



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 in receipt of sporting scholarships, referred to in this policy, to allow them to compete at the highest level in their sport.

Version number	Purpose / changes	Document status	Author of changes, role and school / unit	Date
02	Updated for six months	Updated	Administrative Officer	25/6/2024

UNIVERSITY OF ST ANDREWS

POLICY ON ACADEMIC FLEXIBILITY FOR STUDENTS WITH RECOGNISED SPORTING TALENT

1. Background

The University currently participates in the SFC-funded “Winning Students” scheme which helps Universities support students (through scholarships) to compete in high performance sport. In order to participate in this scheme, the University is required to introduce flexible educational support which allows eligible students to be able to participate in key sporting competitions. Students who are awarded such scholarships are normally expected to compete at a very high level: Olympic Games; World Championships; Commonwealth Games; European Championships; and the World University Games.

In addition to the SFC-funded scheme, the University also offers a number of sports scholarships including five £1,000 scholarships for any sport with the student competing at national standard eg Scottish University Sports (SUS) or Regional Squad level. Students are also eligible for a number of University golf scholarships and also the Royal and Ancient golf scholarships.

Students in receipt of these scholarships require an element of flexibility which will allow them to compete at the highest level in their sport. This policy introduces ways in which this can be done fairly and equitably, minimising the amount of work involved for Schools and giving the students some degree of academic flexibility whilst recognising that the main priority is their academic studies.

2. Eligibility

All students who are in receipt of a “Winning Student” scholarship, a St Andrews University sports scholarship or who are performing at an international level of sport (within the previous 12 months), will automatically be permitted some degree of academic flexibility. Details of these students (approximately 10) will be published on a staff password-protected webpage that will be updated annually by the Department of Sport and Exercise. This webpage will be up-to-date by the end of week 3 in Semester 1 so that Schools can access the details of students who will have academic flexibility for the coming academic year.

For students who are listed on the ‘talented sportspeople’ 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.

There may be a small number of additional students who are not in receipt of scholarships or competing at international level but may also require some degree of academic flexibility. These students must submit requests in writing to the Department of Sport and Exercise by completion of a new pro forma. This will be considered by the Department of Sport and Exercise and then submitted to the Proctor’s Office for approval. Only after approval has been granted by the Proctor’s Office will the student be permitted academic flexibility and given written approval to take to the School(s) concerned. Again, in these circumstances, Schools will simply be required to determine the type of flexibility which should be allowed.

3. Academic Flexibility

There is no exhaustive list of the types of flexible arrangements Schools may wish to give to students. This must be considered on a case-by-case basis but could include: authorised absence from a scheduled lecture, or a revised deadline for submission of a piece of assessed work. In exceptional circumstances, such as a student competing in or preparing for a major international event, a request may be made for an alternative assessment or examination date. In these instances, the University Examinations Office must be notified of the possibility of the need for special arrangements as early as possible.

4. Contacts

It is the student's responsibility to make contact with the relevant member of staff to discuss the type of academic flexibility being sought. For undergraduate students, the School's contact is the Director of Teaching and for taught and research postgraduates, the contact is the School's Director of Postgraduate Studies. It will be anticipated that these students will know well in advance their training and competition schedules and will therefore make contact with the relevant School(s) at the start of each academic year.

5. Academic Studies

Students with academic flexibility will be expected to complete all elements of their programme and should not be given exemption from completing compulsory pieces of assessed work. Students will be made aware that flexibility cannot be guaranteed at all times, 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 in order to retain their sporting status.

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 Proctor's Office 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