



University of
St Andrews

Academic flexibility for students with recognised sporting talent

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Purpose	This policy outlines ways in which an element of flexibility can be given to those students participating in representative sport for the University, and those in receipt of sporting scholarships to allow them to compete in their sport.

Version number	Purpose / changes	Document status	Author of changes, role and school / unit	Date
03	Updated following Senate approval. Highlighting which students are eligible for academic flexibility under this policy	Updated	Administrative Officer	January 2025

Academic flexibility for competitive student athletes

1. Background

The University currently sets aside Wednesday afternoons for students to participate in recreational activities including sports. Students can engage in sport as a leisure activity and at a representative level in team and individual competitions. Competitive sport occasionally entails participation outside the allotted hours on Wednesdays. The University also participates in the SFC-funded "Winning Students" scheme which helps Universities support students who hold a British passport (through scholarships) to compete in a select number of high-performance sports. To participate in representative sport, the University is required to introduce flexible educational support which allows eligible students to be able to participate in key sporting events. In addition to the 'Winning Students' scheme, the University also offers several sports scholarships under the banner of "Saints Sports Performance Scholarships" for those who compete at the appropriate level. Students are also eligible for a number of University golf scholarships awarded by the R & A.

This policy explains how students with recognised sporting talent who represent the University can be given flexibility to participate. It aims to ensure that flexibility is administered fairly and equitably, minimising the amount of work involved for Schools and giving students some degree of academic flexibility whilst recognising that students with sporting talent must not neglect academic studies.

2. Eligibility

All students who are in receipt of a "Winning Student" scholarship or a Saints Sports Performance Scholarship, will automatically be permitted some degree of academic flexibility. Details of these students will be published annually on the Saints Sports webpage. This webpage will be up to date by the end of week 3 in Semester 1.

For students who are listed on the "Current Scholars" webpage, the decision to allow them academic flexibility has already been taken by the University. Schools do not have a role in determining eligibility for academic flexibility but do have responsibility for deciding the type of flexibility which should be permitted.

Students who are representing the University at a high level in sports, but who are not in receipt of scholarships or competing at international level may also require some degree of academic flexibility e.g. to facilitate competing in important fixtures, as determined by Saints Sport. These students must submit requests for academic flexibility in writing to Saints Sports. Permission to request flexibility will be determined by Saints Sports. Only after approval has been granted by Saints Sports will the student be permitted to request academic flexibility from the School(s) concerned. Schools will then be required to determine the type of flexibility which should be allowed. Flexible adjustments may include excusing students from a compulsory class on a one-off basis or offering a short extension of an additional day to cover the day missed.

3. Academic Flexibility

There is no exhaustive list of the types of flexible arrangements which Schools may wish to give to students. Flexibility should be considered on a case-by-case basis but could include authorised absence from a scheduled class, such absences should not exceed Senate Regulations on absence limits. Competing in representative sport will not ordinarily constitute grounds for extensions to

assessed coursework. In exceptional circumstances, such as a student competing in or preparing for a major international event, a request may be made for an extension, alternative assessment, or a deferred examination date. The School will have authority to accept or reject such requests.

4. Contacts

It is the student's responsibility to contact the relevant member of staff to discuss academic flexibility. For undergraduate students, the School's contact is the Director of Teaching and for taught and research postgraduates, the School's contact is the Director of Postgraduate or Postgraduate Taught Studies. These students will normally know the affected dates well in advance and will therefore contact the relevant School(s) as soon as the schedule of events are published. There may be some rare occasions when re-scheduled fixtures mean that affected dates are not known far in advance and Schools should be cognisant of this.

5. Academic Studies

Students with academic flexibility will be expected to complete all elements of their programme and will not be given exemption from completing compulsory pieces of assessed work. Students will be made aware that flexibility cannot be guaranteed, depending on the requirements of their academic programme. Students who have not been given academic flexibility but still miss lectures or classes due to sporting events will have this considered as unauthorised absence.

Students who have been granted academic flexibility will be required to sign a "Code of Commitment", stipulating that excellent academic standards must be maintained to retain their sporting status. This documentation will be held by Saints Sports.

The University expects all students supported through this process to maintain high levels of academic and sports performance and to serve as ambassadors for the University. It will be within the remit of the AVP Learning & Teaching or their delegate to withdraw academic flexibility if the student's studies are seen to be suffering.

More information is available at <http://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/staff/studentadmin/sportspeople/>

Version number	Purpose / changes	Document status	Author of changes, role and school / unit	Date
01	To include PGT students/Link to webpage	Updated	-	March 2015
02	Updated for six months	Updated	Administrative Officer	25/6/2024
03	Updated following Senate approval. Highlighting which students are eligible for academic flexibility under this policy	Updated	Administrative Officer	January 2025