



JOB DESCRIPTION

JOB TITLE: Academy Director

DEPARTMENT: Wolves Academy

REPORTS TO: Director of Recruitment and Player Development

DIRECT REPORTS: TBC

LOCATION: Sir Jack Hayward Training Ground / International & National

HOURS: 37.5 hours per week, exact hours and days to be agreed, flexibility in this role is essential as it includes evening and weekend work.

DATE: October 2025

We are Wolves. Progressive, determined, bright, unified and humble. A pack that is hungry for success. Wolves is one of the fastest growing professional football clubs in the UK, and also boasts one of the richest histories in the beautiful game.

Formed in 1877, Wolves was a founder member of the Football League, and was one of the country's most successful sides in the fifties and sixties. During a two decade spell the Black Country's most decorated side won three First Division titles and one of its four FA Cups.

Fast forward 70 years and Wolves are back amongst football's elite, in the Premier League for an eighth successive season; but now we compete as a sports and entertainment business across multiple brand verticals. As a challenger club, Wolves dare to be different, which is why creating world class propositions in esports, fashion and music are all part of our ambitious plans.

At Wolves, we don't simply look to the future, we seize it.

We are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and adults at risk. We expect all colleagues and volunteers to share this commitment. This means that the post-holder is required to apply all relevant policies and uphold the Club's commitment to safeguarding children, young people and adults at risk

Job purpose

To drive the vision of the Academy through strategic financial planning, football development and effective leadership of people. The Academy Director will work closely with the Director of Recruitment and Player Development and First Team Staff. Reporting to the Director of Recruitment and Player Development, this role will lead and develop the Club's Academy football philosophy and performance plan, taking overall responsibility of the management and direction for Academy Coaching, Recruitment, Medical, Sports Science, Education and Operations. The Academy Director will also ensure the Academy is a safe and inclusive space for all players, where safeguarding and player welfare are paramount and embedded across all areas of academy practice.

Key responsibilities

Activities include:



- Revising Academy vision and strategy to meet the necessary requirements of EPPP while operating in the optimal way to maximise football productivity and financial responsibility for Wolverhampton Wanderers.
- Involving Department Heads in strategic discussions and decisions and ensuring they are accountable for meeting the strategic vision for the academy.
- Working with the Director of Recruitment and Player Development to present proposed Academy strategy to the Board for approval.
- Engaging with staff to enable them to understand how they contribute to the vision and strategy and maximize their collective efforts as an integrated team.
- Ensuring the creation of the Wolves Academy's Playing and Coaching Philosophy in line with Club Philosophy. This will involve consultation with some or all the following: Director of Recruitment and Player Development, Head of Academy Coaching, Cell Lead Phase Coaches and Head of Academy Recruitment.
- Presenting philosophy back to stakeholders for approval and work with Heads of Department to embed and monitor the philosophy adoption in their individual departments.
- Building operational / performance plans based on Academy KPI outputs and EPPP requirements in consultation with Department Heads. Ensure the Academy continues to develop in line with the requirements of EPPP to maintain Category 1 status.
- Agreeing KPIs with all Department Heads and produce plans to meet KPI targets in their areas.
- Reviewing and interpreting all (management) information/ reports supplied by all Departmental Heads to assess progress and feed back into operational planning in line with Academy KPI's. Monitor audit metrics between audits to check progress/ ensure standards are met.
- Working with the Director of Recruitment and Player Development to manage the financial operations of the business.
- Working with the Director of Recruitment and Player Development to produce a business case for the Academy budget to present to the Board.
- Collaborate closely with the Head of Safeguarding and the wider safeguarding team to and sit on our club-wide Safeguarding Executive Board.
- Fully engage with any Premier League safeguarding audits.
- Cascading budgets to Departmental Heads, giving clear budget targets and subsequently checking the departments meet their budgetary targets.
- Calculating and monitoring value added from players (as Club assets).
- Identifying and managing change effectively, manage change proactively, ensuring it is implemented in line with plans and reviewed regularly/adapted as required.
- Working in collaboration with the Director of Recruitment and Player Development and Academy Operations Manager to develop strategies and ways to generate revenue for the Academy, maximising commercial opportunities and finding cost efficiencies.
- Reviewing the organisational structure of the Academy to ensure that it supports the vision and strategic plan, agree clear objectives with department heads and provide regular feedback
- Writing role profiles and updating these for Academy staff to ensure they will enable the role holder to deliver relevant KPIs.



- Implementing suitable performance management processes and communicating this across the Academy, including identified areas of underperformance and ensuring others are performance managing their staff appropriately.
- Ensuring all direct reports have Development Action Plans.
- Managing recruitment and succession planning for other key posts and direct reports (Cell Lead Phase coaches etc.).
- Monitoring player progression through regular communication and reporting with the Head of Coaching / Cell Lead Phase coaches.
- Ensuring that the Wolves Academy succession planning is up to date
- Working alongside Head of Academy Recruitment to ensure that Wolves recruit and retain the best players locally and nationally.
- Meeting with the Technical Board to discuss players (informed by LPCs).
- Discussing changes to individual/ group player strategy.
- Helping maintain a strategy to track players who leave the Academy to comply with EPPP alumni requirements.
- Champion a culture of equality, diversity, and inclusion across all areas of academy operations, ensuring that every player, staff member, and stakeholder feels respected, represented, and empowered.
- Producing a 'Player and Parent Charter' to outline the Club's way of communicating with players and their families.
- Working with the Director of Recruitment and Player Development to negotiate individual contracts directly or through agents.
- To support the development of education and player care standards
- Ensuring that education and player care strategies are delivered, including with Wolves alumni.
- Monitoring player and parent satisfaction.
- Developing a strategy to help refine the Academy's release processes.
- Creating a structured approach to engaging parents and carers including clear communication channels, induction processes, and regular review meetings'

General responsibilities

- Compliance with Club policies
- Compliance with the Club's health and safety procedures
- Compliance with the Club's safeguarding policies
- To promote the Club's values of progressive, humble, determined, bright and unified
- To work consistently to embed equality & diversity into the Club
- To undertake such other duties as may be reasonably expected
- To maintain professional conduct at all times

Safeguarding



This role carries a specific safeguarding responsibility. This means that the post-holder is required to apply all relevant policies and uphold the Club's commitment to safeguarding children, young people, and adults at risk.

Key relationships

- Chairman
- Technical Director
- Director of Recruitment and Player Development
- Academy Operations Manager
- First Team Manager
- First Team Goalkeeping Coach
- Head of Academy Coaching
- Academy Management Team including all Heads of Academy departments
- Coaching staff
- Players
- Parents
- Head of Safeguarding, Safeguarding Senior Manager, Head of Education, Education and Welfare employees, Player Care
- HR & Payroll
- Legal Department
- Player schools, local universities inc. University of Wolverhampton.

Scope of job

Working with the Director of Recruitment and Player Development and the Academy Operations Manager to lead, develop and manage the Academy with circa 100 staff and the Academy Management Team incorporating Education, Operations, Medical, Player Care, Sports Science and Performance Analysis for the Academy.



PERSON SPECIFICATION

Job Title: Academy Director

Knowledge: the level and breadth of knowledge to do the job e.g. understanding of a defined system, method or procedure, legal or regulatory frameworks etc

Essential

- Complete understanding the Premier League Elite Player Performance Plan (EPPP) rules and regulations.
- Entrepreneurial outlook in relation to the challenges presented in meeting EPPP requirements whilst maximising player productivity within allocated budgets.
- Previous experience of working within an elite football academy environment with individual players.
- A proven track record of developing individual players across youth and professional development phases within the EPPP system.
- Understanding of maturation and long-term athletic development.
- A strong understanding of key organisational and operational requirements, including safeguarding, HR and Health & Safety.
- Experience of managing multi department clubs or corporations
- Experience of working within an Academy multi-disciplinary team.
- Knowledge and experience of reflective practice and personal development.
- An understanding of elite player behaviour and psychological aspects.
- Knowledge and understanding of Safeguarding practices in an elite sporting environment

Desirable

- Experience at a Category 1 Academy
- Experience in leading an Academy through an EPPP audit process
- Languages
- A Licenced member of Football Association Coaches Club.

Technical/work-based skills: skills specific to the job e.g. language competence, typing skills, coaching skills etc

Essential

- Good understanding of the rules of the game.
- Good use of IT e.g. Word, Excel, PowerPoint.
- Ability to provide reflective feedback using PMA.



- Ability to use and utilise HUDL Analysis tool to provide relevant feedback.
- Able to manage own time and tasks efficiently with a high attention to detail. An understanding of the importance of process and governance.

General skills and attributes: more general characteristics e.g. flexibility, communication skills, team working etc

Essential

- Understanding of how to work safely with children and/or vulnerable adults and uphold generally accepted practice when working with those participants.
- Promote, adhere to and implement the Club's Equality Policy and to work consistently to embed equality and diversity within Club.
- Can work effectively within a team environment and also independently.
- Proven experience of leading and managing people including large diverse teams, ensuring that people feel valued, motivated and empowered. Excellent interpersonal skills.
- Presentation skills.
- Ability to effectively liaise with players, parents, coaches, staff and senior management, including being able to deal effectively with situations/tasks, in both a methodical and creative way.

Desirable

- Strong communication and public engagement skills.
- Availability for flexible working hours.
- An adaptive individual who can cope well under high pressure situations.
- A proven ability to multi-task and manage multiple projects. Hardworking and enthusiastic

Experience: proven record of experience in a particular field, profession or specialism.

Essential

- Proven experience in a similar role.
- Member of F.A. Licensed Coaches Club.
- Working with children and/or vulnerable adults.
- Senior Leadership role experience.
- Working with children and/or vulnerable adults

Qualifications: the level of educational, professional and/or occupational training required

Essential

- U.E.F.A – B Licence.
- F.A. Advanced Youth Award.
- Up to date FA Emergency First Aid Certificate.
- Post-holder must hold or obtain at the earliest opportunity the relevant safeguarding training (i.e. FA Safeguarding Children Workshop).
- A DBS check at the appropriate level will be conducted as part of the recruitment process
- Own transportation and clean driving licence.
- Post-holder must hold or obtain at the earliest opportunity the relevant safeguarding training (i.e. FA Safeguarding Children Workshop)



- This position is subject to a satisfactory DBS check. The successful candidate must have a clear and appropriate DBS certificate in place prior to commencing employment, in line with our safeguarding obligations

Desirable

- U.E.F.A – A Licence
- Associate degree (college diploma or above)