

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

POLICY AND PROCEDURES ON ACADEMIC FLEXIBILITY (HIGH PERFORMANCE SPORTS)

BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Policy and Procedures on Academic Flexibility were approved by the University Senate on 18 October 2017. It applies to all undergraduate and postgraduate taught students.
- 1.2 The Policy and Procedures are designed for any student seeking to apply for flexibility in their studies as a consequence of their involvement in High Performance Sports (section 2.1 further refers).
- 1.3 Please note that appropriate Academic Flexibility is dependent upon the activity being undertaken. This may include, but is not limited to, authorised absence from a compulsory lecture, tutorial, or lab 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, examination date or examination location.

ELIGIBILITY

- 2.1 For the purpose of the Policy and Procedures, High Performance Sports is defined as any sporting activity where a student is competing, or training to compete, at senior international level (Olympic Games, Paralympic Games, World Championships, Commonwealth Games, European Championships and World University Games).
- 2.2 For competitions which do not fall under one of the categories above, consideration must be made on a case by case basis, taking advice from appropriate experts (e.g. Sport and Exercise Team, National Governing Bodies).
- 2.3 International students wishing to compete in Performance Level Sports must take additional advice from the University's International Student Advisers. Flexibility will only be granted in accordance with visa requirements/restrictions.

PROCESS

- 3.1 Students wishing to apply for Academic Flexibility are asked to complete the [Academic Flexibility Application Form](#).
- 3.2 All applications will be considered by the Academic Flexibility Group, the membership of which will be:
 - 2 academic members of staff drawn from the membership of the Undergraduate or Postgraduate Taught Committees (appropriate to the level of study being undertaken by the applicant). These members will be cross-institutional.
 - A member from the Sport and Exercise Team *and*
 - The Student Association Officer for Sport.

- 3.3 The Academic Flexibility Group will have the authority to grant and/or withdraw access to Academic Flexibility and be able to provide students with a range of Academic Flexibility recommendations which can be discussed with the appropriate school(s) for further agreement on their practical implementation.
- 3.4 The Academic Flexibility Group will ensure consistency in decision making across the institution and will provide students studying across different disciplines with access to a uniform approach.
- 3.5 Decisions taken by the Academic Flexibility Group will be discussed with and communicated to schools and appropriate flexibility initiated as required.
- 3.6 Students granted Academic Flexibility must discuss specific recommendations with all appropriate schools and should do this at the earliest point possible before flexibility is required.
- 3.7 Where Academic Flexibility is granted there can be no compromise on the academic standards required for the attainment of the credits in any University course. Students who have been granted Academic Flexibility will be required to demonstrate commitment to maintaining academic standards to retain access to Academic Flexibility. Students with Academic Flexibility will be expected to complete all elements of their course and/or degree programme (or a suitable alternative where appropriate) and should not be given exemption from completing compulsory pieces of assessed work.
- 3.8 An authorised absence can be defined as where a student has sought permission from an appropriate member of staff for the absence. Alternative examination arrangements should include taking the exam as a first attempt at the next available diet. However, where alternative exam locations and/or dates may be a viable alternative for students granted Academic Flexibility, the University's Examinations Office must be notified as early as possible.
- 3.9 Students who fail to identify themselves to the appropriate staff and are monitored under the University's Monitoring System will not receive any special dispensation. Students must comply with the Monitoring System. Decisions on class certificates and continued registration will be made based upon the ability of the student to meet the learning outcomes of their course and programme, and their ability to progress within the programme.
- 3.10 It is expected that each student will take a responsible approach to combining performance and academic commitments and act as Ambassadors for the University. It is the responsibility of the student to request Academic Flexibility under this Policy and to inform Schools of any potential calendar conflicts as soon as they are aware that this may be a possibility.
- 3.11 Academic Flexibility cannot be guaranteed at all times: it is dependant on the requirements of a student's Degree Programme. However, where possible, flexibility will be maintained in discussion with Schools, students and the Academic Flexibility Board.
- 3.12 Where a student's studies are deemed to be suffering, the University (by way of the Academic Flexibility Board) reserves the right to withdraw Academic Flexibility in discussion with the student.

PROLONGED ABSENCE

- 4.1 Where a prolonged period of absence is required and non-attendance affects compulsory classes, no more than one quarter of such classes may be missed.
- 4.2 When a student is required to miss more than one third of classes the student may be advised to, and is entitled to, take a leave of absence for a specified period, e.g. where a student is preparing for a major sporting event and this preparation cannot be undertaken whilst attending University.
- 4.3 A student may also be asked to consider, and is entitled to instigate, a change to mode of study switching between full-time and part-time modes of study (where available), e.g. to allow preparation for, and participation in, a major sporting event and progress on their programme of study.
- 4.4 Changes to a student's status would fall under the appropriate University General Regulations. Usual withdrawal, readmission and change to mode of study procedures will apply.

