence or engagement with the problem; technical performance issues (but not so much as to prevent operation); poor organisation or presentation, including incorrect conformity to convention or written formatting.

74-76

Work will show evidence of some competence in solving problems or providing analysis. It will also be clearly marred by weakness in multiple General Criteria, including: failure to solve the problem or discuss the question directly; irrelevant use of technologies or citing of information; factual errors or multiple errors in selection of technologies; narrowness in the scope of solution or range of issues addressed or evidence adduced; shortage of detailed evidence or engagement with the problem; significant technical performance issues (but not so much as to prevent operation); poor organisation or presentation, including incorrect conformity to convention or written formatting. They may be characterised by unsubstantiated assertion rather than argument, or by unresolved contradictions in the argument or solution.

70-73

Work will show evidence of competence in solving problems or providing analysis, but this evidence will be limited. It will be clearly marred by weakness in multiple General Criteria. It will still make substantive progress in addressing the primary task or question, but the work will lack a full solution or directly address the task; the work will contain irrelevant material; the work will show multiple errors of fact or judgment; and the work may fail to conform to conventions.

67-69

Work will fall down on a number of criteria, but will exhibit some of the qualities required, such as the ability to grasp the purpose of the assignment, to deploy substantive information or solutions in an effort to complete the assignment; or to offer some coherent analysis or work towards the assignment. Such qualities will not be displayed at a high level, and may be marred by irrelevance, incoherence, major technical performance issues, error and poor organisation and presentation.

64-66

Work will fall down on a multiple General Criteria, but will exhibit some vestiges of the qualities required, such as the ability to see the point of the question, to deploy information, or to offer some coherent work. Such qualities will be substantially marred by irrelevance, incoherence, error and poor organisation and presentation.

60-63

Work will display a modicum of knowledge or understanding of some points, but will display almost none of the higher qualities described in the criteria. They will be marred by high levels of factual or technology error and irrelevance, generalisation or boilerplate code and lack of information, and poor organisation and presentation.

0-60

Work will fail to exhibit any of the required qualities. Candidates who fail to observe rubrics and rules beyond what the grading schemes allow for may also be failed.

Indicative equivalence table

US GPA	US Grade	US Percent	UK Mark	UK UG Classification	UK PG Classification	Malta Grade	Malta Mark	Malta Classification	Swiss Grade
4	A+	97 - 100	70+	First	Distinction	A	80-100%	First class honours	6.0
3.9	A	94-96				B	70-79%	Upper-second class honours	
3.7	A-	90-93							5.5
3.3	B+	87-89	65-69	Upper Second	Merit	C	55-69%	Lower-second class honours	
3	B	84-86	60-64						
2.7	B-	80-83	55-59	Lower Second	Pass				5
2.3	C+	77-79	50-54			D	50-54%	Third-class honours	
2	C	74–76	45-49	Third	Pass				
1.7	C-	70–73	40-44						
1.3	D+	67–69	39-	Fail	Fail				
1	D	64–66							
0.7	D-	60–63							
0	F	Below 60				F			

Synchronous Adjustments Template

Synch discussions may affect the mark on submitted assignments: written work is submitted in advance, and a discussion follows. This provides students an opportunity to clarify and explain their written claims, and it also tests whether the work is a product of the student's own research or has been plagiarised.

The synchronous discussion acts to shift the recorded mark on the submitted assignment according to the following rubric:

+3

Up to three points are added for excellent performance; the student displays a high degree of competence across a range of questions, and excels in at least one group of criteria. Relative weaknesses in some areas may be compensated by conspicuous strengths in others.

+/- 0

The marked assignment is unchanged for fair performance. Answers to questions must show evidence of some solid competence in expounding evidence and analysis. But they will be marred by weakness under one or more criteria: failure to discuss the question directly; appeal to irrelevant information; factual error; narrowness in the range of issues addressed or evidence adduced; shortage of detailed evidence; or poor organisation and presentation, including consistently incorrect grammar. Answers may be characterised by unsubstantiated assertion rather than argument, or by unresolved contradictions in the argument.

- 3 (up to three points)

Up to three are subtracted points for an inability to answer multiple basic questions about themes in the written work. Answers to questions will fall down on a number of criteria, but will exhibit some vestiges of the qualities required, such as the ability to see the point of the question, to deploy information, or to

offer some coherent analysis towards an argument. Such qualities will not be displayed at a high level or consistently, and will be marred by irrelevance, incoherence, error and poor organisation and presentation.

0 (fail)

Written work and the oral examination will both be failed if the oral examination clearly demonstrates that the work was plagiarised. The student is unfamiliar with the arguments of the assignment or the sources used for those arguments.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the use of someone else's work without correct referencing. The consequence of plagiarism is the presentation of someone else's work as your own work. Plagiarism violates Woolf policy and will result in disciplinary action, but the context and seriousness of plagiarism varies widely. Intentional or reckless plagiarism will result in a penalty grade of zero, and may also entail disciplinary penalties.

Plagiarism can be avoided by citing the works that inform or that are quoted in a written submission. Many students find that it is essential to keep their notes organised in relation to the sources which they summarise or quote. Course instructors will help you to cultivate professional scholarly habits in your academic writing.

Depending on the course, short assignment essays may not require students to submit a bibliography or to use extensive footnotes, and students are encouraged to write their assignments entirely in their own words. However, all essays must acknowledge the sources on which they rely and must provide quotation marks and citation information for verbatim quotes.

There are several forms of plagiarism. They all result in the presentation of someone's prior work as your new creation. Examples include:

- Cutting and pasting (verbatim copying)
- Paraphrasing or rewording
- Unauthorised Collaboration
- Collaboration with other students can result in pervasive similarities – it is important to determine in advance whether group collaboration is allowed, and to acknowledge the contributions or influence of the group members.
- False Authorship (Essay Mills, Friends, and Language Help)
- Paying an essay writing service, or allowing a generous friend to compose your essay, is cheating. Assistance that contributes substantially to the ideas or content of your work must be acknowledged.

Complaints and appeals

Students and faculty should always seek an amicable resolution to matters arising by addressing the issue with the person immediately related to the issue. Students should handle minor misunderstandings or

disagreements within a regular teaching session or by direct message, or with their College. If a simple resolution is not possible, or the matter remains unresolved for one party, the steps outlined in this section apply to all groups, colleges, and units of Woolf.

The Red Flag system

An issue with a red flag should be submitted in the case that a member of Woolf seeks to make an allegation of serious misconduct about another member, including matters of cheating, plagiarism, and unfair discrimination or intolerance.

Any member of Woolf, seeking to raise a matter of serious concern, should submit a red flag by emailing redflag@woolf.education. Provide a short, clear description of the issue.

If a student submits an issue with a red flag, or if a faculty member submits an issue about a student, it will trigger a meeting with the student's College Advisor. If the issue is not resolved, the matter will be escalated to the College Dean, or to a committee designated by the College Dean, which will have the power to clear the flag.

If an issue is submitted with a red flag by a faculty member about another faculty member, then the issue is reported directly to the College Dean.

For both students and faculty members, after the Dean's decision, the one who submits the complaint is provided the opportunity to accept or appeal the decision; if the one submitting the issue appeals the decision, it will be assigned to the Quality Assurance, Enhancement, and Technology Alignment Committee, which is a subcommittee of the Faculty Council.

Mitigating circumstances

When serious circumstances ('Mitigating Circumstances'), beyond the control of a student or faculty member, adversely affect academic performance or teaching support, a Mitigating Circumstances report must be submitted using Woolf's red flagging system. Mitigating Circumstances may include but are not limited to serious medical problems, domestic and personal circumstances, major accidents or interruptions of public services, disturbances during examination, or serious administrative or procedural errors with a material effect on outcomes.

Mitigating circumstances do not normally include a member's personal technology problems, including software, hardware, or personal internet connection failures; employment obligations or changes in employment obligations; permanent or sustained medical conditions (unless there is a sudden change of condition); or circumstances where no official evidence has been submitted.

Mitigating circumstances are normally only considered when a red flag has been submitted for the issue before the deadline of an affected written project or assignment, or within one week of a cumulative examination. Proof of mitigating circumstances may result in an extended deadline or examination period, or the possibility to retake an examination; it will not result in any regrading of existing submissions or exams.

Grade appeals

Students who dissent from the grades they have received should follow the normal procedure for submitting a red flag.