



**Dr. Katherine (Kath) O'Brien**

**QUT – Faculty of Health,  
School of Exercise & Nutrition Sciences**

## **Biography**

Dr. Katherine (Kath) O'Brien is an expert in the operational environment and working practices of sport officials. Kath's research interests cover a range of topics related to operating in high performance sport, but most notably focus upon understanding the qualities that foster the work and development of sport officials.

Aiming to create deeper discussion and research around sport officials, Kath created the Australian Sport Officiating Summit (ASOS) hosted online at University of Queensland (QUT). She is founder and coordinator of the QUT Women in Sport Leadership Conference in partnership with QUT Sport.

Dr. O'Brien was awarded the 2020 Vice Chancellor's Award for Teaching Excellence, **winning** the prestigious David Gardiner 'Teacher of the Year'. Kath teaches post-graduate and undergraduate students in the disciplines of exercise science and sport coaching, as well as teaching health and physical education pre-service teachers about curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment.

She is also a registered HPE teacher and previous international coach for both men's and women's teams in the sport of Touch Football.

## **Professional memberships and associations**

- Sport Australia - Industry Advisory Group - Officiating
- Sport Australia - Coach & Officiating Steering Committee
- The Officiating Collective - Lead Researcher
- Creator and organiser - The Australian Sport Officiating Summit (ASOS)
- Founder - QUT Women in Leadership Conference (partnership with QUT Sport)

## Teaching

### Current Teaching:

- Lecturer - Faculty of Health (School of Exercise and Nutrition Sciences)
- Senior Fellow - Higher Education Academy (FHEA)
- Unit Coordinator - XNB299; XNB390; XNB197; EUB420; EUB107
- Courses - XNB174; XNB188; XNB296
- Chairperson / Panel Member – QTPA

### Previous Employment and Teaching:

- Casual Academic - University of Queensland (Post-graduate Master of Coaching)
- Casual Academic and Unit Coordinator - University of New England (UNE)
- Head of Department (HOD) - HPE and Sport
- Acting Deputy Principal
- Secondary Teacher - HPE, Chemistry, Biological Science, Sport & Fitness, Dance
- Board Member - Touch Football Queensland
- Executive Officer - Queensland Touch (SWQ)

### Experience:

- Australian Coach - Men's & Women's Teams - Touch Football
- Chair - Touch Football Queensland Coaching Panel
- Member - Touch Football Australia Coaching Panel
- Member – Women Sport Toowoomba Panel

### Publications:

- O'Brien K, Rynne S, (2021) [Seen but not heard: Missing the mark in conceptualizing high performance officiating](#), *Sport in Society*, 24 (7), pp. 1110-1121.
- Grey M, Mallett C, O'Brien K, Rynne S, (2020) [High-performance coaches](#). In D Hackfort & R Schinke, *The Routledge International Encyclopedia of Sport and Exercise Psychology: Volume 2: Applied and Practical Measures*, Routledge, pp. 343-358.
- Rynne, S., O'Brien, K. A., & Callary, B. (2020). The Roles of Masters Coaches at and around Masters Events. In B. Callary, B. Young, & S. Rathwell. *Coaching masters athletes: advancing research and practice in adult sport*. Routledge.
- O'Brien K, (2020) [Two refs are better than one, so why does the NRL want to drop one?](#), *The Conversation*.
- O'Brien K, (2018) [Blow that whistle: Seven reasons you should respect the ref in the NRL Grand Final](#), *The Conversation*.

- O'Brien K, (2016) [Split second decisions with little praise: So what does it take to ref a game of NRL](#), *The Conversation*.
- O'Brien K, (2015) [NRL video refs can still make the call even if they're not at the game](#), *The Conversation*.

## **Awards:**

**Type** - Academic Honours, Prestigious Awards or Prizes

**Reference year** - 2020

**Details**- QUT Vice-Chancellor Award for Excellence: David Gardiner  
Teacher of the Year

**Type** - Fellowship of a Learned Academy or Membership of AIATSIS

**Reference year** - 2020

**Details** - Senior Fellowship: Higher Education (SFHEA)

**Type** - Advisor/Consultant for Industry

**Reference year** - 2020

**Details** - Consultant: Sport Australia on Sport Officiating Learning &  
Education

**Type** - Funding Award

**Reference year** - 2017

**Details** - UQ: Dr Alf Howard International Travel Scholarship

**Type** - Academic Honours, Prestigious Awards or Prizes

**Reference year** - 2014

**Details** - Deans Commendation for Academic Excellence

