

STRETCHED DEGREE POLICY (SPORT)

1. Scope of the Policy

This document sets out the following:

Background (Section 2)

Responsibilities of students in regard to their studies (Section 3)

The standard of the performer that SDC will support in an application for a stretched degree (Section 4)

The stretched degree (sport) application process (Section 5)

This policy does cover a situation whereby a student feels that due to high level sporting commitments he/she will not be able to adequately prepare for all the required assessments for that part of the course, but would be able to complete a reduced study load. If even a reduced study load is considered untenable a leave of absence should be discussed with the Personal Tutor.

This policy does NOT cover situations

where a student is studying for a module and is fully expecting to complete the required assessments within the University timescales but an event beyond his/her control (for example international team selection) prevents him/her taking the assessment alongside the rest of the student body. In this case the Assessment Flexibility policy should be discussed with the Personal Tutor.

where a student is finding their academic load difficult, regardless of any sporting commitments they may have. In this case the student should talk to their Personal Tutor about other possible options relating to reducing the academic requirements of their course.

where a student wishes to stretch their degree for reasons other than sport. In this case, students should contact their Departmental Administrator for advice in the first instance.

2. Background to the Policy

Preservation of the integrity of a Loughborough University degree is paramount. However, the University recognises the dual demands placed upon student-athletes and our responsibility in helping them meet those demands. It is also essential to maintain equitable treatment of all students including student-athletes.

3. Student Responsibility

The onus will always remain with the student-athlete to contact their department if they wish to be considered for a stretched degree. The personal responsibilities of the student-athlete themselves underpin this policy and the student-athlete is under obligation to discuss the possibility of stretching a Part of their degree during the final term of the preceding year. Applications received after this date will only be considered in exceptional circumstances.

4. Definitions

4.1 Sport

- The University recognises that students participate in a wide range of sporting and recreational activities. However, only those recognised by UK Sport¹, the English Institute of Sport² or as Loughborough University performance sports³ will be eligible to request a stretched degree for sports related reasons⁴.

4.2 The Performance Standard

- The athlete should have a realistic opportunity of competing at senior international level in their sport within 18 months of commencing a stretch degree study mode, or be aiming for a specified major international event (e.g. World Student Games, European Championships, World Championships, Commonwealth Games or Olympics).
- Performers who fall just short of these criteria but who have other extenuating circumstances may also be considered for SDC support.

4.3 Course and Module Criteria

- A stretched degree should not normally be requested for the first academic year of a programme.
- One year of a full-time degree programme may not normally be stretched over more than two years
- The stretched module split should normally be 60:60, 50:70 or 70:50 between the two years. In exceptional circumstances (for example a major competition falling during one semester) the split may be outside these criteria with departmental agreement.

4.4 Assessments

- Student athletes will undertake all the assessments pertaining to the modules in that part of the stretched degree.
- Students should be aware that "stretching" their degree could have implications for the timing of reassessments and/or progression. All undergraduate students on stretched degrees will be considered annually by a Programme Board in June/July. However, reassessment rights will only be awarded in the first half of the stretched Part where the student a) has failed to achieve module mark requirements as set out in Programme Regulations and/or b) has failed to achieve modular credit in 30 credits or more. In the case of b) students will not be permitted to take reassessment in all modules and will have to "carry" 20 credits until the final Programme Board for their Part.
- If there is a possibility of a missed assessment relating to sporting commitments then the student must refer to the assessment flexibility policy as soon as they are aware it could be a possibility.

¹ "UK Sport will work in partnership to lead sport in the UK to world-class success." www.uk-sport.gov.uk.

² www.eis2win.co.uk

³ http://sdc.lboro.ac.uk/performance_sport/?cat_id=20&level=1

⁴ Students wishing to stretch their degree for reasons other than sport will need approval from their academic department and the appropriate Associate Dean for Teaching

5. Stretched Degree Procedure

The following sections set out the procedures for requesting a stretched degree.

- AT THE EARLIEST OPPORTUNITY the student-athlete should discuss the possibility of a stretched degree with his/her University coach in relation to the criteria set out in section 4.2. In sports without a University coach this initial discussion should take place with the Performance Sport Education & Welfare Manager. This should take place during the final term preceding the start of the academic year the student wishes to stretch.
- The student-athlete should discuss the stretched degree request with their Personal Tutor and should be aware that due to academic constraints a stretched degree may not be possible in all programmes. Once approved by SDC, the final decision on any request remains with the student's academic department.
- The student must complete the application for a stretched degree (sport) form.
- The student must obtain a supporting statement from their Loughborough University coach or an NGB supporting statement if a non-SDC sport (proforma attached).
- The Deputy Director of Sport or designated nominee will assess the application and indicate whether or not it is supported by SDC.
- If the Deputy Director of Sport feels that the applicant does not meet the Performance Standard (see Section 4) or has not acted in a responsible manner in terms of their organisation and communication of their selection (see Section 3) then the request for a stretched degree may be declined at this stage. The student may request to meet with the Deputy Director of Sport to discuss their declined application. Applications that are not supported by SDC will not be forwarded to the Academic Department. Academic Departments are not expected to approve applications for a stretched degree for sporting reasons without support from SDC.
- Where an application is supported by SDC, it will be forwarded to the student's academic department where the Personal Tutor and Head of Department will assess the application and indicate whether or not they support it, including an indication of the proposed schedule of modules.
- If the Academic Department feels that the applicant has not acted in a responsible manner in terms of their organisation and communication of selection (see Section 3) then the request for a stretched degree may be declined at this stage. The student may request to meet with the Head of Department to discuss their declined application.
- If the Academic Department supports the application, they will request a wavier of programme regulations from the appropriate AD(T) and forward the approved application to the Academic Registry (Student Office).
- In keeping with the expectation that student-athletes will proactively manage their affairs, **the deadline for a stretched degree to be approved is 15 September before the start of each academic year** unless there are exceptional circumstances.

6. Further Information

For an initial discussion on the level of competition the student-athlete would like to attend please contact:

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