KEY ASPECTS TO CONSIDER WHEN CHOOSING THE RIGHT EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION

Does the educational institution understand the needs and unique challenges that athlete’s face in combining academic and sporting pursuits, particularly as it relates to:

- Does it allow you to balance training and competition by providing flexibility with timetables, schoolwork and assignments? For example does it utilise online learning or other flexible learning so you can keep up with school work when you need to travel?
- Does it cater for different learning requirements and various educational abilities, whilst maintaining the highest academic standards?
- If there is a programme that supports combining your sport and education programmes, how many students are involved in the programme and how do you relate and integrate with other sport students along with the mainstream students at the educational institution?
- Is there a dedicated coordinator or person responsible within the institution that is the key point of contact to assist you and your entourage to resolve any issues that you may encounter in combing your educational and sporting pursuits?
- If you are in a team sport it is worth understanding how your particular needs will be supported and discussing this with the school and your team management.
- If your circumstances change in the near future are you able to transfer your credits that you have completed, and if so how easily within your country and internationally?

What type of facilities does the educational institution have access to:

- Are the facilities that are provided “fit for purpose” for training needs of all athletes and located close to the educational institution?
- Do the transport options available mean it is possible, in a reasonable time, to access these facilities?
- What type of links does the educational institution have to the broader sporting community:
  - Does the educational institution have access to the required expertise in terms of coaching and support services (for example biomechanics, nutrition, sports psychology, physiotherapy, etc) if you are to be based there?
  - Does the educational institution have demonstrated links with other national or international sporting authorities from which to draw expertise and advice?
  - Is the educational institution supported by the local government and/or community?
  - Is there access available for personal coaches to use venues and facilities?
Whilst the above is not an exhaustive list it should provide you with some of the key areas of focus when looking to find an academic institution that will understand the unique requirements that are faced in combining an elite sporting and education career.

In order to provide insight into how athlete friendly education centres operate, a number of short case examples have been researched. Here are a few schools and centres that cater to student athlete needs and identify the different ways that schools and centres address this area.

**Athletes Friendly Institutions (existing pdfs):**

- **Centre Sport-Etudes, Lausanne - Switzerland**
- **Stiftung Sport-Gymnasium, Davos - Switzerland**
- **Westfields Sports High School, Sydney - Australia**
- **Lampang Sports School, Lampang - Thailand**
- **Plymouth College, Devon - Great Britain**