The Olympic Studies Centre

International Olympic Case Study Competition for Undergraduate and Master's Classes

January 2026

2026/2027 Edition: "Driving growth for the five new sports on the LA28 Olympic programme"

Introduction and background

Over its history, the Olympic programme has grown from nine sports at the first edition in Athens in 1896 to 31 at the Games in Los Angeles in 2028.

This big increase in the number of sports on the programme illustrates the great evolution and diversity of sports around the world during the history of the modern Olympic Games, and the need for the Olympic programme to evolve over time.

This evolution has always taken into consideration various criteria to keep a balance between traditional and new sports while ensuring that the Games remain a sustainable size.

With the introduction of Olympic Agenda 2020, the Organising Committees for the Olympic Games (OCOGs) now have the possibility to play a more interactive role in the process of shaping the Olympic programme. Added to the Olympic Charter in 2014 and implemented for the first time in 2020, it is now stipulated that an OCOG can propose one or more additional sports to be considered by the IOC Executive Board for inclusion, but only for that specific edition of the Games. This strategy is designed to incorporate new flexibility into the way in which sports are chosen and introduce more innovative formats and youth appeal to the Games.

The inclusion of these sports represents a strategic opportunity for the Olympic Movement to remain relevant and inclusive, bringing fresh energy and attracting new audiences to the Olympic Games.

Based on this decision, the Tokyo 2020 organisers included five new sports, surfing, karate, sport climbing, skateboarding and baseball/softball, while Paris 2024 chose to include breaking, skateboarding, sport climbing and surfing.

The Los Angeles 2028 Olympic Games (LA28) will mark a significant milestone in this evolution. Building on the legacy of recent Games, LA28 will feature the following five sports at this Games edition: baseball/softball, cricket, flag football, lacrosse and squash.

For the International Federations (IFs) overseeing the new Olympic sports, LA28 is not merely an event, it is a strategic opportunity to amplify global visibility and drive sustainable growth for their sports. But of course, the IFs also have new challenges to manage, including the complexities of scaling their operations, developing their good governance practices, deepening athlete development pathways, expanding global reach, and embedding the Olympic values into their sport cultures. Success will depend on strategic planning, innovative partnerships and a clear understanding of how to leverage the Olympic spotlight to build long-term capacity and credibility.

In this edition of the International Olympic Case Study Competition, the participants will act as strategic consultants for one of the five IFs of a sport newly included on the Olympic programme. They will be tasked with developing forward-looking strategies that harness the momentum of LA28 to foster sustainable growth for a chosen sport. This includes exploring governance models, youth engagement, commercial viability, digital innovation and alignment with the IOC's and the Olympic Movement's policies and programmes.

Participants must propose actionable solutions that reflect the realities of recently added sports while embracing the Olympic Movement’s commitment to excellence, inclusion and sustainability. Their work will contribute to shaping the future of sport and ensuring that the Olympic Games continue to be a catalyst for positive change across all disciplines.