

UEFA action plan for the academic world: An evaluation

Contact details

Name author(s): Thomas Junod, Universities Coordinator
 Institution(s) or organisation(s): UEFA
 City and country: Switzerland
 Email address for correspondence: thomas.junod@uefa.ch

Aim of paper

The paper evaluates UEFA's cooperation with the academic world developed over the last two years. It summarises UEFA's approach, and identifies its main successes as well as the problems encountered. Thus, the paper acts as a genuine case study of universities' potential role in assisting major sports governing bodies in their mission of protecting, promoting, regulating and developing their respective sport.

Organisational/managerial context

In 2007, UEFA began developing and implementing an action plan directed towards the academic world. This was the result of the UEFA Executive Committee's decision to ensure that UEFA has access to, and an understanding of, the best and most relevant research, ideas, contacts and alumni networks from universities as well as other research and academic institutions.

Organisational/managerial practice/issues

Four main areas of potential cooperation with the academic world were identified: research, training/education, staffing (recruitment, internships) and communication. The action plan presented 19 recommendations aiming to develop UEFA's cooperation with academic partners in these areas and to provide the organisation and European football with new benefits.

Practical needs encountered by UEFA drive its association with the academic world; this association has clear-cut goals as opposed to being solely philanthropic. Consequently, an evaluation of the action plan is feasible and measurable. The paper describes the objectives of UEFA's cooperation with the academic world, the action plan's main recommendations and how these have been implemented. It finally assesses whether and how the different objectives have been met.

Implications for sport and sport management

The paper thus analyses how universities can help fulfil various needs that major sports governing bodies face, using UEFA as a case study. It provides real examples of cooperation projects and identifies key success factors as well as problems encountered. It concludes by presenting the main future projects that UEFA plans to develop in cooperation with the academic world. These include the implementation of a UEFA Research Grants Program that will contribute to encourage academic research on issues related to European football.