

## **The Current status of physical education for first – year students at the university of fire prevention and fighting**

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**Abstract:** This study aims to provide a comprehensive evaluation of physical education (PE) at the University of Fire Prevention and Fighting. It examines various aspects, including the current management of PE, the status of PE faculty, the availability and condition of sports facilities, the implementation of the PE curriculum, teaching and assessment practices, and students' awareness of the importance of extracurricular sports activities. Additionally, the study analyzes the academic performance of first-year students to explore the potential relationship between physical education and academic achievement.

**Keywords:** Current status, Physical education, University of Fire Prevention and Fighting.

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### **1. Introduction**

The development of the socio-economic sector has played a significant role in advancing sports in every country. Sports, in turn, are closely tied to socio-economic growth, forming an inseparable part of both the physical and spiritual culture of society. In recent years, sports have become a prominent field of study, attracting the attention of researchers from various disciplines who aim to enhance physical conditioning and improve athletic performance. Physical education (PE) for the youth is a fundamental component of the educational system. In the current context, PE has become essential to the goal of training a well-rounded workforce capable of meeting the demands of both scientific and technical fields, as well as managing economic and socio-cultural development. It plays a crucial role in fostering intellectual, physical, and mental growth, thereby equipping students with the necessary attributes to meet job requirements and actively participate in the labor market of a developing economy. Despite its importance, the actual implementation of PE reveals that a low percentage of first-year students are currently meeting the required standards, even though course expectations remain at a moderate level. Therefore, finding effective methods to help students improve their physical fitness and meet training demands has become an urgent matter. This issue has drawn the attention of many researchers, who have proposed various solutions to improve student fitness in universities and vocational schools. Notable studies include “Research on the Current Status and Solutions to Enhance School PE” by Ngu Duy Anh and Tran Van Lam; “Research on Systematic Solutions to Improve Practical Teaching Effectiveness at Hanoi University of Sports and Physical Education” by Kieu Tat Vinh; “Developing Solutions to Improve Student Fitness at Vinh University” by Le Van Hai; and the joint work “Innovating and Improving the Quality and Effectiveness of PE in Universities and Colleges (1999–2003)” by Do Van Chung and Vu Duc Thu. Additionally, Professor Le Van Lam’s research, “The Current Status of Physical Development of Students on the Eve of the 21st Century,” further underscores this concern.

While these studies provide valuable insights and guidance for enhancing physical training programs and tailoring content to future occupational fields, none have specifically addressed the unique context of the University of Fire Prevention and Fighting. Given the practical and strategic importance of developing human resources to meet national renewal goals, this gap in research is notable. Therefore, I have chosen to focus on the topic: "Current Status of Physical Education for First-Year Students at the University of Fire Prevention and Fighting."

## 2. Research results and discussion

### 2.1. Current status of PE management at the University of Fire prevention and fighting

The management of physical education (PE) at the University of Fire Prevention and Fighting is currently under the direct supervision of the university's administration. The primary unit responsible for advising on sports-related activities and instruction is the Department of Military, Martial Arts, and Physical Education. This department operates directly under the university's leadership and comprises one department head, three deputy heads, and fourteen lecturers. The department is tasked with organizing and delivering all PE instruction and conducting scientific research under the university administration's guidance. Additionally, it coordinates with other campus organizations such as the School Union, Student Union, and various student associations to plan and host sports events, organize internal competitions, and train student athletes for participation in competitions at both provincial and national levels. Beyond instructional responsibilities, the department also oversees personnel, including its own faculty members and students from other academic departments who engage in PE courses and extracurricular sports activities. It manages all physical infrastructure and equipment related to PE, and is responsible for designing course syllabi, maintaining program content, and coordinating teaching schedules in alignment with university directives.

### 2.2 Current status of the physical education instructor team at the Fire Fighting and Prevention University

The quality of instruction at any university largely depends on the competence of its teaching staff, both overall and within each specific discipline. Accordingly, enhancing the effectiveness of physical education (PE) requires a close examination of the current status of the PE instructor team.

In recent years, with support from both the university administration and the leadership of the Department of Physical Education, the team of PE instructors has seen gradual improvements in both quantity and quality. Efforts have been made to standardize qualifications in line with national education standards, although progress has been relatively slow. At present, the department comprises six instructors: five hold master's degrees, and one is currently pursuing a doctoral degree. Importantly, all members of the team are graduates of specialized universities in physical education, ensuring a foundation of relevant academic training.

**Table 1.** Current status of the physical education instructor team

No.	Qualification	Quantity	Work experience - years			Remarks
			< 5	5 - 10	> 10	
	Master's	06	0	03	03	05 Male, 01 Female
	Doctorate	0	0	0	0	
	Senior Instructor	03	0	0	03	
	Instructor	03	0	03	0	

As shown in Table 1, the current physical education (PE) faculty consists of six instructors—five male and one female. All hold master's degrees, with none having yet attained a doctoral qualification. In terms of experience, three instructors have less than ten years of teaching experience, while the remaining three have over a decade of teaching experience. Despite these qualifications, there remain limitations in terms of professional development. The instructors' competencies in areas such as scientific research, innovative teaching methods, and the organization of competitive training activities are still underdeveloped. This lack of advancement has resulted in a scarcity of updated pedagogical approaches and a limited dissemination of scientific knowledge within the department. To address these challenges, the university and the Department of Physical Education must urgently implement targeted policies and support mechanisms to improve the professional capacity of PE

instructors. Enhancing their qualifications and teaching methods is essential not only to meet the growing demands of university-level instruction but also to elevate the overall quality of physical education at the institution.

### 2.3 Current status of sports facilities at the Fire Fighting and Prevention University

Under the current circumstances, the physical education (PE) facilities at the university remain limited in both quantity and quality. These shortcomings hinder the effective delivery of PE classes and have a direct impact on the quality of extracurricular activities and overall student participation in sports.

**Table 2.** Sports Facilities of the The University of Fire Prevention and Fighting

No.	Name of Training Field, Equipment	2024		2025	
		Quantity	Quality	Quantity	Quality
1	Football Field	2	Regular Grass	2	Regular Grass
2	Volleyball Court	5	1 carpet + 4 concrete surfaces	5	1 carpet + 4 concrete surfaces
3	Basketball Court	0		0	
4	Handball Court	0		0	
5	Badminton Court	4	2 carpet + 2 concrete surfaces	4	2 carpet + 2 concrete surfaces
6	100m Running Track	1	Dirt	1	Dirt
7	1500m Running Track	1	Dirt	1	Dirt
8	Long Jump Pit	2	Sand	3	Sand
9	High Jump Equipment (set)	1	Mat	1	Mat
10	Weight Throwing Field	1	Ground	1	Ground
11	Parallel Bars	3	75%	4	70%
12	Uneven Bars	2	75%	4	70%
13	Gymnastics Ladder	0		0	

A survey conducted among 18 faculty managers and lecturers, along with 246 students, reveals that the current sports facilities at the University of Fire Prevention and Fighting are inadequate in both quantity and quality. Specifically, 83.33% of lecturers (15 out of 18) and 47.97% of students (118 out of 246) believe that the university lacks sufficient training fields and equipment. In contrast, only 16.66% of lecturers and 43.09% of students consider the facilities adequate. Notably, just 8.94% of students rated the facilities as being in good condition.

Observational data also indicate a slight improvement in the number of available facilities compared to previous years—such as increased football and volleyball fields. However, these improvements are still insufficient, and the facilities remain below the standards required for effective teaching and training. Most of the equipment currently available is only adequate for meeting minimum instructional needs. Although the university continues to invest annually in infrastructure and new equipment, the overall level of investment in high-quality, standardized training facilities remains limited. To address this, it is recommended that the Department of Military, Martial Arts, and Physical Education work with the university leadership to establish a long-term plan for the systematic development of training fields and procurement of sports equipment. This is essential to support both instructional activities and extracurricular physical training, ultimately contributing to improved student health and learning outcomes.

## 2.4 The Physical Education Program currently implemented at the The University of Fire Prevention and Fighting

In recent years, the University of Fire Prevention and Fighting has authorized the Faculty of Physical Education to revise its program based on the official framework issued by the Ministry of Education and Training. In response, the Faculty developed a new curriculum, which has shown positive initial results since implementation. The current program consists of three academic credits (equivalent to 90 periods). Of these, two credits (60 periods) are dedicated to athletics and general physical exercises, while one credit (30 periods) is allocated to elective subjects, including football, volleyball, and badminton.

Regarding the learning duration of Physical Education parts 1 and 2, there is a total of 60 periods, with 6 periods of general theory (accounting for 10%) and 54 periods of practical techniques (accounting for 90%). In the practical section, there are 30 periods dedicated to athletics and 24 periods to physical exercises. The Physical Education part 3 consists of a total of 30 periods, including 3 theory periods related to elective subjects (badminton, football, or volleyball) and 27 practical technique periods for specific content of the chosen elective subject.

Theoretical content in Parts 1 and 2 includes:

- The role of physical education in universities and colleges
- Physiological effects of exercise on the human body
- Common injuries during training and competition

Practical content includes:

- Athletics

- Short-distance running (100m)
- Medium-distance running
- Sitting long jump.

- Physical exercise

- + Strength and technique exercises on parallel bars and uneven bars
- + Technical movements on parallel bars (for males)
- + Technical movements on uneven bars (for females)
- + Sequential exercises on parallel bars (for males)
- + Sequential exercises on uneven bars (for females).

Part 3 content (elective courses in badminton, football, volleyball) includes:

- History and background of the selected sport
- Basic technical principles and rules
- Practical sessions focusing on skill development in the selected sport

At the end of Parts 1 and 2, students take practical exams in both athletics and physical exercises. For Part 3, assessments focus on demonstrating proficiency in the techniques of the selected sport. In practice, the Physical Education program of the The University of Fire Prevention and Fighting has recently been adjusted in accordance with the directive of the University to shift from a fixed academic calendar to a credit-based system since late 2010. The program has been compiled according to the requirements of the University and the Faculty, after which it underwent feedback and approval from faculty members, and was accepted at both the Faculty and University levels. As of now, no necessary changes have been identified.

A recent survey of 18 faculty managers and lecturers, along with 246 students, indicates strong support for the current curriculum. Specifically, 100% of academic staff and 95.12% of students consider the program appropriate to current conditions. Only 4.07% of students were undecided, and 0.81% viewed it as unsuitable. In light of these findings, there is currently no need for curriculum reform in physical education at the university.

## 2.5 Actual implementation of classes and assessment at the The University of Fire Prevention and Fighting

The implementation of physical education classes is taken seriously by the Faculty. Each lecturer is required to prepare a complete set of teaching materials, including lesson plans, course outlines, attendance records, and lecture notes. During practical sessions, both instructors and students must wear appropriate sportswear and footwear. Punctuality and adherence to the prescribed lesson content are strictly enforced. Undergraduate students attend three physical education sessions per week. The Faculty also organizes demonstration lessons to share best practices and enhance instructional quality. Classroom management by instructors is generally effective, and lecturers employ a variety of standardized supplemental exercises. Most lessons are conducted with the appropriate training equipment as required by the curriculum. However, the large number of classes combined with a limited amount of equipment has had a somewhat negative impact on lesson quality. Despite these limitations, the overall delivery of physical education classes is considered effective. A supporting survey of 18 faculty managers and lecturers, along with 246 students, confirms this assessment. All faculty members (100%) believe that the current evaluation methods are appropriate. Among students, 91.46% rate the assessments as fair, 4.07% as difficult, and 4.47% as easy. These results suggest that the existing assessment approach is generally balanced and suitable for the program's objectives.

### 3. Target of research

To understand the current state of students' awareness of the role and position of Physical Education, we conducted a survey interviewing 246 first-year students at the The University of Fire Prevention and Fighting to determine their understanding of the subject. The results are presented in Table 3 as follows:

**Table 3.** Results of student awareness interviews

No.	Content of the interview	Interview results	
		n = 246	%
1	Awareness of the importance of PE?		
	Important and beneficial	212	86,18
	Not important	9	3,66
	Unclear	25	10,16
2	Interest in studying PE?		
	Likes it	205	83,33
	Does not like it	41	16,67

Based on the results presented in Table 3, it is evident that students' awareness of the benefits, role, and significance of Physical Education (PE) in promoting physical well-being remains limited. Notably, 10.16% of respondents reported being unsure about the importance of PE, while 3.66% considered it unimportant—indicating a misunderstanding of its value and purpose. Moreover, 16.67% of students expressed a lack of interest in studying PE, which further emphasizes the need to strengthen awareness and foster engagement. This gap in understanding is not only a reflection of student attitudes, but also a shared responsibility of the PE faculty to promote the relevance and long-term benefits of physical education. This situation, if left unaddressed, may negatively affect students' physical development and could also have broader implications for the overall quality of education at the university. Enhancing student motivation and awareness through improved communication, more engaging teaching methods, and integration of practical benefits into the curriculum is therefore essential.

#### 4. Literature analysis

Extracurricular sports activities play a crucial role in enhancing students' physical health and supporting their academic performance. When effectively implemented, these activities can attract significant student participation, contributing to the successful completion of the physical education curriculum and other academic requirements. In recent years, the university's focus on constructing new facilities has necessitated investment in more urgent infrastructure projects. Consequently, there have been challenges regarding the availability and quality of training grounds, especially during the rainy season when adverse weather conditions hinder sports activities. This situation has led to limited participation in sports activities among students. Observations indicate that at Campus 1, student participation in extracurricular sports activities at the school's training grounds is modest. At Campus 2, due to poorer training conditions, the number of students engaging in extracurricular training is very low, particularly during exam review periods when participation further declines. Although the new campus offers better training conditions, student involvement in extracurricular sports activities remains limited.

A survey conducted using interview forms revealed that only 26.42% of students regularly participate in extracurricular sports training, 37.4% participate occasionally, and up to 36.18% do not participate in any extracurricular sports activities. This issue warrants attention from the Faculty of Military, Martial Arts, and Physical Education, as well as the university administration. Implementing effective measures to promote and enhance extracurricular sports training is essential to improve student health and overall educational outcomes.

#### 5. Research methods

An analysis of the academic performance in Physical Education among first-year students at the University of Fire Prevention and Fighting was conducted, focusing on classes D39 and D40. The study examined average scores from the first and second semesters of the academic year.

**Table 4.** Academic performance of first-year students in PE: classes D39 and D40

Class	Academic Performance			
	Excellent/Good (Percentage %)	Fair (Percentage %)	Average (Percentage %)	Weak/Fail (Percentage %)
Class D39 n = 689	8,49	10,38	78.95	2,18
Class 40 n = 1068	10,07	17,23	62,97	9,73

#### 6. Research results

An analysis of Table 4, which outlines the academic performance of first-year students from classes D39 and D40, reveals the following distribution:

- **Excellent and Good Grades:** A relatively small proportion of students achieved high marks, with percentages ranging from 8.49% to 10.07%.
- **Fair Grades:** This category encompasses between 10.38% and 17.89% of students, indicating a moderate level of performance among this group.
- **Average Grades:** The majority of students fall into this category, with percentages ranging from 62.97% to 78.95%, suggesting that most students meet the basic requirements but do not exceed them.
- **Poor Grades:** A notable segment of students, accounting for 2.18% to 9.73%, received poor grades, highlighting an area of concern regarding their grasp of the subject matter.

## 7. Conclusions

The evaluation of the current state of physical education at the University of Fire Prevention and Fighting reveals that a low percentage of first-year students meet the subject requirements, despite the curriculum's moderate difficulty. To address this issue, it is essential to explore strategies that enhance students' physical fitness, thereby establishing a scientific foundation to improve the effectiveness of the university's physical education program.

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