



INSPIRE

PROGRAMME

Administration and Governance Academy



OBJECTIVE

To establish a **Administration and Governance Academy** aimed at identifying, training, and equipping future club, league, and divisional association officials to contribute positively to the growth and sustainability of football in Northern Ireland.

This Academy will provide participants with a blend of theoretical knowledge, practical experience, and networking opportunities, developing a cohort of skilled professionals within the football ecosystem.

ACADEMY COMPONENTS

Level 5 Advanced Certificate

In collaboration with Ulster University, the Academy will provide a Level 5 Advanced Certificate to a select cohort of participants.

This qualification will be worth 60 credits and is designed to align with similar modules from existing degree programmes.

Upon successful completion, participants will receive an academic qualification, celebrated at a graduation ceremony held at the Waterfront Hall.

These modules will be delivered on the dates outlined below
9.30am – 4.30pm.

This course is fully funded through support from the Irish FA and FIFA.

Masterclasses

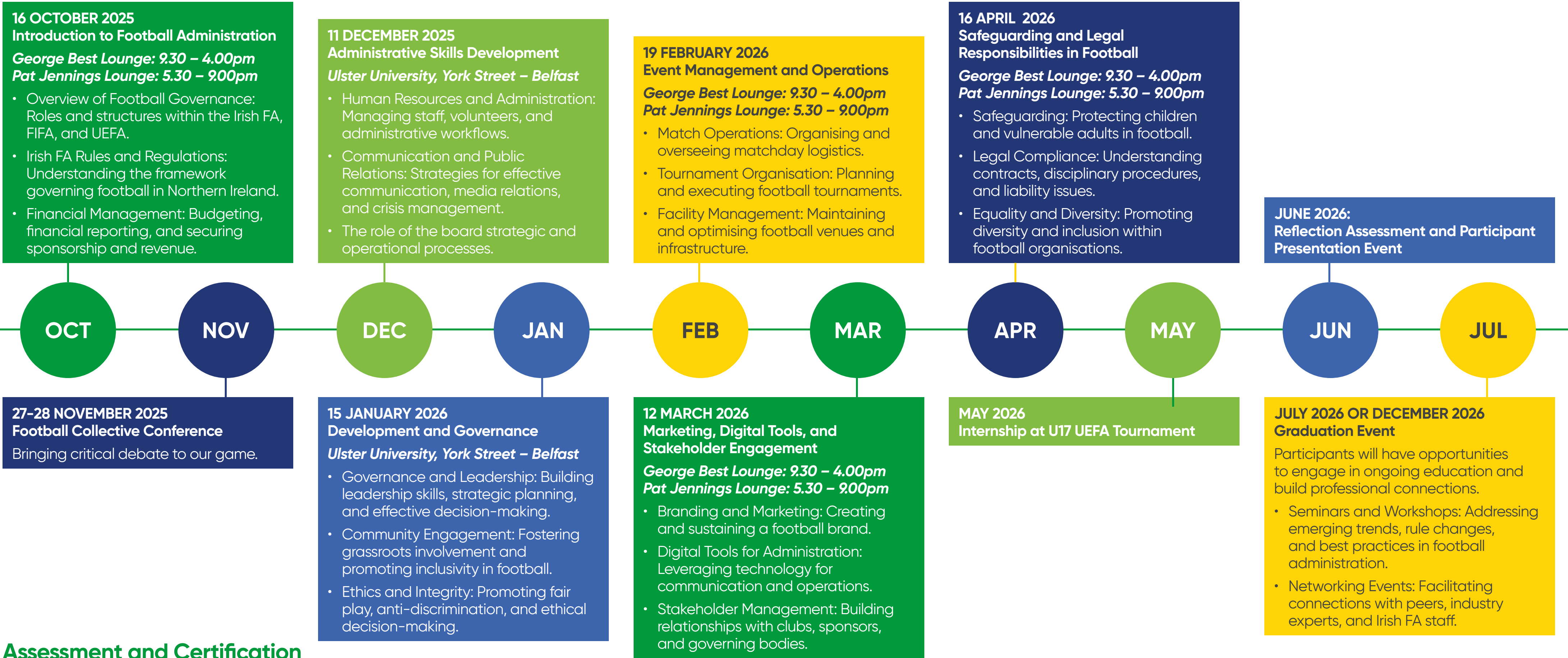
An annual calendar of masterclasses (x6) will offer participants comprehensive training in key areas of football administration and governance.

These sessions will draw on internal Irish FA expertise, input from Ulster University, and insights from guest speakers. Masterclass events will be held from 6–8pm on the day of the block teaching session.



ACADEMY COMPONENTS

Programme Structure



Assessment and Certification

Participants will receive a certificate upon successful completion of the programme (linked to attendance).



PRACTICAL PLACEMENTS AND PROJECTS

To provide practical experience, participants will have the opportunity to engage in hands-on placements and practical projects.

- **Placements:**
Opportunities to work within Irish FA departments, affiliated leagues, or clubs, e.g., assisting with the UEFA Under-17 tournament and Irish FA Events such as National Cup Competition Finals.
- **Projects:**
Participants will undertake projects addressing real challenges in football administration, developing solutions and recommendations.

Learning Outcomes

The masterclass series is designed to improve participants knowledge base regarding core aspects of governance in football. The Advanced Certificate will build on this knowledge by exploring underpinning research and policy to promote understanding. Participants will gain valuable graduate skills as critical thinkers and civic contributors. By combining guest speakers from the football industry with underpinning research the advanced certificate will ensure participants are able to shape and influence the future of football in Northern Ireland.

Delivery

The advanced certificate will be delivered in one day blocks, one day per month. The Football Collective Conference together with the UEFA u17 Euro Internship will add additional opportunities for learning.

The proposed modules for the Advanced Certificate are Sports Development and Management and Reflective Practice or Football Operations Management and Sport Policy and Governance

The master class events will take place as a two hour event in the evening (6-8pm) and will be open to approx. 50 participants outside of the Inspire programme.

Venue

The Venue will alternate between Ulster University Campus and The Clearer Twist National Football Stadium at Windsor Park.

Assessment

Assessment for the programme will be based on both written case studies, personal reflection and oral presentation.

PRACTICAL PLACEMENTS AND PROJECTS

Entry Requirements:

Academic Route:

The minimum required for any programmes is a minimum of passes in five subjects, two of which must be at A level (grades A-E) or equivalent (three at A Level for full-time undergraduate courses) and three at GCSE level* (grades A-C/4-9) or equivalent. Please provide details of your academic qualification, relevant experience and a 250 word summary of the personal benefit to you of taking part in this course.

Experiential Route

We will take into account relevant work experience within the sport and football environment. Application from those with experience of volunteering with football clubs, leagues or divisional associations in particular are welcome. For the Experiential route please provide a summary in 250 words of how you feel your experience would enable you to complete this course. Please also provide a 250 word summary of the personal benefit to you of taking part in this programme.

Eligibility Criteria

Applicants must:

- Be available to attend all scheduled sessions (October 2025 – July/ December 2026).
- Submit two written reflections (each 250 words).
- Provide basic qualifications and/or relevant work experience.

Be able to provide evidence that they are a resident in Northern Ireland

Ineligibility Criteria





Please note that the following individuals are not eligible to apply for the Governance & Administration Academy:

- Individuals currently serving on the Irish FA Board or Council
- Individuals who have previously completed the UEFA Certificate in Football Management (CFM) course
- Irish FA Staff







PRACTICAL PLACEMENTS AND PROJECTS

Sample Modules:

 REFLECTIVE PRACTICE		
 Rationale	 Aims	 Learning Outcomes
<p>Work-based learning is a key component of this foundation degree and each year's coaching placement is designed to increasingly challenge students in terms of their level of engagement and reflection.</p> <p>Students will be required to develop a coaching programme or engage in a particular facet of coaching which will be discussed with and approved by their tutor.</p> <p>A key component of this module will be the crafting of an 'Action Research' project that will demonstrate the student's ability to reflect upon the programme they have developed and measure its effectiveness.</p> <p>The module will give students the opportunity to apply identified models of recognized good coaching practice and to engage in a process of action research.</p>	<p>This module aims to provide students with an opportunity to engage in a thorough examination of a specific coaching project chosen in consultation with and under the supervision of a staff member.</p> <p>The module allows students to demonstrate knowledge and skills that have been acquired in the course of their studies, building upon experiences and applying these in a live situation.</p>	<p>Successful students will be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1 Demonstrate an understanding of the value of action research to coaching practice.2 Demonstrate originality of thought with specific reference to sports coaching.3 Critically reflect upon the impact of action research on coaching practice and identify key learning achieved.4 Prepare and execute an action research project.

PRACTICAL PLACEMENTS AND PROJECTS

Sample Modules:

<div> FOOTBALL DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT</div>		
<div> Rationale</div>	<div> Aims</div>	<div> Learning Outcomes</div>
<p>Sport, physical activity and specifically football play an important part in the lives of thousands of people in Northern Ireland on a daily basis and with the growing acknowledgment that physical inactivity can have serious physical and psychological implications, football development work and the business management of resources related to sports participation and promotion is essential.</p> <p>This Football Development and Management module assesses football and sports development work in terms of current practice and issues. The module will focus on personal development as well as contextual business planning to meet local, club and sectoral need.</p>	<p>On successful completion of the module students will have developed knowledge of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The football development process.• Key football related organisations and their impact on sports development work.• The concepts and practices of business management in a football context.• Football development in practice through contributions from visiting lecturers.• Various football/sports development issues. <p>Students will learn the role and importance of theories pertaining to all aspects of football development and sports/business management and their practical application to functional areas within the football industry and wider sport and leisure environments.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1 Apply monitoring and evaluation theory and practice within a sports development programme.2 Discuss various issues underpinning sports development and business management models relevant to the football industry.3 Demonstrate the ability to select appropriate business planning processes within the football industry.4 Identify the development and business management elements of the 2 strands of sports development work in terms of community related sports interventions and elite sports provision.

