



UNIVERSITY OF
LIMERICK
OLLSCOIL LUIMNIGH

High Performance Athlete Policy



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1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose

This policy document sets out the University of Limerick's policy and associated procedures relating to the award of high performance athlete (HPA) status on elite athlete students of the University.

The purpose of the policy is to provide all four UL faculties with a standard, campus-wide approach to the awarding of HPA status on enrolled elite athlete students. The policy sets out the conditions under which students are eligible to apply for HPA status and the step-by-step application process. Once a student has been awarded HPA status, the student is eligible to be in receipt of reasonable accommodations from the University to assist them to meet the requirements of both their degree programme and their outside sporting commitments.

1.2 Scope

1.2.1 *To whom does the policy apply?*

The policy applies to any dual-career athlete who is enrolled on an undergraduate or postgraduate degree programme at UL and who fulfils the conditions outlined in 1.2.2.

1.2.2 *In what situations does the policy apply?*

A student who fulfils any of the following conditions is eligible to apply for HPA status:

1. The student is a carded athlete under the [Sport Ireland International Carding Scheme](#).
2. The student represents Ireland in a sport recognised under an Irish national governing body of sport (NGB).
3. The student is in receipt of a UL high performance sports scholarship.
4. The student has a professional playing contract with a sporting organisation affiliated to an NGB recognised by Sport Ireland. The professional contract must indicate a relationship between athlete and organisation that would lead the High Performance Athlete Advisor (HPA Advisor) to believe that the contract has a significant impact on the dual career of the student athlete.
5. The student is recognised by the Gaelic Players Association (GPA) or the Women's Gaelic Players Association (WGPA) as a senior intercounty player under the terms of the student's annual grants scheme.
6. If the student is an international student, they represent their own country in a sport recognised by a body equivalent to an Irish NGB in that country.

1.2.3 Who is responsible for ensuring that the policy (and any associated procedure) is implemented and monitored?

The HPA Advisor (one per faculty) is responsible for ensuring that the policy is implemented and monitored.

1.3 Definitions

1.3.1 National Governing Body of Sport

The national governing bodies of sport (NGBs) are key Irish agencies that work closely with Sport Ireland to achieve the strategic and operational goals of Sport Ireland and the strategic priorities identified in the [National Sports Policy 2018–2017](#). (Definition based on <https://www.sportireland.ie/national-governing-bodies/ngb-overview>).

1.3.2 Dual Career

In the context of this policy, the term ‘dual career’ is used to refer to the pursuit by a high performance athlete of an athletic career while undertaking academic study at the University of Limerick.

2 Context

2.1 Legal and Regulatory Context

2.1.1 EU Guidelines on Dual Careers of Athletes (2013)

The European Commission recognises the importance, challenges and validity of athletes’ dual careers. Through this policy, the University of Limerick seeks to provide clear academic structures and supports for its HPA students in line with the European Commission’s [EU Guidelines on Dual Careers of Athletes \(2013\)](#) for member states, educational institutions and employers.

3 Policy Statements

3.1 Principles for High Performance Athlete Status

3.1.1 Recognising Dual-Career Athletes

In line with the [EU Guidelines on Dual Careers of Athletes](#), the University of Limerick recognises the importance, challenges and validity of its student athletes’ dual careers and endeavours to support such students to excel in their sport and meet the requirements of their degree programmes.

3.1.2 HPA Advisor

The role of the HPA Advisor is pivotal to the successful implementation of this policy. Each faculty’s HPA Advisor will have a clear understanding of the University’s

[academic regulations and procedures](#) and will, ideally, have some familiarity with the structures of high performance sport and the demands on elite athletes.

The University will identify the needs of each HPA Advisor and will provide appropriate training and support to meet those needs.

3.1.3 Reasonable Accommodations

UL is committed to assisting students with HPA status to meet the requirements of their degree programme while striving to reasonably accommodate their outside commitments. Students must be cognisant that there may be accrediting body criteria that could affect the accommodations that the University can make. Some of the reasonable accommodations that *may* be made at the discretion of the academic unit, course director or module leader include:

- Providing extra assistance with academic planning
- Offering alternative accommodation if exams, lectures, tutorials or labs coincide with training or an important sporting event
- Being flexible with assessment deadlines based on sports-related travel commitments
- Allowing the student, where possible, to sit exams externally under exam conditions within the student athlete's environment, including while travelling
- Offering flexible leave of absence when it is needed by the student athlete to meet their sporting commitments
- Offering flexibility in relation to alternative Co-op or Erasmus models once the alternative has been arranged one semester in advance
- Providing access to distance education materials and class notes for missed lectures, tutorials or labs, where appropriate and available
- Splitting or postponing semesters

4 Related Procedures for HPA Status

4.1 Faculties Appoint HPA Advisors

4.1.1 Each of the four faculties appoints a HPA Advisor for a minimum of three years.

4.2 Student Applies for HPA Status

4.2.1 The student discusses their eligibility for HPA status with the respective faculty HPA Advisor.

4.2.2 If the HPA Advisor believes the student is eligible for HPA status, the student completes the High Performance Athlete Status Application Form.

4.2.3 As part of the application, the student prepares documentation that proves they are a high performance athlete, such as a signed and dated reference from a qualified referee (e.g. coach, manager, development officer or NGB representative).

4.2.4 The student submits the completed application form and accompanying documentation to the HPA Advisor.

4.3 Application Is Evaluated

- 4.3.1 The application is evaluated by the HPA Status Committee.
- 4.3.2 On a case-by-case basis but no later than 10 working days after the application has been evaluated, the student's HPA Advisor lets the student know whether or not the application was successful.
- 4.3.3 If the application is successful, the student's HPA Advisor informs all relevant parties of the outcome.

4.4 HPA Status Is Reviewed

- 4.4.1 The student's HPA status is reviewed annually by the HPA Status Committee with a view to renewing it for another year.
- 4.4.2 The student must progress to the next year of their programme of study to be eligible to have their HPA status renewed.
- 4.4.3 The review is conducted at the start of the next academic year.
- 4.4.4 The High Performance Athlete Status Annual Review form forms the basis of the review.
- 4.4.5 On a case-by-case basis but no later than 10 working days after the annual review has been conducted, the student's HPA Advisor lets the student know whether or not their review was successful.
- 4.4.6 If the review is successful, the student's HPA status is renewed for another year.
- 4.4.7 The student's HPA Advisor informs all relevant parties of the outcome.

5 Related Documents

5.1 External Documents

- Sport Ireland (2020) *2021 international carding scheme guidelines: athletes and national governing bodies*, available: <https://www.sportireland.ie/sites/default/files/media/document/2020-10/international-carding-scheme-guidelines-2021.pdf> [accessed 12/01/2021].
- Sport Ireland (2019) *Criteria for the international carding scheme 2019*, available: https://www.sportireland.ie/sites/default/files/2019-10/criteria-for-the-international-carding-scheme-2019-v2.0-may-2019_0.pdf [accessed 12/01/2021].
- European Commission (2013) *EU guidelines on dual careers of athletes*, available: <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/3648359d-61c4-4132-b247-3438ee828450> [accessed 12/01/2021].

5.2 Internal Documents

- [Handbook of Academic Regulations and Procedures](#)

6 Document Control

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