



FOR RELEASE ON: Wednesday 5 December

## University of Birmingham receives England Athletics Gold Charter Mark

This week, England Athletics announced that the University of Birmingham will be the first and only current university to receive a Gold standard Charter Mark, a new initiative awarded to outstanding institutions that provide a high quality athletics experience.

Athletics is a key sport for the University of Birmingham, with over 450 student members in its club, and a number of notable achievements in the last 18 months. The completion of the new athletics track in 2017, the development of the in-house Performance Centre for nurturing athletic talent, and the success of scholar Sarah McDonald being selected to represent Team GB in this year's Gold Coast Commonwealth Games are just a few of the athletic successes. This fantastic new recognition from England Athletics will hopefully continue to drive the future stars to the University of Birmingham, and provide a strong and beneficial partnership.

The England Athletics Charter Mark scheme recognises institutions that provide a well-rounded athletics offering – from students who are new to athletics, to elite scholars. The Gold standard, granted when the institution excels across the board, was awarded to the University of Birmingham after considering the broad offering in regards to providing both the support for the elite athletes in their dual careers, and a welcoming environment for any students who want to get involved at a participation level. In addition, the University met the majority of the key criteria, including offering the full range of competition structures, access to the world-class facilities, lifestyle mentors for bursary athletes, nutritional and physiological support and an acclimatization chamber. This official badge of honour is truly a reflection of the outstanding programme that the University of Birmingham can offer, and Zena Wooldridge OBE, Director of Sport, emphasised how fantastic it was to have been acknowledged for the standard.

'It's an honour to have been awarded the Gold Charter Mark by England Athletics. Our team work so hard to provide a wide range of opportunities to offer our athletes, from beginner to elite, and this recognition is a great testament to the work all of UBSport is doing. It is of key importance to us to be able to offer our aspiring talent the best options we can to succeed in their sport, and the dedication, commitment and pride our team has to be able to deliver this will only be strengthened with this partnership.'

Lynne Duval, University Coordinator for England Athletics, said, 'The transition to university life is a significant one which comes at an important stage of a young person's athletic development. While the athlete, along with people such as their parents and coach, have a range of factors that they should be considering when choosing a university we recognise that Charter Mark has an important role to play in helping to inform these decisions. We are fortunate that there are very good universities that can help athletes thrive in a student environment, and Birmingham's facilities, programme for athletes and opportunities to get involved made it a clear contender for the top status. We want to congratulate the University of Birmingham for its Gold Charter Mark status.'

The Gold Charter Mark recognises that future students at all levels will receive an outstanding sporting experience in Athletics – whether they are looking to get involved and develop in a welcoming environment, or enhance their progression as an elite athlete. As one of only three universities that have been awarded a Charter Mark, and the first to get the Gold, it's a true reflection of the positive work the University of Birmingham is doing to provide the best sporting experience across the board.



**ENDS**

For further enquiries: Harriet Cockill – [h.cockill@bham.ac.uk](mailto:h.cockill@bham.ac.uk) / 0121 4147526 / 07738494099

**Notes to the editor:**

- University of Birmingham Sport & Fitness Club opened in May 2017, it features Birmingham's first 50m pool, six glass back squash courts, 200+ station gym, five activity studios, an indoor sports arena, 10m climbing wall and more.
- The University of Birmingham is currently ranked in the top ten universities for sport in the UK.
- The University have invested in new outdoor sport facilities including new pitches and a pavilion, 10 tennis/netball courts, and an international standard training track, which comprises a 400 metre, eight-lane floodlit track with a full range of throws and jumps.
- The first athletes to test out the new track were the Jamaican Team as part of their preparations for the 2017 World Athletics Championships, which were in London in August last year.
- The University of Birmingham is ranked amongst the world's top 100 institutions, its work brings people from across the world to Birmingham, including researchers and teachers and more than 5,000 international students from over 150 countries.
- 477 students are part of the Birmingham University Athletics Club, including those for Athletics, Cross Country and Cool Runnings, the social running club.
- Read more on the England Athletics page [here](#).