

## Authorised Elite Student-Athlete Flexibility Policy

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| <b>2. Approved by</b>                       | Education Committee                |

### Policy development steps

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| <b>3. Legal implications of this policy area.</b> |              |
| <b>4. Consultation for this policy</b>            |              |
| <b>5. Related procedures/guidance</b>             |              |
| <b>6. Version history</b>                         | V1.0         |
| <b>7. Monitoring</b>                              |              |
| <b>8. Date of issue</b>                           | October 2023 |
| <b>9. Review date</b>                             | October 2026 |

## **Authorised Elite Student Athlete Flexibility Policy**

### **1. Scope of the policy.**

- 1.1 This document is applicable to all current students studying at the University of Leicester, incorporating all levels and modes of study.
- 1.2 The Authorised Elite Student-Athlete Flexibility Policy covers situations where a student is studying for a module and is fully expecting to complete the required assessments within their departmental timescales, but an event beyond their control (for example, international team selection) prevents them from taking the assessment alongside the rest of the student body.
- 1.3 The Policy also covers situations where a student is unable to attend scheduled learning and teaching events as a result of sporting commitments.
- 1.4 This policy does NOT cover a situation whereby a student feels that due to sporting commitments, they will not be able to adequately prepare for teaching sessions, assessments, and examinations. Similarly, a student should not be expected to make repeated requests for assessment flexibility due to several international sporting commitments throughout the academic year, where the cumulative effect would have a negative impact upon the integrity of their academic studies. In such cases, other alternatives should be discussed with their named academic staff member, personal tutor, or supervisor.
- 1.5 Students undertaking a placement as part of their studies will generally not be eligible for flexibility under this policy, see section 8 below.

### **2. Introduction**

- 2.1 The university recognises that there are considerations and requirements for student-athletes which must be balanced against their academic commitments.
- 2.2 This policy provides a framework within which students and their academic schools can manage student sporting commitments within the wider context of their academic studies.

### **3. Principles**

- 3.1 Preservation of the integrity of a University of Leicester degree is paramount.
- 3.2 The University recognises the demands placed upon student-athletes and our responsibility to maintain equality in helping them meet these demands. Whilst all efforts will be made to accommodate sporting commitments, if this is not possible whilst maintaining the integrity of the programme, requests may not be approved.
- 3.3 In line with the University Mitigating Circumstances Policy if a recognisable serious or significant non-sporting commitment beyond their control has affected their health or personal life and as a result, they are, or have been, unable to submit or attend an assessment on time, they would need to submit a claim via MyStudentRecord.<sup>1</sup>

### **4. Responsibilities**

- 4.1 The Education Committee is responsible for approving this Policy.
- 4.2 The Curriculum and Quality Sub-Committee is responsible for monitoring the application of this policy, and for conducting reviews of the policy as may be required.

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<sup>1</sup> University of Leicester Mitigating circumstances (<https://le.ac.uk/policies/regulations/mitigating-circumstances>)

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- 4.3 Sport & Active Life are responsible for the clarification that student-athletes seeking academic flexibility participate in a Sport England or UK Sport recognised sport, at an elite level.
- 4.3.1 Sport and Active Life will provide a list of confirmed elite athletes to academic schools at the start of each year.
- 4.4 The Head of Sport within Sport & Active Life is responsible for confirming elite level eligibility, or making a determination where an eligibility question or challenge arises
- 4.5 The Sports Experience Officer (Performance) is responsible for providing support and guidance to the sport scholars whilst collaborating with the named academic staff member or personal tutor or supervisor. The Sports Experience Officer (Performance) will support the student in liaising with other academic colleagues where necessary. Ideally, a pre-academic year meeting will be convened to agree on a suitable progression plan for the student together with follow-up meetings to monitor progress and circumstances that may impact upon progression.
- 4.6 Business Administration Managers in Schools and the Student Records Team are responsible for ensuring that, where required, individual assessment allowances made under this policy are reflected in the student's record and communicated within the school as appropriate.
- 4.7 Student Athletes are responsible for:
- Obtaining a supporting statement from their National Governing Body as to the nature of the competition/training camp, including when the student-athlete was informed of their selection/possible selection and the duration of the event and or camp
  - Contacting their named academic staff member or personal tutor or supervisor in a timely manner if it is likely that there will be an impact between a scheduled international competition and their academic study or assessments.
  - At the earliest opportunity it is the responsibility of the student-athlete to contact their named academic staff member or personal tutor or supervisor if it is likely that there will be a clash between a scheduled international competition and their teaching, assessment.
  - The University acknowledges that the timescale for notification of selection is completely outside the student's control and may be on a relatively short timescale. The student should, however, contact their named academic staff member or personal tutor or supervisor as soon as they are aware that selection may be a possibility.
  - The personal responsibilities of the student-athlete themselves underpin this policy and the student-athlete is under obligation to discuss the possibility of affected learning and potentially missed taught programmes of study,<sup>5</sup> assessments<sup>4</sup> or examinations<sup>6</sup> with their named academic staff member or personal tutor or supervisor as soon as they are aware of it. Students are ultimately responsible for ensuring that they meet the academic requirements of their programme.
- 4.8 Heads of School should ensure that the status of students as elite athletes, as confirmed by Sport and Active Life, is shared with relevant colleagues within the school, notably Director of Education, Personal Tutors, and assessment lead roles. Academic Schools are then responsible for appointing a named academic staff member or personal tutor or supervisor for each elite athlete student within their respective school.

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- 4.9 Named academic staff member or personal tutor or supervisor are responsible for being the central point of contact for all students and members of staff in relation to the scope of the policy, approval and monitoring of the policy and agreement of any academic flexibility will be the students named academic staff member or personal tutor/supervisor within their respective department.
- 4.10 In discussion with the student and the named academic staff member or personal tutor/supervisor, the Sports Experience Officer (Performance) is responsible for identifying, in advance, the likely training and competition schedule impact on the student's taught programmes of study,<sup>5</sup> assessments<sup>4</sup> or examinations<sup>6</sup>.
- 4.11 The named academic staff member or personal tutor/supervisor should furthermore discuss and sign post students to the range of University support services, which all students can access throughout their academic journey at Leicester<sup>7</sup>

### 5. Definitions.

#### Sport

- 5.1 'Sport' refers only to student-athletes participating in sports recognised by Sport England<sup>2</sup> or UK Sport<sup>3</sup>. Where there may be any uncertainty regarding eligibility under this policy, this will be decided by the Head of Sport.
- 5.2 'Sport' refers only to those students who engage in sport at an elite level by;
- I. representing their respective country at a major international competition (NGB sanctioned and or supported)
  - II. being involved in preparation immediately preceding an international competition
  - III. participating in a major national championship. (NGB sanctioned and or supported)
  - IV. BUCS Sports. An individual athlete with a realistic medal chance in either individual or team events should be eligible for assessment flexibility. A 'realistic medal chance' will be defined by the University of Leicester Head of Sport & Sports Experience Officer (Performance)

#### Examinations and Assessments

- 5.3 University Senate Regulations require that student must submit all assigned work by the set deadline and attend any exams that are part of their course.<sup>4</sup>

### 6. Assessment Flexibility Options

- 6.1 The following sections set out the procedures for the various types of taught programme assessment.

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<sup>2</sup> Sport England- Established by Royal Charter in 1996, we're determined to give everyone in England the chance to benefit from sport and physical activity. <https://www.sportengland.org/>

<sup>3</sup> UK Sport- UK Sport is the nation's trusted high-performance experts, powering our greatest athletes, teams, sports, and events to achieve positive success. <https://www.uk sport.gov.uk/about-us>

<sup>4</sup> Examinations and assessment <https://le.ac.uk/policies/regulations/student-responsibilities>

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- 6.2 For each programme of study there is be a Head of School responsible for the secure operation of assessment procedures and practices.<sup>5</sup>
- 6.4 If there is a possibility that a taught programme assessment is going to be affected by an international selection, it is a student's responsibility to contact their school at the earliest opportunity to discuss this possibility with their named academic staff member, personal tutor, or supervisor. The student should also send details of their potentially affected assessments to the Sports Experience Officer (Performance).
- 6.5 The Sports Experience Officer (Performance) and named academic staff member, personal tutor or supervisor will then liaise to explore alternative options. Where the student is a confirmed elite athlete the following should be considered:
- An extension to deadlines (typically coursework only)
  - Undertaking an exam remotely (see the Policy on Remote Examinations)
  - Providing an alternative format for the assessment
  - Providing an opportunity to take the assessment at the next available date, with no cap applied
- 6.6 Consideration of available options will take due regard of the requirements of the academic programme and students should be aware that not all the above options will be available for all assessments. The ultimate responsibility for determining the academic viability of options for flexibility will remain with the academic school.
- 6.7 If assessment flexibility is granted it will be for the duration of the preparation and competition only. A student will be expected to return to the University as soon as is reasonable; extended absences for non-competitive reasons will not be eligible for assessment flexibility.
- 6.8 Should the Academic School feel that the student-athlete has not acted in a responsible manner in terms of their organisation and communication of selection (see Section 5) then the request for Academic Flexibility may be declined at this stage. The student may request to meet with the Head of School to discuss their declined application.
- 6.9 Partaking in elite sport cannot be used as mitigating circumstances or grounds for appeal relating to performance in assessment. It also cannot be used as mitigating circumstances for absence from assessment where this has not previously been managed under this policy.
- 7. Teaching**<sup>6</sup>
- 7.1 Participation in learning and teaching sessions, whether in person or digitally is an essential requirement for all campus-based programmes of study, full or part-time.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Regulations governing the assessment of taught programmes <https://le.ac.uk/policies/regulations/senate-regulations/senate-regulation-7>

<sup>6</sup> Regulations governing student obligations <https://le.ac.uk/policies/regulations/senate-regulations/senate-regulation-4>

<sup>7</sup> University of Leicester Support Services- From the moment you arrive until the day you graduate, all our Student Support Services are available to ensure you get the most out of your time at Leicester <https://le.ac.uk/study/wellbeing/support-services>

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- 7.2 Full-time students studying on campus must reside in Leicester or within easy commuting distance of the city for the duration of each semester, and all students are normally required to attend, in person or digitally all learning and teaching sessions associated with the programme of study on which they are registered.
- 7.3 Some programmes of study may contain modules in which attendance, either on campus or digitally is designated as compulsory for all students. In such cases this will be stated in module specifications and communicated to students by means of programme handbooks and related course literature.
- 7.4 It is the responsibility of every student to notify their home school of absences from scheduled learning and teaching sessions whether this is due to take place digitally or face-to-face. <sup>4</sup>
- 7.5 Where absence of up to one week is required, this can be authorised by a school under standard student engagement processes.
- 7.6 Schools are advised to offer flexibility as standard but there may be some teaching events which it is not possible for a student to miss, particularly in relation to externally accredited degrees or where there are practical teaching sessions which cannot easily be duplicated. As with assessment, a final judgement regarding the amount of from which it is possible for a student to be absent without risking the integrity of the overall University degree will be the responsibility of the academic school, in consultation with Sport and Active Life.
- 7.7 If a student requires an extended period of absence which would lead to a negative impact upon their ability to manage their academic commitments the student should discuss the absence period with their named academic staff member, personal tutor, or supervisor. If these sporting commitments will require an extended period away (for example more than a month or a commitment to relocate due to location training requirements) students may need to suspend their studies.
- 7.8 If a student decides to attend the sporting event without the required academic permission after all reasonable efforts have been made to accommodate sporting commitments (section 3) the student upon their return will be required to discuss their non-approved absence with their named academic staff member, personal tutor or supervisor and Head of School.
- 7.9 Partaking in elite sport cannot be used as mitigating circumstances or grounds for appeal relating to absence from teaching where this has not previously been managed under this policy.
- 8. Placements**
- 8.1 Where a student's programme contains a placement, it will typically not be possible to offer flexibility. This is due to the requirements of individual placements and the involvement of third-party providers which may be incompatible with attendance at sporting competitions.
- 8.2 For the avoidance of doubt the requirements of the placement will, always, be paramount. Where sporting commitments impact upon a student's ability to meet the requirements of their placement flexibility will not be offered.

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- 8.2 Where a student on placement is also required to submit academic work, students are required to inform their school of any sporting commitments which may impact via the process set out in section 6 above and the school will consider what options may be possible. Any final decision will be made in light of the centrality of the placement to the learning outcomes and competency thresholds of the degree and whether it is practically possible to offer flexibility within this regard.
- 8.3 Where a student has sporting commitments that may occur during a period of industrial placement (for example on a programme with a year in industry) and which may, therefore, affect their ability to attend placement they should discuss this with their academic contact in the school and Sport and Active Life before the commencement of the placement. Given the involvement of a third-party placement provider and the contractual relationship between the student and placement provider it may not be possible to offer flexibility within an industrial placement.