

ELITE ATHLETE FRIENDLY UNIVERSITY AGREEMENT

Guiding Principles for Implementation of the National Network of Athlete Friendly Universities *Supporting Australia's elite athletes to achieve academic excellence*

1. Purpose

To establish a network of athlete friendly universities that adopt the following guiding principles within their policies and/or systems to support Australia's elite athletes to achieve academic excellence.

2. Background:

The value of combining both sporting and academic aspirations is well recognised across the university and sporting fraternities. The challenge now placed on both sectors is to identify and implement the necessary support systems to facilitate this occurring.

From our experience the type of flexibility required by the student-athlete is available within existing university policy documents and frameworks. However, the availability of these support systems is not widely known and not generally applied to the athlete population.

This network, therefore, seeks to highlight the specific requirements of the elite athlete population, and the flexibility and systems needed to create a supportive environment that is conducive to the achievement of academic excellence.

This document seeks to detail the flexibility and systems that are required, through the development of guiding principles. It is expected that universities within the network review these principles, in line with their existing policies to identify opportunities to tailor the documentation to highlight the specific needs of the elite athlete population and/or to develop new systems where there is currently no documentation in place.

For universities to successfully adopt these guiding principles and implement them to the benefit of the student-athlete, support and commitment must be evident within the policy documents. This will then inform and guide behaviour of staff across the university network, and provide leverage for discussions and negotiations within individual schools and/or faculties.

3. Guiding Principles:

The following guiding principles identify the key areas where elite athletes require support to be able to successfully integrate their academic and sporting aspirations. It is requested that universities identify within their existing policy framework (or develop as necessary), ways to accommodate these guiding principles into practice.

University Commitment

Nominated Staff Contact

Appointment of a specific staff contact person, to support elite athletes within the university, is seen as critical to the successful implementation of the guiding principles. It is expected that this person be of a significantly senior position within the university, to be able to effectively negotiate and implement the guiding principles across the university environment. It is expected that this position would provide the following support:

- Advice and guidance to student-athletes on academic planning
- Support in negotiating necessary flexibility to meet academic requirements
- Advocacy for the student-athlete within the university environment
- Support in negotiating and/or implementing student cross institutional study or credit transfer arrangements

- Provision of advice and support to local Athlete Career & Education Adviser or related personnel

Flexible Study Options

It is expected that universities would consider how they could tailor (or develop) policy documentation to incorporate the student athlete needs highlighted below:

- Assessment related needs:
 - Ability to negotiate assessment deadlines based on sporting related travel commitments
 - Ability to sit exams externally under exam conditions, within the athlete's environment (e.g. whilst travelling, in their hotel etc)
 - The minimum attendance at lectures, tutorials or practicals waived where student-athlete unavailable due to sporting commitments
- Enrolment related needs:
 - Ability to:
 - tailor academic study load to integrate with sporting commitments, available for first year students as well.
 - negotiate lecture, tutorial and practical timetables to accommodate sporting commitments
 - extend minimum time to complete course due to periods of decreased study load
 - take several leaves of absence where required due to increased sporting commitments (e.g. Olympic Games year)
 - complete cross institutional study options with interstate universities, and flexibility within this policy provided for student athletes (e.g. first year student's eligible, increase number of subjects able to be completed by cross institutional study
 - Provision of summer study alternatives and/or ability to swap between distance education mode and on campus mode, depending on sporting commitments
 - Recognition of credit achieved at interstate universities
- Course related needs:
 - Access to distance education materials, and/or class notes for missed lectures, tutorials or practicals

Course entry:

- Ability for elite-athletes to submit accompanying documentation for consideration for entry into course. This to be highlighted within Tertiary Admissions documentation.

Defining Elite Athletes:

It is recognised that the implementation of this policy document relies heavily on the accurate identification of athletes as being elite. Whilst the majority of elite athletes within Australia will be on scholarship within the network of institutes and academies of sport around Australia, there are many athletes that may fall outside of this cohort. The following strategies are therefore suggested for identifying elite athletes studying at universities within Australia.

- For athletes to access the support identified within the guiding principles outlined above, they must be identified and recognised by one of the following organisations as an elite athlete:
 - [Australian Institute of Sport](#)
 - State Institutes or Academies of Sport
 - [AFL Players' Association](#)
 - [Australian Cricketers' Association](#)
 - [Rugby Union Players' Association](#)

- [Rugby League Professionals' Association](#)
- [Australian Professional Footballers' Association](#)
- National senior squad members from CACE supported sports
- Coach Career Management Program
- SCOPE Program

Note that, in accordance with item 4 of this Schedule, the University will now be provided with details of elite athletes enrolled at its institution

- If an athlete falls outside of these organisations, they may submit an application for consideration, to the University. The National ACE manager will act as a representative from the Australian Sports Commission (the parent body of the AIS) to investigate, verify and make a recommendation.

Universities will need to identify appropriate self-registration processes for student-athletes to identify themselves.

4. ASC / SIAS Commitments:

To support the University to adopt and implement the Guiding Principles, support will be provided by the National Coach and Athlete Career and Education (CACE) program for consultation and discussion.

Network of Professionals

All staff nominated under this Agreement to support student-athletes would be identified as members of a professional network. The National CACE program would coordinate the provision of the following opportunities for this professional network:

- annual professional development days on related topics;
- a contact person in each state to work collaboratively with the University;
- access to a network of like-minded professionals; and
- sharing of information and research outcomes.

Athlete/Staff Resources

In conjunction with the University, develop and tailor:

- athlete and staff resource booklets to outline the processes and relevant policy documentation for the network of athlete friendly universities; and
- forms for use by the University in evaluation of the student athlete study experience,

aimed at helping to improve the policy.

Nominated Contact

The nominated contact will generally be the SIS/SAS based ACE program coordinator for the State that the institution resides in.

Endorsed Athletes

The University will be provided with (subject to agreement by each athlete), a list of athletes enrolled at their institution that have been identified as being 'elite athletes' according to the definition of elite athletes set out above. This will occur twice yearly, generally at the start of the recognised semester 1 and 2 of the regular academic year.

Elite Athlete Friendly University

**State Institutes and
Academies of Sport**



**AUSTRALIAN
INSTITUTE OF SPORT**

A division of the
Australian Sports Commission

**Participating Professional
Players' Associations**