

Student Athlete Support Policy

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Version 2.0

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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. SETU recognises that elite and high performance athletes experience enhanced academic, physical, psychological and time related demands that require structure and transparent institutional support.

This Student Athlete Support Policy establishes SETU's formal institutional commitment to the dual-career pathway and provides a clear framework through which student athletes and staff can engage with academic flexibility and support mechanisms.

Under the 2023-2025 Sport Ireland Institute Accreditation for Student Athlete Support, SETU was awarded an 'Affiliate' award. 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.

This revised policy aligns with the Sport Ireland Institute Accreditation for Student Athlete Support (ASAS) Framework (2026) (see supporting documentation in section 6 point 4) and positions SETU to apply for ASAS Bronze Accreditation, demonstrating the University's commitment to foundational dual-career structures and minimum quality standards.

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 each 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. It offers guidance to student athletes in relation to academic flexibility options.
- 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 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.
- Academic flexibility is applied reasonably and at the discretion of the University, recognising programme accreditation requirements and academic standards. Where a student athlete is enrolled in a programme with a compulsory attendance policy, it is understood that academic flexibility may not be available.
- Support is based on early communication, shared responsibility, and documented agreement between the student, the student athlete support coordinator, and academic staff.

4. Responsibilities

4.1 South East Technological University

- South East Technological University will maintain a formal institutional policy supporting student athletes and the dual career pathway.
- SETU sports department will appoint a Student Athlete Support Coordinator as a clear and accessible point of contact for student athletes.
- The University will promote awareness of student athlete supports and contact details through publicly available channels while supporting a dual career aware academic environment through communication and guidance.

4.2 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 and signposting of services to support 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.
- The Student Athlete Support coordinator will be responsible to facilitate the administration of the annual ASAS National Student Athlete Survey (provided by the Sport Ireland Institute) to gauge awareness and accessibility of support services.

4.3 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.
- Provide supporting documentation where required.

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 professional accreditation, attendance policies, or programme requirements may limit the flexibility available.

Some of the reasonable accommodations that may be made at the discretion of the academic

department, course director or lecturers include:

- If a clash arises with a major international event or a planned, National Governing Body approved high performance training camp or fixture, 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. Monitoring and Review

South East Technological University will periodically review the effectiveness of the student athlete supports through feedback including participation in the ASAS National Student Athlete Support Survey, and will use this information to inform continuous improvement.

7. Supporting Documentation

- European Commission (2013) *EU guidelines on dual careers of athletes*, - [EU Guidelines on Dual Careers \(europa.eu\)](https://european-council.europa.eu/media/eu-guidelines-on-dual-careers-of-athletes.pdf)
- Sport Ireland (2022) *Criteria for the international carding scheme 2023* - [international-carding-scheme-guidelines-2021.pdf \(sportireland.ie\)](https://sportireland.ie/media/2022/09/International-Carding-Scheme-Guidelines-2021.pdf)
- Sport Ireland (2022) *2022-2024 international carding scheme guidelines* - [sport-ireland-international-carding-scheme-guidelines-2022-2024.pdf \(sportireland.ie\)](https://sportireland.ie/media/2022/09/sport-ireland-international-carding-scheme-guidelines-2022-2024.pdf)
- Sport Ireland (2023) *Accreditation for Student Athlete Support, ASAS Criteria (003).pdf*
- SETU Elite Athlete Definition (Appendix 1)

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.