

Student Athlete Support Policy

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Feedback or issues arising on implementation of this policy should be communicated to the policy author.	
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Policy Management Framework Compliance Review as requested by EMT all draft policies should be reviewed by the Policy Review Group¹ in advance of review by EMT. Please confirm that the policy was reviewed by the policy review group.

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1. Definitions

The following definitions apply to the Student Athlete Support Policy:

Academic Flexibility

Academic Flexibility refers to the ability of students and faculty to adapt to changing circumstances when needed, while maintaining commitment to academic excellence.

Dual Career

Sport Ireland defines a 'dual career athlete' as an individual who is in education but also competes at a high level in sport. In the context of this policy, the term 'dual career' is used to refer to the pursuit by a high-performance athlete of an athletic career while undertaking academic study at SETU.

National Governing Body

Non-profit, non-governmental organisations responsible for promoting and developing a particular sport within a nation.

Pacing a Degree

The student athlete's sporting commitments restrict them from completing the degree within the regular timeframe. The student athlete can then negotiate a pacing of the degree subject to their sporting commitments. In the case of a four year degree programme the student athlete would be permitted to complete their degree within six years.

Student Athlete

A student athlete is defined as an athlete recognised as a high-performance athlete by their NGB while undertaking academic study in SETU. Athletes will be identified through the Rising Stars Programme, CAO applications and through conversations with sports coaches within the university. This definition applies to all sports recognised by Sport Ireland.

Student Athlete Support Coordinator

The Student Athlete Support Coordinator is a staff member designated through the sports department to give student athletes a point of contact to support them in negotiating academic flexibility under the guidelines of the policy.

2. Introduction

South East Technological University (SETU) supports student athletes by providing world class facilities and a personalised approach to educational, athletic and personal development. Within the University there are a number of elite athletes pursuing education while also competing at an elite sporting level. As part of Sport Ireland's 'Accreditation for Student – Athlete Support' programme, SETU have been awarded an 'Affiliate' award (see supporting documentation in section 6 point 4). Achieving this accreditation has allowed the University

to receive a nationally recognised Sport Ireland Accreditation for dual career support as well as ongoing access to up-to-date career research and support from Sport Ireland.

The purpose of the Student Athlete Support Policy and associated procedures is to offer guidance for student athletes and staff regarding options available to student athletes who wish, while studying for an undergraduate or postgraduate degree in SETU, to maintain active elite participation in a given sporting activity.

This policy applies to athletes who are recognised as high-performance athletes by their National Governing Body (NGB) and are enrolled in an undergraduate or postgraduate degree programme in SETU.

3. Principles

- The Student Athlete Support Policy supports students who wish to achieve an academic qualification at SETU while maintaining an elite sporting career.
- In line with [EU Guidelines on Dual Careers](#), SETU appreciates the demands experienced by students aiming to balance academic study alongside an elite sporting career. The Student Athlete Support Policy offers guidance to student athletes in relation to academic flexibility options.
- The Student Athlete Support Policy recognises that the primary purpose of a student athlete is to achieve an academic qualification. By adopting a proactive academic flexibility approach, student athletes will be better equipped to manage academic commitments alongside their sporting careers. Where a student athlete is enrolled in a programme with a compulsory attendance policy, it is understood that academic flexibility may not be available.

4. Responsibilities

4.1 Student Athlete Support Coordinator

- The Student Athlete Support Coordinator gives student athletes a point of contact to support in negotiating academic flexibility.
- The Student Athlete Support Coordinator provides advice and guidance to student athletes as well as conducting regular liaison in regards to student athlete wellbeing.
- The Student Athlete Support Coordinator will keep an up to date record of sporting events which may require academic flexibility.
- If academic flexibility has been agreed for a student athlete, it is the responsibility of the Student Athlete Support Coordinator to notify the administration support team or the school office within the student athletes department.

4.2 Student Responsibility

- The student athlete and the Student Athlete Support Coordinator will conduct a written attendance plan based on the student athletes travel to tournaments and training.
- The student will communicate these dates with heads of departments, lecturers and Student Athlete Support Coordinator in order to be proactive about possible academic flexibility needs.
- Outside of these agreed dates, it is the student athlete's responsibility to make sure attendance is as high as possible.

5. Academic Flexibility

SETU is committed to assisting students to meet the requirements of their degree programme while striving to reasonably accommodate their outside commitments. Students must be cognisant that there may be accrediting body criteria or specific attendance policies that could affect the accommodations that the University can make. Some of the reasonable accommodations that may be made at the discretion of the academic department, course director or lecturers include:

- If a clash with a major international event, extensions may be facilitated for continuous assessment without penalty.
- The Student Athlete may be facilitated to sit an exam or submit an assignment within the repeat assessment time without incurring a financial penalty.
- Providing access to missed material in the event of missed classes due to explained dual career circumstances.
- If the Student Athletes sporting commitments restrict them from completing the degree within the regular timeframe, the student athlete can negotiate a pacing of their degree. It is the responsibility of the student athlete to communicate their interest in pacing their degree at the earliest opportunity.

6. Supporting Documentation

- European Commission (2013) *EU guidelines on dual careers of athletes*, - [EU Guidelines on Dual Careers \(europa.eu\)](#)
- Sport Ireland (2022) *Criteria for the international carding scheme 2023* - [international-carding-scheme-guidelines-2021.pdf \(sportireland.ie\)](#)
- Sport Ireland (2022) *2022-2024 international carding scheme guidelines* - [sport-ireland-international-carding-scheme-guidelines-2022-2024.pdf \(sportireland.ie\)](#)
- Sport Ireland (2023) *Accreditation for Student Athlete Support Criteria*, [ASAS Criteria \(003\).pdf](#)
- SETU Elite Athlete Definition [Elite Athlete Definition](#)

Appendix 1

South East Technological University Elite Athlete Definition

1. The student is a carded athlete under the Sport Ireland International Carding Scheme.
2. The student represents Ireland in a sport recognised under an Irish national governing body of sport (NGB).
3. The student is in receipt of a SETU high performance sports scholarship.
1. The student has a professional playing contract with a sporting organisation affiliated to an NGB recognised by Sport Ireland. The professional contract must indicate a relationship between athlete and organisation that would lead the Dual Career Coordinator to believe that the contract has a significant impact on the dual career of the student athlete.
2. The student is recognised by the Gaelic Players Association (GPA) or the Women's Gaelic Players Association (WGPA) as a senior intercounty player under the terms of the student's annual grants scheme.
3. If the student is an international student, they represent their own country in a sport recognised by a body equivalent to an Irish NGB in that country.