

Student Athlete Support Policy

Policy Category:	Academic - Student
Subject:	Support for Student Athletes
Approving Authority:	Academic Board
Responsible Officer:	Vice-President (Education & Student Success) and Executive Director, Students and Education Directorate
Responsible Office:	Academic Regulations, Quality and Standards (Students and Education Directorate)
Related Procedures:	N/A
Related College Policies:	Academic Regulations Mitigating Circumstances Policy Interruption of Study Policy
Effective Date:	1 September 2024
Supersedes:	International Athlete Support Policy
Next Review:	September 2027

I. PURPOSE & SCOPE

King's College London recognises the achievement of student athletes who gain selection to represent their country and the positive contribution this can make to the university. The university is committed to ensuring that student athletes do not suffer disadvantages as a result of their time in competition and individuals may be eligible for reasonable adjustments to help them meet the requirements of both their programme of study and their athletic commitments.

This policy applies to students who are selected by their respective National Governing Body (NGB) to represent their nation in a major international competition in a sport recognised at Olympic, World, European (or equivalent) and Commonwealth level. This policy also applies to student athletes who are selected as part of the King's Sport & Wellness Programme and are eligible for [the Talented Athlete Scholarship Scheme \(TASS\) Dual Career Accreditation](#). In certain circumstances, students who are attending special training camps may be considered under this policy, but this must form part of the selection process for a major competition as stated above, or as part of their inclusion in a national squad.

II. DEFINITIONS

The term 'student athlete' is used in this policy to refer to students who meet the above criteria. In all cases, the Head of King's Sport & Wellness will make the final decision as to whether a student's sporting commitment qualifies for the considerations outlined in this policy.

III. POLICY

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This policy outlines how the university will support student athletes to achieve academically and athletically. It has been developed to enable student athletes to complete their studies whilst balancing competing at a high level in their sport.
- 1.2 All student athletes will be given a consideration of circumstance for any scenario not covered by this policy.
- 1.3 This policy does not apply to students who attend or participate in national/international events or competitions that fall outside of the scope and parameters of this policy. In this scenario, students are encouraged to seek guidance from their department. The [Mitigating Circumstances Policy and Procedure](#) may be used, however there is no guarantee that an extension or deferral will be approved.
- 1.4 The university recognises the unique demands experienced by student athletes and the possible challenges that may arise. In addition to this policy, student athletes who find themselves facing challenging circumstances are encouraged to use the variety of resources and services available to them (Appendix 1).

2. Responsibilities

Responsibilities of students

- 2.1 Students are responsible for informing their department and King's Sports & Wellness of any athletic commitments that may interfere with their studies, such as their training and competition schedules. This should happen at the earliest opportunity, which would normally be at the start of each academic year.
- 2.2 Student athletes are likely to be subject to training and competitions that may interfere with their studies and should inform their department in advance of any absences. Students are responsible for making their own arrangements to catch up on material covered in any sessions missed. If a student is required to have a prolonged absence, an interruption of study may be appropriate and this should be discussed at the earliest opportunity (see Section 5).
- 2.3 Student athletes studying on a student visa should be mindful of the conditions of their visa and immigration rules relating to employment. Student athletes studying on a student visa should speak with [the Visa and International Student Advice team](#) to ensure compliance with the conditions of their visa.

Postgraduate Research Students

- 2.4 Postgraduate Research student athletes are expected to discuss and agree a plan of progression with their supervisor, which should balance their research progression alongside their athletic commitments. This should happen at the earliest opportunity, which would normally be at the start of each academic year.

Responsibilities of King's Sport & Wellness

- 2.5 King's Sport & Wellness will meet with student athletes to discuss their requirements and their expected schedule for the forthcoming year in relation to training and competitions. This should happen at the earliest opportunity, which would normally be at the start of each academic year.
- 2.6 King's Sport & Wellness will work in partnership with student athletes to ensure that there is transparency and understanding between the student and their academic department. This may include providing advice to the academic department on the flexibility that may be required throughout the year.

Responsibilities of faculties

- 2.7 Every student athlete should be given an opportunity to discuss their specific circumstances and how this might impact their studies with their personal tutor and/or an alternative staff member, such as their programme lead or Assessment Sub-Board (ASB) Chair. This should happen at the earliest opportunity, which would normally be at the start of each academic year and arrangements revisited as necessary and agreed throughout the year. Input from professional services should be sought where required.

3. Adjustments to Programme of Study

- 3.1 At the discretion of the ASB Chair (or nominee) and programme leader, a student may be permitted to change modules and/or seminar groups to help balance their academic and athletic commitments. This should be discussed at the earliest opportunity and input from departmental professional services colleagues may be required. Requests are not guaranteed to be accepted.
- 3.2 In exceptional circumstances and at the discretion of the ASB Chair (or nominee), a student athlete may be permitted to:
- a. transfer from full-time status to part-time status, where this is permitted in the student's programme specification
 - b. split their modules unevenly between semesters and/or academic years, where this is permitted in the student's programme specification

The ASB Chair (or nominee) should assess whether these adjustments are appropriate based on the student's personal and academic circumstances.

Where these above adjustments are not permitted in the student's programme specification, it may be possible to request an exemption in order to allow greater flexibility in the programme structure. Faculties should consult with [Academic Regulations, Quality and Standards \(ARQS\)](#) for advice on exemption requests or to discuss other possible accommodations. There is no guarantee that an exemption request will be approved.

- 3.3 Faculties should ensure that any implications of adjustments made to mode of attendance, timetabling, module distribution and/or periods of absence are made clear to the student athlete before adjustments are made. This would normally include a consideration of the following:
- the student's ability to meet the minimum progression requirements of their programme and/or their expected date of award and graduation;
 - the student's ability to complete their award within the maximum period of registration for their programme;
 - for students on Professional, Statutory and Professional Bodies (PSRB) programmes, any mandatory requirements expected by the relevant external regulator;
 - students studying on a student visa must speak with [the Visa and International Student Advice team](#) to ensure compliance with the conditions of their visa;
 - any potential impact to the student's fees and/or funding, including any additional fees the student may be liable for.
- 3.4 If there are acceptable reasons, Assessment Boards can extend the maximum period of registration permitted under a student's programme specification by up to 2 years (as long as the maximum period does not exceed the university's overall maximum of 10 years) without the need for an exemption. Further information can be found [here](#) and in the Academic Regulations.

Postgraduate Research Students

- 3.5 At the discretion of the Associate Dean for Doctoral Studies (or their nominee), the student's supervisor and their funder, a Postgraduate Research Student Athlete may be permitted to transfer from full-time to part-time status. The same group of decision makers may also decide to approve the progression timeline for research students to facilitate balancing their academic and sporting commitments. Advice on this should be sought from the [Centre for Doctoral Studies](#).

4. Assessment

- 4.1 Student athletes unable to sit an examination or meet an assignment deadline due to a sporting commitment are expected to comply with the university's [Mitigating Circumstances](#) process.

- 4.2 Flexible deadlines for assessments may be agreed on an individual basis between student athletes and their programme lead and ASB Chair (or nominee). Following an informal conversation between the student athlete, their programme lead and the ASB Chair, the student should make a formal request using the [Mitigating Circumstances process](#) based on the deadlines discussed and agreed. King's Sports & Wellness may advise if required.
- 4.3 All Mitigating Circumstances requests should be accompanied by third-party evidence of the student's sporting commitment (such as documentary evidence which confirms the student's participation in an international training camp or world-standard competition).
- 4.4 ASB Chairs (or their nominee) will be asked to consider cases where a student athlete is prevented from submitting a Mitigating Circumstances request in advance of an examination or assessment deadline as a result of a sports commitment undertaken at short notice. The student should inform their department as soon as possible of their circumstances and should submit a Mitigating Circumstances request with supporting evidence (including evidence of why they were unable to submit the Mitigating Circumstances request in advance of the examination or assessment deadline) as soon as possible.
- 4.5 If a student athlete is unable to attend a scheduled examination, they may request to defer the exam to the next assessment period via the [Mitigating Circumstances process](#). Faculties should ensure that student athletes are aware of the potential implications of deferring to the next assessment period (such as how this affects progression or date of award, or any PSRB implications). There is no guarantee that a request to defer an assessment will be approved.
- 4.6 On a case by case basis and at the discretion of the ASB Chair (or their nominee), internal unseen written examinations may be replaced by an alternative assessment if it is not appropriate for the student to defer the examination to the next assessment period.
- 4.7 If necessary, ASB Chairs (or their nominee) will be asked to consider requests concerning the need for student athletes to sit written examinations in situ at competition events/training camps. Such requests should be considered on a case by case basis and advice should be sought from the Examinations team, King's Sport & Wellness and relevant programme team colleagues.

Postgraduate Research Students

- 4.8 Research student athletes must engage with their supervisory team on the scheduling of their viva examination to accommodate examiner availability alongside their sporting activities. Research student athletes who experience delay with their thesis progression and submission may apply for an exemption to the regulations to extend their submission deadline (see academic regulations 6.9). Advice should be sought from the [Centre for Doctoral Studies](#) and should be

discussed at the earliest opportunity.

5. Interruption of Study

- 5.1 It is recognised that students may need to take a break from their studies as a result of their athletic commitments. An interruption of study is for a sustained period and the request is normally initiated by students on a voluntary basis. Faculties have the discretion to determine if an interruption of study is appropriate for a student based on their personal and academic circumstances. Any request should be considered in line with the university's [Interruption of Study policy and procedure](#).

Appendix 1: Links and Resources

Links

[Academic Regulations](#)

[King's Sport & Wellness](#)

[\(internal staff access only\) Exemptions from Academic Regulations](#)

[Academic Regulations, Quality and Standards](#)

[Centre for Doctoral Studies](#)

Associated Policies and Procedures

[Mitigating Circumstances Policy](#)

[Interruption of Study Policy](#)

Student Support: Information and Resources

[Student Services Online](#)

[Assessment – Mitigating Circumstances, Examinations](#)

[Health and Wellbeing](#)

[Disability Support](#)

[Fees, funding and money advice](#)

[Visa and International Student Advice](#)

[Money & Housing Advice](#)

[Personal Tutoring](#)

[KCLSU Advice](#)