

# EDUCATION & FOOTBALL ACADEMY.



SANCTIONED  
LEAGUE



ESPFA



A portrait of Terry Barratt, the Southern Football League Chairman, is shown on the left side of the page. He is an older man with white hair, wearing a dark suit, a white shirt, and a striped tie. The background of the entire page is a solid olive green color.

# **WELCOME TO THE SLFA.**

## **THE NEWLY ESTABLISHED EDUCATION AND FOOTBALL ACADEMY IN THE UK**

We are delighted to create along with Eliteform (ESPFA) our very own league wide education and football programme here at the Southern Football League.

Having seen the success of the Northern Premier League Football Academy (NPLFA), we were eager to see this fantastic concept be replicated within our league at our member clubs.

As seen in the north, combining education and football is a perfect blend which not only creates footballing pathways to the first team but also provides opportunities in the sporting industry through the qualifications and the real experience our clubs will be delivering.

The success that Eliteform (ESPFA) have delivered speaks for itself and we are looking forward to creating this fantastic concept within our league.

**Terry Barratt - Southern Football League Chairman**



# AN INTRO



# ESPFA

## THREE LEAGUES, ONE VISION

The extensive growth and success of the Northern Premier League's education and football programme, has seen the Southern League and Isthmian League sign up to create the English Semi-Professional Football Academy (ESPFA), encompassing the whole tier of the English football pyramid.

Our programmes will continue to run alongside existing youth set-ups at participating clubs, to offer students the chance to play academy and senior non-league football at the clubs main stadia, whilst gaining nationally recognised qualifications in sport.

Whilst working daily through these academic qualifications, our students can also train full-time at the academy, under the guidance of their clubs UEFA-qualified coach. You will also be able to compete in our academy league, cup competition and have the opportunity to play in the illustrious FA Youth Cup.



# WHY JOIN ESPFA



**97%** **PASS  
RATE**



**90%**

**OF OUR STUDENTS  
PROGRESS  
DIRECTLY INTO  
FURTHER STUDY  
OR EMPLOYMENT**



**THE BEST  
ENVIRONMENT  
FOR YOU TO  
IMPROVE AS  
A FOOTBALLER**

**WE HAVE A  
PROVEN TRACK  
RECORD FOR  
RUNNING  
OUTSTANDING  
EDUCATION  
& FOOTBALL  
ACADEMY  
PROGRAMMES**



# STUDY



# STUDY.

At the academy, we are extremely passionate about education and the academic development of our students. We are of course always happy to see footballing competition, achievement and progression; however, education has to be the primary endpoint for all of our students.

Estimated to have an industry worth over **£23.8 billion** in the UK, which provides nearly **one million jobs nationwide**, there really is no better time to become a qualified sports professional. That does not necessarily mean relying solely on sports performers either; as the ever-growing business of sport demands skilled specialists in fields such as coaching, physiotherapy, marketing, social media and journalism, to name but a few.

The additional benefits of our sport programmes come with the ongoing development of all of our students, in particular the cross-transferable skills that you will learn throughout your time with us. Just as with professionals from the armed forces, we know that the discipline, communication and work-ethic of our sports students is highly attractive to employers.

# ONE MILLION JOBS NATION -WIDE.



# WHY CHOOSE BTEC?

BTECs are the primary Level 3 qualification chosen and delivered at our academies. They are career-focused qualifications, designed to give you the skills you need to move into higher education or progress directly into employment.

A BTEC develops a range of industry-relevant knowledge and practical skills, which help you to prepare for, and progress in, your chosen career. Classroom-style teaching combined with project work and practical, work-related activities, help to develop a number of skills including teamwork, research, creative thinking and presentation skills; all of which are crucial for the workplace or Higher Education.

	BTECs	A-Levels
Method of Assessment	Coursework	Final Exam
UCAS points available	168 points	168 points
Potential Pathways	Higher Education, Apprenticeships or Employment	Higher Education, Apprenticeships or Employment

Chosen by over one million learners every year, BTEC offer a range of professional qualifications for anyone wishing to take their next step into the world of work to progress in their chosen careers. The primary difference between BTECs and A-Levels, for example, is the method of assessment. BTECs are graded via unit coursework throughout the duration of the programme, with the objective of preparing students for ongoing assessment in the working world.

# THE BTEC QUALIFICATIONS WE OFFER?

The majority of our academies run two BTEC qualifications, both the Level 3 Diploma and Extended Diplomas in Sport, which are equivalent to two and three A-Levels respectively and accumulate UCAS points; the UK's tariff for applying to university.

BTEC In Sport Level 3	Diploma	Extended Diploma
Entry grades (GCSE)	Three 9-4s (one must include English or Maths)	Four 9-4s (must include both English AND Maths)
Days per week	3 days	4 days
Course length	2 years	2 years
Units	13 units	19 units
UCAS points available	112 points	168 points
Equivalent to A-Levels	2 A-Levels	3 A-Levels

As mentioned above, the BTECs we offer are assessed via unit coursework, which allows students to follow a clear structure throughout the duration of the programme and track their progress on the go. Both qualifications offer fantastic opportunities to progress academically and will equip you with vital skills to ultimately succeed in your chosen career. At some of our academies, we also have scope to run level two sporting qualifications, in place of the Level 3 BTECs. Please ask your club's area manager for further information on the qualifications currently on offer.

# WHAT DOES A BTEC UNIT LOOK LIKE, AND HOW IS IT ASSESSED?

The BTEC in Sport qualifications we deliver will provide you with an in-depth knowledge into the ever-evolving world of sport. Over the duration of the two-year programme, you will work practically whilst gaining an insight into each sector, with a view to eventually specialising in one particular area of sport.

Some of the areas you will have the opportunity to learn and develop your understanding of are listed below:



**SPORTS COACHING**



**PSYCHOLOGY FOR SPORTS PERFORMANCE**



**PRINCIPLES OF ANATOMY & PHYSIOLOGY**



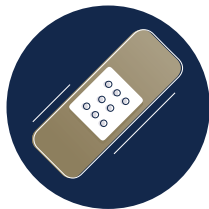
**SPORTS NUTRITION**



**SPORT AS A BUSINESS**



**LEADERSHIP & MANAGEMENT IN SPORT**



**SPORTS INJURIES**

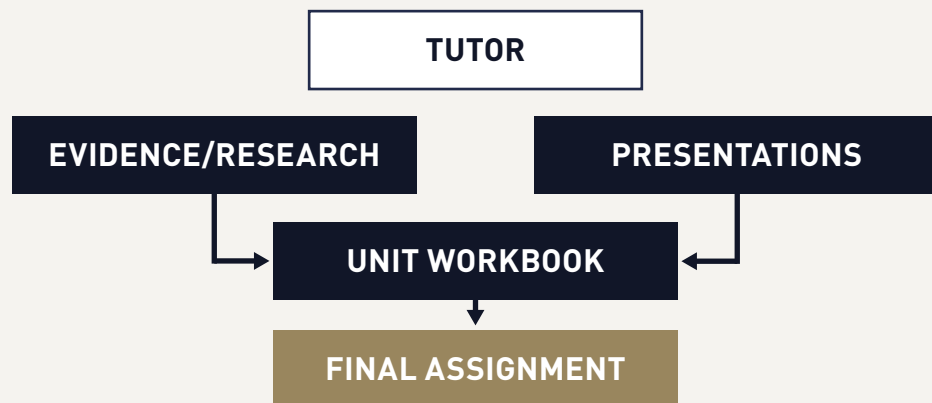


**ANALYSIS OF SPORTS PERFORMANCE**

## ASSESSMENT PROCESS.

Our expert teachers will deliver each sport unit to the whole group and it will take approximately 4-6 weeks for you to complete each one.

All units will cover the essential content via a range of different learning and assessment activities, such as group tasks, presentations, individual research and practical performance.



At the end of each unit, you will be graded against the BTEC criteria and awarded either a Pass, Merit or Distinction grade. The higher grade you achieve in each unit will boost your overall qualification grade at the end of the programme and ultimately open up more options to you, to move forwards in your chosen field.

## HOW FAR CAN YOU GO AFTER YOUR BTEC?

As mentioned throughout, there are a vast amount of opportunities open to you upon completion of one of our BTEC programmes. Our courses are designed with good working practices in mind and are centred around commitment and hard work, both of which will ultimately decide which grade you achieve at the end of year two.

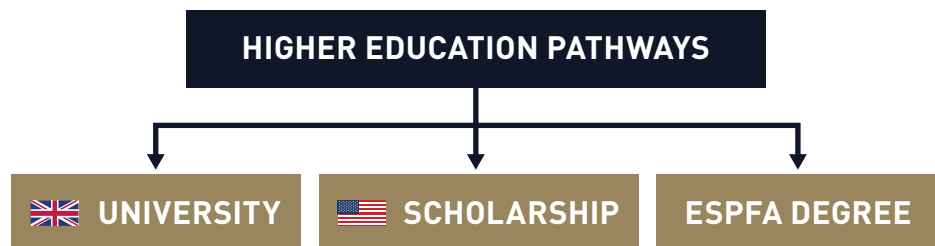
Extended Diploma	Diploma	UCAS Points
D*D*D*		168
D*D*D		160
D*DD		152
DDD		144
DDM		128
DMM	D*D*	112
	D*D	104
MMM	DD	96
MMP	DM	80
MPP	MM	64
PPP	MP	48
	PP	32

For those hoping to progress into Higher Education, the UCAS table above provides a breakdown of what each qualification is worth in terms of UCAS points, which will give you an idea of which grades you'd need to achieve, in order to be accepted onto a university course, all of which will vary depending upon the institution you wish to join.

Upon completion of our BTEC programmes, some of our students choose to progress directly into employment and are highly attractive to employers, with a nationally-recognised Level 3 qualification under their belt.

Likewise, for any students who choose an apprenticeship route, they are able to fast track into a Higher-Level Apprenticeship, as opposed to starting afresh.

Some of the Higher education pathways our students choose to progress into are:



#### INTERESTING FACT

More than **100,000 BTEC students** apply to Higher Education each year and make the university grade.

## UK UNIVERSITY.

If you have achieved enough UCAS points within your BTEC qualification, you can join over 500,000 other students who apply for UK universities each year. We would usually advise this to be in a sport-related field, however some universities may also give you the option of a course in a completely unrelated subject, again, dependant on the number of UCAS points that you achieve.

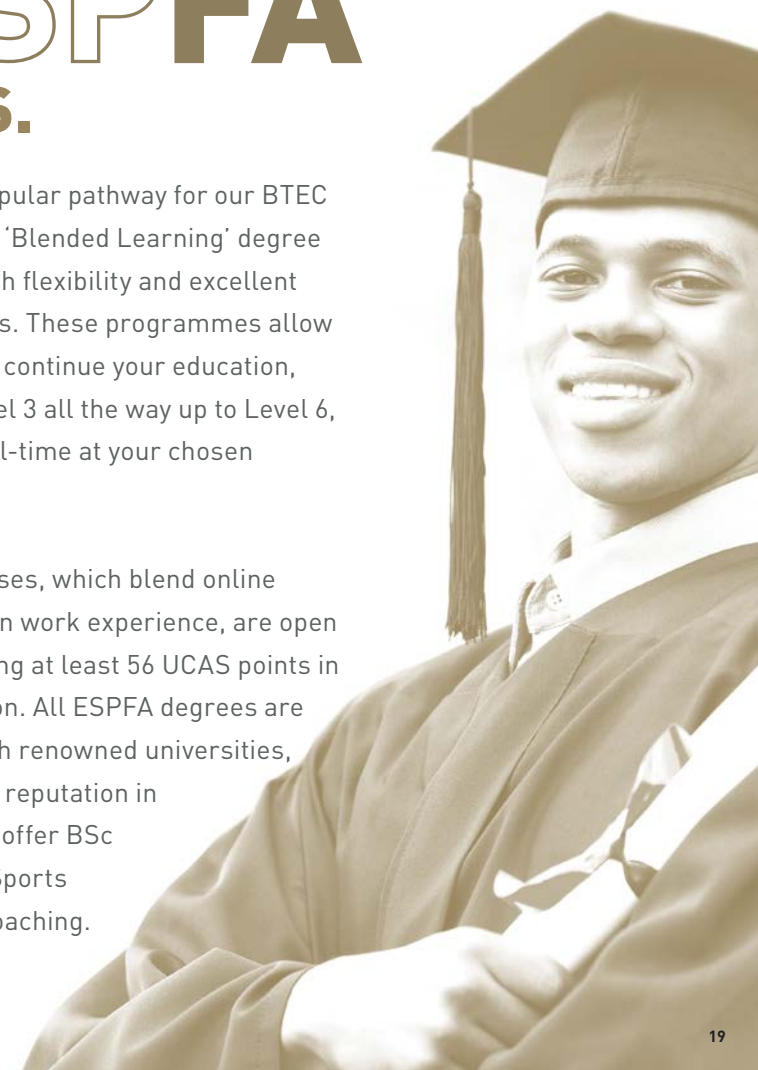
## US SCHOLARSHIP.

An increasingly attractive pathway for our academy students involves taking the leap across the Atlantic, to become a scholar in the USA. We work alongside scholarship industry experts, based both in the UK and abroad, to advise and guide you through the process, should you wish to study and play in America.

## ESPFA DEGREES.

Currently the most popular pathway for our BTEC graduates, the ESPFA 'Blended Learning' degree programmes offer both flexibility and excellent employment prospects. These programmes allow you the opportunity to continue your education, progressing from Level 3 all the way up to Level 6, whilst still training full-time at your chosen football club.

These innovative courses, which blend online learning with hands-on work experience, are open to all learners achieving at least 56 UCAS points in their BTEC qualification. All ESPFA degrees are run in partnership with renowned universities, who have an excellent reputation in sports education, and offer BSc programmes in both Sports Science and Sports Coaching.



# TRAIN.



ULTIMATELY, YOUR **PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND IMPROVED PERFORMANCES** WILL ARISE FROM FULL-TIME TRAINING.

**WORKING WITH OUR DEDICATED UEFA-QUALIFIED COACHES ON A DAILY BASIS, YOU WILL UNDOUBTEDLY IMPROVE ALL ASPECTS OF YOUR GAME; TACTICALLY, TECHNICALLY AND PHYSICALLY.**

Our handpicked academy coaches, a number of which are ex-professionals, boast a wealth of experience; and will provide you with daily mentoring on what it takes to make it to the next stage of your footballing career.

## WHAT DOES A TYPICAL TRAINING WEEK LOOK LIKE IN THE ACADEMY?

<b>MONDAY</b>	Technical skills with strength and conditioning
<b>TUESDAY</b>	Tactical match preparation and phases of play
<b>WEDNESDAY</b>	Matchday
<b>THURSDAY</b>	Recovery day
<b>FRIDAY</b>	Applied training session (from coach's match analysis)

In addition to the innovative coaching programme you will be part of, we are also committed to providing excellence in training via video technology. To meet that aim, we invest heavily each year to ensure all matches are filmed for analysis and feedback; to ensure that through your coach, you have every tool possible to reach your true potential.





## NUTRITION AND PERSONALISED EXERCISE PLANS.

As with any aspect of sport, to progress into football at the elite level requires complete dedication and commitment, to follow a healthy and balanced diet and lifestyle, as well as a carefully planned exercise regime.

In order to assist our students in reaching their own specific goals, we provide each and every student with a professional and personalised exercise and diet plan. These guides aren't compulsory, however they are designed to give you the best chance of maximising your performance and ultimately giving you the edge to make the next step.

# PLAY.



# PLAY.

OUR UNIQUE GAMES PROGRAMME IS BOTH EXCITING AND PROVIDES AN EXPERIENCE ON A REGULAR BASIS NOT PROVIDED BY ANY OTHER PROGRAMME. BEING PART OF OUR BESPOKE **FA-SANCTIONED** LEAGUE PROGRAMME MEANS THAT WE WILL HAVE A FULL SET OF MATCH OFFICIALS FOR EVERY GAME AND AT LEAST **90%** OF LEAGUE FIXTURES WILL BE PLAYED AT THE HOME STADIUM OF THE NON-LEAGUE CLUB INVOLVED.

As with all other aspects of the academy programme, we obviously strive for excellence in our footballing games package. With student experience at the heart of everything we do, we ensure that all matches are filmed and covered via social media; for immediate goal updates, weekly and monthly awards, match action photography and of course our very own highlights show.

In terms of a footballing pathway, there is a real opportunity to progress into the first team at your chosen club, which many of our students have done so already. Our clubs sit at step seven of the English football pyramid and have developed the likes of Jamie Vardy and Craig Dawson, who are now Premier League and international stars, with many others also progressing into the English Football League.


For all aspiring footballers, there really is no better place to develop your talent, whilst gaining excellent academic qualifications, that will serve as a foundation for your future career.



# OUR COMPETITIONS.



In addition to our academy league programme, you will also have the opportunity to progress in our cup competitions. Each branch of the ESPFA (NPLFA, SLFA and ILFA) have their own cup competitions, with the finals being played at a showcase venue, such as the NPLFA Cup Final which was played at the home of Stoke City FC.

A young footballer with dark skin and curly hair is running on a green field. He is wearing a yellow and black checkered jersey with a black long-sleeved shirt underneath. He is looking towards the right with a focused expression. In the background, another player in a similar jersey is visible, slightly out of focus. The background shows a hazy landscape with some buildings and trees.

**“I can honestly say  
it (the academy)  
has been the most  
exciting and best  
two years of my life  
so far.”**

**MORGAN WILLIAMS - FORMER STUDENT AND  
PROFESSIONAL FOOTBALLER AT COVENTRY CITY**

# MEDIA EXPERIENCE & ENRICHMENT.

At the academy, we truly believe your education and football experience should be one that you enjoy, day in, day out. To fulfil that vision, in addition to the education and football programme that we provide, we also embed an unrivalled media experience for all of our students. Some of these exciting and fun extras include:

## INTER-CLUB COMPETITIONS.

Similar to videos you may have seen on the TV and online, our media team manage inter-club competitions across the whole programme, such as the Crossbar Challenge, Team Mates and You Know the Drill, to name but a few.



## POST-MATCH INTERVIEWS.


Just like stars in the professional game, we also give you the option to immerse yourself within the media and gain an insight into what goes on in this sector of the beautiful game.

Whether taking part as a subject of an interview, conducting one yourself or simply observing what goes on via social media, you'll understand the preparation, technology and process involved from our own academy all the way up to the Highest Level.





# INTER-LEAGUE.



In order to give our players the best chance of progressing within the game, each year the ESPFA select the best footballers within our programme and offer them the chance to represent the academy against professional opposition.

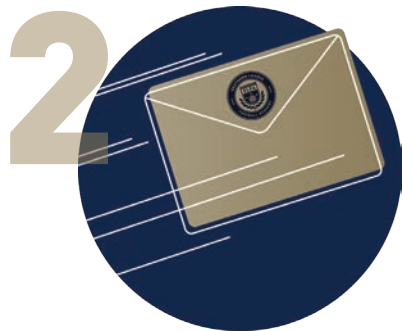
As the programme has grown so quickly since its inception back in 2014, our academies now attract real attention from professional scouts and clubs within the English Football League, and therefore the Inter-League fixtures present an excellent chance to make your dream move into professional football.

Two students to have represented the Inter-League, Max Hunt (2017) and Morgan Williams (2018), have both been successful in acquiring professional contracts, at Derby County and Coventry City respectfully.

# HOW DO I JOIN THE SLFA?



Visit  
[www.theslfa.co.uk/register](http://www.theslfa.co.uk/register)



**Register your interest** and choose the academy you'd like to join



We'll be in touch with details of  
**upcoming trials and events**



**Attend a trial session** at the football club



If you are successful at the trial, we'll invite you to the next stage, which is an **interview at your chosen club**



You'll need to bring your predicted GCSE grades, as well as two references (one for education and one for football), so we can explain the programme in detail to you and **discuss which level of course we feel is most suitable for you**



If we're both happy with how the interview went, **the place is provisionally yours! You just need to keep working hard at school/college**, to ensure you achieve your predicted grades, so that we can officially enrol you onto the academy programme in August/September.



[www.theslfa.co.uk](http://www.theslfa.co.uk)

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