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## New degree of success for professional rugby player

Newcastle Falcons' club captain and member of the Rugby Players' Association (RPA), Will Welch, swapped his playing kit for academic robes this week as he joined the latest graduate cohort at Northumbria University, Newcastle.

Will, along with team mate Alex Rogers, was celebrating after gaining a [BA \(Hons\) Leadership and Management \(BALM\)](#) degree from [Newcastle Business School](#). Designed in partnership with the RPA, the degree matches a professional rugby player's needs and provides the flexibility to study around

their sporting career.

The players are part of 24 current and former players to graduate from the BALM degree this year. They join over 70 others who have completed or studying the degree. The course encourages students to draw upon their leadership skills as sports professionals, and equips them with a leading business degree to help secure a successful career after rugby.

Commenting on his graduation Will said: “It’s great to have completed my degree and graduate from the University. The club are very keen to encourage us as players to think about our lives after rugby and I’m really pleased I took the opportunity to do the course. It will open up options for me when I eventually stop playing and I’d encourage anyone to consider studying with the university and its top class teaching and facilities.”

Guy Brown, Director of [Northumbria University London Campus](#), added: “Our partnership with the RPA has been hugely successful, and once again this year’s cohort of rugby players has excelled in their studies and taken a significant step toward their future goals. It’s worth adding that they are graduating from a globally recognised business school, and one which has just been named as the UK’s Business School of the Year in the prestigious Times Higher Education Awards – all of which can add to their CVs and enhance career prospects.”

RPA Personal Development Manager for Newcastle Falcons, Yorkshire Carnegie (EAP) and Alumni (North) and a key figure in the establishment of the degree, Mandy Thompson, said: “2015 will stand out as a remarkable year for the BALM degree with such a strong contingent of players studying and graduating across the course. It’s fantastic to see so many of our members, both past and present players, working so hard around their playing careers to achieve brilliant results and begin their journey towards a successful post-rugby career.”

Last year Newcastle Business School achieved a double accreditation in business and accounting with the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB International), making it part of an elite group of less than 1% of business schools worldwide and the first in Europe to achieve the distinction.

*If you would like to know more about the Leadership and Management degree*

visit [www.northumbria.ac.uk/rpa](http://www.northumbria.ac.uk/rpa).

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Northumbria is a research-rich, business-focused, professional university with a global reputation for academic excellence. To find out more about our courses go to [www.northumbria.ac.uk](http://www.northumbria.ac.uk)

If you have a media enquiry please contact our Media and Communications team at [media.communications@northumbria.ac.uk](mailto:media.communications@northumbria.ac.uk) or call [0191 227 4571](tel:01912274571).

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