

POLICY ON ELITE ATHLETE SUPPORT

1. Preamble

Consistent with its Mission, Australian Catholic University recognises the dignity of each individual, supports the holistic development of students and provides appropriate levels of support for students in recognition of their diverse backgrounds and career aspirations. It is committed to helping all students to achieve their academic and personal potential. In particular, this Policy reflects its commitment to assist students, who are elite athletes, to combine their academic and elite sporting aspirations successfully at the highest level.

In support of elite athletes, the University collaborates with the Australian Institute of Sport and other national or state bodies representing elite athletes in various sporting endeavours and, at a local level, with Athlete Career and Education (ACE) Advisors nominated by those bodies.

2. Definitions

“Elite athlete”: someone who has been identified as such by the Australian Institute of Sport, a State Institute (or Academy) of Sport or a relevant national association such as the AFL Players Association, the Australian Cricketers Association or the Rugby Union Players Association. In the case of minority sports, the Elite Athlete Coordinator (EAC) will make a judgment based on the advice of the Australian Sports Commission through the National ACE Manager.

“Elite Athlete Coordinator” (EAC): a member of academic staff designated as such by the Faculties.

“Elite Athlete Program” (EAP): a mechanism through which support and flexible study options for elite athletes, registered as members of the EAP, can be facilitated.

3. Role of the Elite Athlete Co-ordinator

The role of the EAC is to:

- (a) advise on applications for admission via the Elite Athlete Scheme;
- (b) provide elite athletes with advice and guidance on course planning and other academic matters;
- (c) assist in the negotiation of flexibility for elite athletes in meeting academic requirements;
- (d) advocate for elite athletes within their School and the wider University;
- (e) work closely with Course Coordinators in negotiating and implementing cross-institutional study and/or credit transfer arrangements;
- (f) liaise with local ACE Advisors to ensure the best possible balance between academic and sporting demands and the total welfare of the elite athletes.

4. Course Entry

Elite athletes may apply for any course through the standard admission processes. In addition, the University will consider admitting a limited number of elite athletes who have outstanding sporting or appropriate recreational/vocational performance but do not meet normal entry criteria. Applicants in this category should contact the Student Centre.

5. Registration in the Elite Athlete Program

A student who wishes to be registered under the EAP must apply in a timely manner, usually at the beginning of his/her first semester at Australian Catholic University or the first semester in which he/she meets the criteria for recognition as an elite athlete.

Such a student must submit to the University’s EAC, the EAP application form, accompanied by a training and competitive program duly endorsed by the ACE Advisor of the relevant national sporting body.

The EAP will consult with the relevant Course Coordinator and will advise the student and the Course Coordinator, in writing, of the outcome of the application for EAP registration.

6. Flexible Study Options

6.1 It is recognised that elite athletes must meet competing needs in reconciling their training and competition calendars with the University academic calendar and course requirements. Some adjustments or modifications may be approved, consistent with the Academic Regulations and the student achieving all requirements for the degree (or other qualification), and subject to the principle of equity for all students within the EAP.

Where, for reasons outside the athlete's control and that could not, in the opinion of the EAC, have been reasonably anticipated, timely accommodations are not negotiated by an elite athlete, every effort will be made to implement a flexible study option, although a successful outcome cannot be guaranteed.

6.2 Enrolment-related needs

A student who has been registered under the EAP will seek endorsement of his/her enrolment (and any variation of enrolment) by the EAC prior to its submission to the Course Coordinator for approval. The EAC will be in close contact with the relevant ACE Advisor concerning the athlete's anticipated training and competitive program. This process will facilitate the:

- (a) tailoring of the student's academic program to match with his/her sporting commitments (this frequently may involve a reduced workload);
- (b) matching of lecture, tutorial, practical and laboratory timetables with sporting commitments (this may involve unit selection having regard to unit timetabling as well as course requirements);
- (c) extension of the duration of the degree (or other qualification) within the current maximum time limit (ten years);
- (d) taking of periods of leave of absence at times of intensive sporting commitments;
- (e) completion of units at other campuses of the University, offering of units to elite athletes from other universities or facilitation of cross-institutional enrolment at other universities where these methods facilitate a more flexible and appropriate program for the athletes concerned;
- (f) use of non-standard study periods, online and distance education delivery, where relevant, to achieve more flexible and timely delivery of the program;
- (g) recognition of appropriate credit achieved at interstate and overseas universities consistent with University policy.

6.3 Course-related needs

Consistent with current practice and commitment to web-enhanced teaching, elite athletes may have the facility to access flexibly class information and lecture notes and to negotiate some unit requirements directly with lecturers.

6.4 Assessment-related needs

Students who are registered in the EAP may, with the support of the EAC and approval of the relevant Course Co-ordinator:

- (a) negotiate assessment deadlines to accommodate their travel-related sporting commitments;
- (b) sit examinations externally where appropriate examination conditions have been established.