



UNIVERSITY OF
LIVERPOOL

CODE OF PRACTICE ON ASSESSMENT

APPENDIX O

Student Athlete Academic Support Policy

2025-26

Applicable to all cohorts

In the Code of Practice on Assessment and all Appendices the term “student” includes apprentices on degree apprenticeship programmes

Student Athlete Academic Support Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The University of Liverpool is committed to supporting its students with a recognised sporting talent (Student Athlete) to excel in both their academic studies and their chosen sport. The University recognises that as part of this these students will require additional support to balance their studies and their sporting commitments.
- 1.2 The University recognises that each Student Athlete will require differing levels of support from Sport Liverpool and their academic departments. The University, through this policy will enable effective support mechanisms which will establish a relationship and joint commitment with academic departments and the Student Athlete.
- 1.3 Student Athletes being supported by the University are often in the early stages of their sporting career and it is recognised that the majority will not peak as an athlete until after they have graduated. The University and its staff play a formative part of each student athletes' journey and has a storied history of supporting its students who have gone on to achieve Olympic and International success. These Student Athletes positively contribute to the University's global reputation as a university of choice.
- 1.4 Student Athletes accepted onto the Performance Programme receive a comprehensive support package, which can include sports science, sports nutrition, sports psychology, anti-doping service, financial support, coaching, strength and conditioning and have a dedicated team of support staff working alongside them at all stages of their athletic career.
- 1.5 Student Athletes who are not accepted into the Performance Programme, may be offered Student Athlete status, and therefore are entitled to use this policy if they meet the requirements of 7.1.1.
- 1.6 The University expects that all students supported through this policy will maintain high levels of academic achievement throughout their course of study and will serve as ambassadors for the University.
- 1.7 Sport Liverpool manages the recruitment and ongoing support of Student Athletes, the process for which is detailed in section 4 of this policy.

2. Scope of the Policy

- 2.1 This policy applies to all students studying at an undergraduate or postgraduate level (including degree apprentices and Study Abroad students) who attain 'Student Athlete' status as determined by Sport Liverpool.
- 2.2 This policy applies to students in all modes of study including on campus online and to study which takes place off campus such as work placements, year abroad, field trips and off-site research.

2.3 Students on online programmes delivered in partnership with Kaplan Higher Education UK (Kaplan) are considered within the scope of this policy and any student will be considered under Category 2 Student Athlete status, as detailed in section 7.1.2 and 8.2.

3. Responsibilities

3.1 In all cases, responsibilities may be undertaken by a nominee as necessary. This should be communicated to the Sport Development Officer – Performance.

3.2 **Director of Sport & Active Health** is responsible for ensuring the approved process and protocols for Student Athlete selection are followed (section 4).

3.3 **Heads of Departments** (or their nominee, for students on online programmes delivered in partnership with Kaplan) are responsible for ensuring that this policy is effectively implemented within their department and staff responsibility is allocated and processes are clear. They will nominate a contact for the department and at least one member of staff to complete a short eLearning module that provides a valuable insight into athlete lifestyle and support.

3.4 **Sport Development Officer – Performance** serves as the liaison contact between academic departments and Sport Liverpool and is responsible for ensuring that all Student Athletes are familiar with this policy and receive a timely induction. They are also responsible for supporting athletes in balancing their sporting commitments to help ensure expected academic standards are maintained. For students on online programmes delivered in partnership with Kaplan, Student Support at Kaplan will liaise with Sport Liverpool as appropriate.

3.5 **All Staff** who have Student Athletes in their cohort are expected to read this policy and work with fellow staff to support and guide the students in balancing their academic and sporting commitments.

4. Athlete Selection

4.1 Prospective and current students with a sporting talent can apply for university recognition as a Student Athlete by submitting the application form through the University's website.

4.2 Prospective students can receive a conditional offer of support prior to applying to the University. Any offer made is contingent on obtaining a place on a recognised academic programme offered by the University and through the normal channels.

4.2.1 Applications to join the programme will be considered by a panel comprising the Director of Sport & Active Health, the Sports Development Manager and the Sports Development Officer (Performance) against a set of published criteria. (www.liverpool.ac.uk/sports/team-sport-liverpool/performance-programme);

4.2.2 The panel convenes in January and August each year but can meet at any time to consider applications requesting a time critical response prior to applying to study at the University. This is typically reserved for applicants who are of an exceptional standard and allows them to better evaluate their options prior to deciding where to apply to study.

4.3 Details of recognised Student Athletes are notified to the relevant academic departments/Schools at least a week in advance of the start of the new academic year.

5. Expectations of Student Athletes

- 5.1 The University expects that all students supported through this policy will maintain required levels of academic progress.
- 5.2 Student athletes who do not maintain required levels of academic progress, as defined by the relevant board of examiners, will not be eligible to use this policy to apply for academic flexibility.
- 5.3 Student athletes will act as ambassadors for the University, including Sport Liverpool and their academic departments.
- 5.4 Student Athletes will be responsible for ensuring their department is informed of their training and competition programme. Any academic flexibility required will be requested in a timely manner following the process set out by the department.
- 5.5 Student Athletes will engage with the Athlete Manager to discuss time management and plan a schedule to help balance sporting and academic commitments.
- 5.6 Student Athletes will be proactive in identifying potential challenges relating to balancing their academic studies and sporting commitments and reporting these to the Athlete Manager in the first instance. Prospective and current students with a sporting talent can apply for University recognition as a Student Athlete by submitting the application form through the University's website.

6. Expectations of Academic Departments

- 6.1 Once departments are notified that a Student Athlete is part of their cohort, they will contact each student and assign a staff support for communication. This staff support must be able to communicate with the wider department as required and establish a mechanism for support that works for both the department and Student Athlete.
- 6.2 Departments should have a broad understanding of the demands placed on a high performing Student Athlete and how their lifestyle differs from the typical student. All staff are invited to undertake a brief eLearning module produced by the national Talented Athlete Support Scheme Programme (TASS).
- 6.3 Staff should recognise that successful Student Athletes can significantly enhance the University's reputation, and this effect could continue to develop and endure well beyond their time as students.
- 6.4 Departments are asked to keep the Sport Liverpool Athlete Manager informed of any concerns regarding a Student Athlete's academic progress.

7. Athlete Profiles

- 7.1 Sport Liverpool will assign each Student Athlete into one of two categories to determine the level of academic flexibility a student can request:

- 7.1.1 **Category One** is assigned to Student Athletes who are currently on a National Governing Body of Sport 'performance pathway' and have national or international commitments;
- 7.1.2 **Category Two** is assigned to student athletes who are representing the University at a national level and significantly contribute to the University's performance sport goals.

8. Flexible Arrangements for Student Athletes

8.1 **Category One** Student Athletes are eligible to apply to their department for:

- 8.1.1 Authorised absence from scheduled lectures, seminars or other teaching sessions;
- 8.1.2 Revised deadlines for submission of formative or summative coursework;
- 8.1.3 Special consideration in the allocation and timing of placements, study visits or clinical practice sessions;
- 8.1.4 In exceptional circumstances, such as competing in or preparing for a major international sporting event, alternative assessments or examinations.

8.2 **Category Two** Student Athletes are eligible to apply through departmental processes for:

- 8.2.1 Authorised absence from scheduled lectures, seminars or other teaching sessions;
- 8.2.2 Special consideration in the allocation and timing of placements, study visits or clinical practice sessions.

8.3 Examples for which Student Athletes can apply for flexible arrangements (examples are not exhaustive and departments should defer to Sport Liverpool for advice if an activity is not listed):

8.3.1 Attendance at competitions:

- BUCS Matches;
- BUCS Championships;
- Christie Championships;
- National Championships for the sport in which they compete.;
- Appearing for a team for which the student athlete holds a professional contract;
- National Team Representation.

Category Two Student Athletes are eligible to apply through departmental processes for:

8.3.2 Attendance at national training/selection camps.

8.3.3 Rehabilitation of injury.

8.4 The Head of Department (or their nominated representative) shall refer the application to the relevant Board of Studies for a decision on the application if required. The decision shall be notified to the student and reported to the relevant Board of Examiners as necessary.

8.5 It is expected that any student requiring a concession in academic schedules under this policy will already have discussed the matter with relevant University staff well in advance.

8.6 The decision of the Board of Studies on the application for concession under this policy (including a refusal of the application or the provision of an alternative arrangement) is a matter of academic judgment and there is an expectation that academic commitments are prioritised. Therefore, such decisions are not normally accepted as grounds for appeal or complaint. of recognised Student Athletes are notified to the relevant academic departments/Schools at least a week in advance of the start of the new academic year.