



ALT SPORTING DIRECTOR MBA

By ASD LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE



PRESENTED BY:



www.associationofsportingdirectors.com



**THE PREMIER
UPSKILLING
OPPORTUNITY
FOR
SPORTING
DIRECTORS**

I believe in creating real opportunities for the next wave of Sporting Directors and Technical Leaders, people who have the ambition and the drive to shape the future of football and impact sport.

There's nothing more rewarding than helping ambitious people realise their potential. This programme brings participants into the heart of elite football with direct access to established Sporting Directors and top executives, world-class mentorship, and the insight to inspire and accelerate their path to the top.

PAUL MITCHELL
SPORTING EXECUTIVE



ALT SPORTING DIRECTOR MBA

The **Association of Sporting Directors** proudly launches **Edition 3** of the Alternative Sporting Director MBA (AltSD MBA) — a programme designed beyond traditional MBAs.

Created by ASD members, it delivers real-world learning from elite Sporting Directors, industry, and academic experts, focusing on practical insights from modern football leadership across sports, business, and entertainment.

More than an academic course, it's an impactful journey equipping future football leaders with actionable skills, plus a dedicated football mentor throughout 2027.

SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITY EYEBALL

Thanks to the support of our partner Eyeball, a limited number of partial scholarships are available for the 2027 Alt Sporting Director MBA.

Scholarships aim to support talented individuals looking to make an impact in football and sport. Applicants should indicate interest during the application process and include a short statement on how the programme will support their development and contribution to the game.



WHO

Sporting Directors, senior leaders and aspiring leaders in football (and sport) clubs and organisations

SCHEDULE

January 2027 - December 2027

DURATION

12 months

PRICE

£10,000 (+VAT)

WHERE

In-person or online

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS

15

CERTIFICATION

Certificate of Completion

MODULES

UNDERSTANDING THE SPORTING DIRECTOR ROLE

PAUL MITCHELL
(SPORTING EXECUTIVE)

- Examine the concept of the SD
- Compare SD models
- Explore SD innovations and best practice

BECOMING AND BEING A SPORTING DIRECTOR

KEVIN THELWELL
(THE FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION)

- Understanding SDs career journeys and trajectories
- Planning your SD journey using applied network theory
- Examine recruitment in elite football

DEVELOPING A FOOTBALL STRATEGY

JULIAN WARD
(FENWAY SPORTS GROUP)

- Examining football clubs strategies
- Understanding multi-club ownership strategies
- Developing an effective recruitment strategy for players and staff

LEARNING AND IMPROVING STANDARDS

ALISTAIR MILNER
(ASD)

- Exploring change management in elite professional football
- Implementing a culture of continuous improvement
- Leading through accountability and shared responsibility

COMMUNICATION AND NEGOTIATION

MIKE RIGG
(BIRMINGHAM CITY FC)

- Understanding negotiation in elite professional football
- Communicating with media, agents, media and external stakeholders
- Gaining alignment and clarity across club functions, from ownership downwards

DIRECTORSHIP, FINANCE, GOVERNANCE & SUSTAINABILITY

ROSS WILSON
(NEWCASTLE FC)

- Understanding and balancing financial sustainability
- Exploring good governance
- From profit and sustainability to the UN sustainable development goals.

LEADERSHIP IN FOOTBALL

REBECCA CAPLEHORN
(PREMIER LEAGUE)

- Leading in the football industry
- Examining leadership and management
- Successful practices and lessons from elite football environments

IDENTIFYING AND DEVELOPING TALENT

TIAGO PINTO
(AFC BOURNEMOUTH)

- Modern trends in Talent ID and recruitment
- Recruitment structures, processes and practices
- Technology to enhance Talent ID

EXCELLING AS A SPORTING DIRECTOR IN THE REAL-WORLD

NICK HAMMOND
(EVERTON FC)

- Topical issues and challenges facing Sporting Directors
- Overcoming problems as a Sporting Director
- Effective decision-making as a Sporting Director

LEARNING BENEFITS

- Build your **leadership** skills
- Enhance your **network**
- Career **mentorship** from global football leaders
- Increase your **employability**
- **Lifetime** access to course materials
- Direct access to **world-class** professors and professionals
- Interactive learning **opportunities**
- **Global** network of learners
- Access to our back catalogue of **executive** insights and recordings

APPLIED IMPACT PROJECT

PROFESSOR BARRY DRUST
(ASD)

- Apply learning to real-world challenges in football
- Use data, research and insight from the programme to shape solutions
- Create a professional impact by influencing or improving practice, systems or solving problems

THE PROFESSORS



Paul Mitchell (Sporting Executive)
Module Lead: Understanding the Sporting Director Role



Kevin Thelwell (Football Association)
Module Lead: Becoming & Being a Sporting Director



Julian Ward (Fenway Sports Group)
Module Lead: Developing a Football Strategy



Alistair Milner (ASD)
Module Lead: Learning and Improving Standards



Mike Rigg (Birmingham City FC)
Module Lead: Communication and Negotiation



Ross Wilson (Newcastle FC)
Module Lead: Directorship, Finance, Governance and Sustainability



Rebecca Caplehorn (Premier League)
Module lead: Leadership in Football



Tiago Pinto (AFC Bournemouth)
Module Lead: Identifying and Developing Talent



Nick Hammond (Everton FC)
Module lead: Excelling as a Sporting Director in the Real-World



Professor Barry Drust (ASD)
Module Lead: Applied Impact Project



Dr Alex Bond (ASD)
Learning lead



Polly Bancroft (Grimsby Town FC)
Course Tutor



Iffy Onuora (Premier League)
Course Tutor



Joel Roberts (ASD)
Mentor Programme Lead



Gregg Broughton (Chicago Fire FC)
Course Tutor



Dr Daniel Parnell (ASD)
CEO

TESTIMONIALS



"The real strength of this course is access. Honest, open conversations with decision-makers at top clubs, plus a cohort of driven professionals from all over the world. Everyone brings something different. The tailored format gives you permission to stretch yourself in ways traditional courses don't."

STEPHEN RANDS | FIRST TEAM COACH ANALYST BORUSSIA DORTMUND



"Having held leadership positions across Europe and the USA, I felt it was time to pursue a higher level of education. The AltSD MBA with the Association of Sporting Directors has been a truly valuable experience — deepening my strategic thinking, reconnecting me with former colleagues, and building new relationships. The insight into how sporting directors operate across the UK and Europe has been particularly impressive, giving me a clearer framework to lead more effectively."

GARY LEWIS | ACADEMY TECHNICAL DIRECTOR, CHICAGO FIRE FC, ALTSD MBA PARTICIPANT



The ASD AltSD MBA provides truly unique insights into the background, skills and current positioning of the role within modern football. There is a truly amazing blend of in person and online educational approaches that draws the best available information from both those working in the role and academic literature. The content is also highly relevant for those who have similar leadership roles within football or sport. I can't think of better CPD for those either starting their journey in football leadership or others who want to upskill.

PROFESSOR BARRY DRUST
CO-COURSE DIRECTOR



PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

EXECUTIVE MEMBERS

AltSD MBA

	EXECUTIVE MEMBERSHIP	AltSD MBA		
JANUARY	Online Workshop 1 21 January	Online Welcome 14 January	TUTOR GROUP + MENTOR PROGRAMME	CAREERS 1-1 HOGAN TEST
FEBRUARY	Online Workshop 2 18 February	Block 1: Day 1 to Day 3 In-person Club Visits 24-26 February		CAREERS SUPPORT
MARCH		Online MasterClass 1 25 March + ASDX Webinar 1 11 March		
APRIL	Online Workshop 4 22 April	Online MasterClass 2 29 April		CAREERS 1-1
MAY	Online Workshop 5 27 May	Block 2: Day 1 to Day 3 In-person Club Visits 12-14 May + Annual Global Conference		
JUNE	Online Workshop 6 17 June	Online MasterClass 3 + ASDX Webinar 2 24 June		CAREERS SUPPORT
JULY	Online Workshop 7 22 July	Online MasterClass 4 29 July		
AUGUST		Online MasterClass 5 26 August		CAREERS 1-1
SEPTEMBER	Online Workshop 8 16 September	Online MasterClass 6 23 September + ASDX Webinar 3 9 September		
OCTOBER	Online Workshop 9 21 October	Online MasterClass 7 28 October		CAREERS SUPPORT
NOVEMBER	Online Workshop 10 18 November	Online MasterClass 8 25 November + ASDX Webinar 4 11 November		
DECEMBER		Block 3: Day 1 to Day 4 In-person Club Visits 7-10 December		CAREERS 1-1



MENTORING PROGRAMME

A core element of the **Alt Sporting Director MBA** is the structured mentoring programme, where participants are paired with experienced industry leaders. Through confidential one-to-one conversations, mentors help participants reflect on leadership challenges, develop strategic thinking, strengthen decision-making, and apply programme learning directly to their professional environment.

Designed to support personal and professional growth, the mentoring relationship provides valuable industry insight, constructive challenge, and guidance to help participants accelerate their development as future sporting directors and senior leaders.

KEY BENEFITS INCLUDE:

- One-to-one support from experienced industry leaders
- A confidential environment for reflection and professional growth
- Enhanced leadership confidence and decision-making
- Insight into managing complexity and influencing stakeholders
- Personalised guidance aligned to individual career aspirations and development goals

EXECUTIVE COACHING OFFER

A key feature of the **Alt Sporting Director MBA** is access to executive coaching, providing participants with dedicated support to accelerate their leadership development. Through confidential one-to-one coaching sessions, participants gain greater self-awareness, explore leadership challenges, and develop practical strategies to enhance their effectiveness and impact.

Executive coaching helps participants strengthen decision-making, leadership presence, stakeholder influence, and resilience in high-performance environments. By combining reflection, challenge, and accountability, coaching supports participants in translating learning into action and achieving meaningful professional growth throughout the programme.

The AltSD MBA delivers on every level — world-class access to elite sporting directors, a rigorous online curriculum, and an executive coaching process that genuinely makes you stop and understand yourself as a leader. The mentorship and executive programmes have been the standout elements for me personally; having that trusted space to discuss where I am, where I want to go, and how to get there is something I didn't know I needed until I had it. The network and relationships built on this programme are worth the investment alone.

ANNE MÄKINEN
Specialist in Sports Directorship
at Erikkilä Sports & Outdoor Resort





“This programme blends academic learning and applied experience, and offers the learners direct access to expert practitioners at every stage. The inclusion of Executive Coaching provides a personal space to reflect, challenge, and evolve—using the Hogan report as a powerful thread running throughout the journey. I have seen individuals grow in confidence, develop their ability to self-reflect and create realistic development action plans.”

ALISTAIR MILNER
MANAGING DIRECTOR, ASD



APPLICATION PROCESS

1	CHECK ELIGIBILITY	Open to Sporting Directors and senior leaders within football and sports organisations seeking to make a high impact on the game.	6	CHOOSE YOUR COHORT	In-person cohort: capped at 15 participants Online cohort: additional places available (by discussion and agreement)
2	PREPARE YOUR DOCUMENTS	One-page motivation letter Current CV	7	PROGRAMME CONFIRMATION & PAYMENT PLAN	Successful applicants receive confirmation and details of the £10,000 (+VAT) tuition fee and available payment plan.
3	SUBMIT YOUR APPLICATION (WITH DEPOSIT)	Apply via the official link and pay the £500 deposit to secure consideration.	8	PROGRAMME DURATION & FORMAT	January–December 2027 (12-month flexible learning) 50% live online learning, 50% in-person (including the ASD Annual Conference)
4	MEET THE DEADLINE	All applications must be submitted by 6 December 2026.	9	ADDED ACCESS THROUGHOUT 2027	• ASD events (UK) • ASD Global Annual Conference (UK & USA) • ASDonline modules & ASDX webinars • Executive ASD Membership
5	SELECTION AND ALLOCATION OF PLACES	Places are awarded based on: • Potential to impact football • Seniority of applicants • Geographic balance • Commitment to a high-quality, small cohort learning experience	10	ACCREDITATION	Endorsed and certified by the Association of Sporting Directors. Certificates are awarded after each module and upon completion of the AltSD MBA.







CONTACT US

*Contact us to discuss your journey with the **Association of Sporting Directors**, whether for our Performance Advisory services, or for our ASD Leadership Institute.*

LOUISE DOOLAN
EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT

louise@associationofsportingdirectors.com
+44 (0)7890 289 611

BARRY DRUST
CO-COURSE DIRECTOR

barry@associationofsportingdirectors.com
+44 (0)7980 810833

DR DANIEL PARNELL
CEO, ASD

daniel@associationofsportingdirectors.com
+44 (0)7538 500 348

PARTNERS

