



UMEÅ UNIVERSITET

# **RULE – LOCAL REGULATIONS FOR DUAL CAREERS OF ELITE ATHLETES AT UMEÅ UNIVERSITY**

Type of document:	Rule
Date:	2023-10-27
Reg. no.:	FS 1.1-1941-23
Decided by:	Vice-Chancellor
Period of validity:	2023-10-27 – until further notice
Area:	First- and second-cycle education, qualifying courses and introductory education, and higher education access programme
Responsible management unit:	Planning Office/Umeå School of Sport Sciences
Replaces documents:	Rule – Local Regulations for Dual Careers of Elite Athletes at Umeå University, Reg. No. FS 1.1-1120-22, and Policy – Dual Careers, Elite Sports and Studies at Umeå University, Reg. No. FS 1.1.1503-18, Date: 2022-06-10



# Contents

1.	Description.....	3
2.	Background.....	3
3.	Organisation .....	3
4.	Undertaking of the student and of the University .....	3
	4.1 Definition of student athlete.....	4
	4.2 International students .....	4
	4.3 Admission and requirements .....	5
5.	Agreements.....	5
	5.1 Processing and copies.....	5
	5.2 Period of validity .....	5
6.	Adapted studies .....	5
	6.1 Forward planning.....	6
	6.2 Distance learning.....	6
	6.3 Decelerated or accelerated pace of study.....	6
7.	Education and training .....	7
	7.1 Lectures.....	7
	7.2 Scheduling and group assignments .....	7
	7.3 Internship/work-based training (VFU) placement .....	7
8.	Examinations (forms of assessment).....	8
	8.1 Examination at another location .....	8
	8.2 Examination at another time.....	9
	8.3 Other forms of assessment .....	9
	8.4 Examination timing .....	10
	8.5 Bachelor's and Master's thesis.....	10
9.	Finances .....	10
	9.1 Compensation to faculties/departments/units/teachers .....	10



# UMEÅ UNIVERSITET

## 1. Description

This document describes Umeå University's rule and local regulations regarding dual careers for elite athletes. The rule describes the opportunities that the elite sports agreement provides for the student and the accommodations that departments/units are to make to the best of their ability.

## 2. Background

The national model for the National Sports University (RIU) contains four development components:

1. Needs expressed by the Swedish Sports Confederation (RF) for specific education measures.
2. The possibility for the elite athlete to combine university studies with elite sport.
3. Promotion of a development environment that enables the pursuit of elite sport.
4. Collaboration between the sports sector and the university in terms of practice-oriented elite sports research.

The core of the model is that the higher education institution (HEI) shall enable what is known as dual careers (DC). A *dual career* in sport summarises the requirements for elite athletes to successfully begin, develop and complete an elite sport career as part of a lifelong career, combined with the pursuit of education.<sup>1</sup>

This policy is based on the *National Guidelines for Dual Careers* and the national manual developed by the Swedish Sports Confederation together with representatives from the Swedish National Sports University (RIU) and Elite-Sports-Friendly Universities. This document replaces the previously adopted document, *Policy – Dual Careers, Elite Sports and Studies at Umeå University*, Reg. No.: FS 1.1.1503-18, Date: 2018-08-28.

## 3. Organisation

The Vice-Chancellor has delegated responsibility and organisation based on the Swedish National Sports University Agreement<sup>2</sup> and organisation related to elite sports agreements with the School of Sport Sciences.

## 4. Undertaking of the student and of the University

For the elite sports agreement to work, the student must plan their sports activities and studies, and must notify the study counsellor or relevant teachers in good time (see section 6.1) when they need a study adaptation.

It is the student's responsibility to initiate contact with the responsible staff at Umeå University, such as teachers, programme/study counsellors, programme coordinators and/or the School of Sport Science's Dual Career Coordinator and Dual Career Counsellor, to ask for help when study adaptations are needed in cases where sport conflicts with studies. The University staff shall provide assistance in order to give the student good conditions for combining elite sport with academic studies at Umeå University while maintaining their well-being.

---

<sup>1</sup> Swedish Sports Confederation (2018). National guidelines for elite athletes' dual careers - Guiding recommendations for the combination of elite sport and higher education studies at the Swedish Sports University (RIU) and Elite Sport Friendly Universities (EVL). Stockholm: Swedish Sports Confederation. Retrieved 220419: <https://www.rf.se/contentassets/12b2b3db9b88485e847b3c7771d21b3d/nationella-riktlinjer-dubbla-karriarer.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Agreement regarding the Swedish National Sports University (RIU) between RIU/EVL universities and the Swedish Sports Confederation (RF).



## UMEÅ UNIVERSITET

In case of disagreement, both the teacher and the student can contact the School of Sport Sciences for advice and support on how to handle the matter.

### 4.1 Definition of student athlete

Umeå University applies two levels of elite sports agreements. Which level of agreement the student signs depends on the requirements they meet. The requirements are described according to two different definitions of *elite athlete*.

The Swedish Sports Confederation (RF) has a stricter definition of student athlete, and such students are referred to as RIU students. To obtain this type of agreement, the student athlete must belong to a Swedish sports federation (SF), and the SF must certify that the student athlete meets the requirements. Umeå University also has its own, broader, definition of student athlete, referred to as an IH student (sports university student). For such an agreement, the student athlete's association must certify that the requirements are met.

A student athlete engages in elite sport to such an extent that adapted studies are desirable, and at least one of the following criteria must be met:

<b>RIU student</b> Elite sports student RIU level <i>Certified by SF</i>	<b>IH student</b> Elite sports student UmU level <i>Certified by the association</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Selected for the Swedish junior or senior national team.</li> <li>• Competes at a high international level in an individual sport.</li> <li>• Plays a team ball sport in the highest division at the national or international senior level.</li> <li>• Is identified by or participates in the development activities of the national team.</li> <li>• Is deemed capable of eventually taking a place in the senior national team or competing at a high international level.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Competes and performs in an individual sport at the national championship level* or a higher level.</li> <li>• Plays a team ball sport in the second highest division at the national senior level (provided there are at least four).</li> <li>• Is the head coach of an elite individual or team.</li> <li>• Is a federation captain or coach of a junior or senior national team.</li> <li>• Is a federation referee at the national and/or international level.</li> </ul> <p><i>* Provided that the championship required qualifying and/or that the active person belongs to the championship's so-called elite class, such as shooting.</i></p>

### 4.2 International students

International students have the same opportunity to sign an elite sports agreement through the School of Sport Sciences as other student athlete, provided they belong to the corresponding RIU level. The relevant National Sports Federation needs to certify their athlete status level.



## UMEÅ UNIVERSITET

### 4.3 Admission and requirements

Student athletes have no special priority for places on courses/programmes, and the requirements for student athletes shall be the same as for other students. The student must, on request, be able to account for and provide proof of any sporting event that prevents the student from attending compulsory course components.

## 5. Agreements

### 5.1 Processing and copies

When a certificate from the relevant specialised sports federation (for RIU students) or the relevant association (for IH students) has been received, the elite sports agreement is signed by the student in question and by the School of Sport Sciences' Head of Unit, who is also the Dual Career Coordinator. The agreement is drawn up in two identical copies. The student receives one original and the other is filed at the Faculty Office of the School of Sport Sciences.

The School of Sport Sciences will send a copy of the agreement to the respective study counsellor with a request to inform the teachers who may be affected.

The student must be able to present their agreement upon request, and departments and units may request a copy of the agreement at any time.

### 5.2 Period of validity

The elite sports agreement is usually signed when the student begins their studies or when the need for a study adaptation arises. The signed elite sports agreement is valid as long as the student is both studying at Umeå University and playing sports at a certified elite level. This is followed up by the School of Sport Sciences once a year.

In the interim, the student is obliged to notify the Faculty Office of the School of Sport Sciences of any changes, such as a change of club or level, approved leave from studies, etc. The student is also obliged to notify the Faculty Office of the School of Sport Sciences if they have completed their studies or are no longer playing sports at the elite level.

## 6. Adapted studies

Both research and proven experience have shown that flexible studies, in the form of different types of study adaptations, contribute to successful management of dual careers by student athletes.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> Stambulova, N., & Wylleman, P. (2019). Psychology of athletes' dual careers: A state-of-the-art critical review of the European discourse. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, 42, 74–88. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psychsport.2018.11.013>;  
Linnér, L., Stambulova, N., & Ziegert, K. (2021). Maintaining dual career balance: A scenario perspective on Swedish university student athletes' experiences and coping. *Scandinavian Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology*, 3, 47–55. <https://doi.org/10.7146/sjsep.v3i.125734>; <https://doi.org/10.7146/sjsep.v3i.125734>;  
Linnér L., Stambulova, N., & Franck, A. (2021). RIU/EVL Barometer 2021 – National report to the Swedish Sports Confederation [statistical report]. Swedish Sports Confederation.



# UMEÅ UNIVERSITET

## Point of departure

The higher education institution must provide student athletes with the option for an individualised study plan in their study programme and its various modules, as well as in freestanding courses. The institution must provide students with opportunities for adapted studies in terms of teaching methods, pace of study and exams.<sup>4</sup>

Students cannot request study adaptations for studies beyond full-time studies unless these are part of the individual study plan drawn up in consultation with the study counsellor. The right to study adaptations applies as long as elite sport is practised.

## 6.1 Forward planning

Student-athletes are expected to plan well in advance if they need study adaptations. As soon as the course schedule and the training/competition schedule are ready, the student must initiate and maintain a dialog with the respective study counsellor or teacher about any study adaptations needed. Good planning normally means at least four (4) weeks for examinations at another location and at least two (2) weeks for other examinations. Exceptional cases apply when the student athlete receives late notice of selection, such as at a camp, competition or match, in which case the department or unit must investigate the possibilities of assisting with study adaptation anyway.

## 6.2 Distance learning

For many student athletes, a relatively simple solution may be to opt for distance learning courses or programmes. However, even distance learning courses and programmes may involve some mandatory on-campus meetings.

A student athlete cannot expect or request to take a campus-based programme or freestanding course entirely at a distance.

## 6.3 Decelerated or accelerated pace of study

Students with an elite sports agreement may request an adapted course of study with a possible decelerated or accelerated pace of study. If this is the case, the student is responsible for contacting the respective study counsellor to discuss the extent and scope to which it is possible to adapt the course of study. They will then work together to draw up a documented individual study plan, taking particular account of the entry requirements for future courses. One option may be to vary the pace of study, i.e. study intensively during certain periods of the year and less during other periods.

When discussing a change in the pace of study, the student must provide training, match and travel schedules. The Dual Career Coordinator of the School of Sport Sciences can be a helpful support for the study counsellors at the departments in this work.

---

<sup>4</sup> Agreement regarding the Swedish Sports University (RIU) between RIU/EVL universities and the Swedish Sports Confederation (RF). § 4 The university's undertaking: Adapted studies.



# UMEÅ UNIVERSITET

A decelerated pace of study may affect the possibility of obtaining student finance from the Swedish Board of Student Finance (CSN) and the amount of student finance. The student is responsible for contacting CSN if there is any uncertainty about how the pace of study affects their student grants and loans.

## 7. Education and training

### 7.1 Lectures

If a student athlete is unable to attend lectures due to their sports activities, the student is encouraged to first try to gain access to lecture notes from fellow students and the teacher concerned. As regards the recording of lectures, rules for audio recording, photography and filming etc. apply in connection with teaching situations.<sup>5</sup>

### 7.2 Scheduling and group assignments

If possible, it is a good idea for the student athlete and the teacher to have a timely dialogue when group assignments are made. This initiative should be taken by the student concerned.

However, flexibility in terms of group assignments with different scheduled times is desirable, i.e. that student athletes are given times that are better suited to their training, competition or match schedule. In such case, the student athlete is responsible for contacting the teacher/course coordinator with a reasoned proposal for group membership based on the schedule.

### 7.3 Internship/work-based training (VFU) placement

#### **Point of departure**

The student athlete shall be offered an internship/work-based training (VFU) placement in a place where they can combine training/competition and the placement. In case of competition for placements, student athletes are included in one of the preferential groups as set out in the document “Rules for placements and study visits”.

The student athlete must attach their elite sports agreement when applying for a specific internship/VFU placement and provide a rationale for their choice of placement site based on their ability to pursue their elite sports endeavours.

If there is competition for placements between student athletes, student athletes at the RIU level shall be given priority over student athletes at the UmU level. If the problem persists, the placement coordinator can, in dialogue with the Dual Career Coordinator of the School of Sport Sciences, make an assessment based on the students’ sporting needs. Student athletes must be offered a placement at a site where the student athlete can combine

---

<sup>5</sup> Rules for audio recording, photography and filming etc. in connection with teaching situations



## UMEÅ UNIVERSITET

training/competition with a placement, if such a site is available.

If the student is not able to fully attend the internship/VFU placement due to sporting reasons (such as competition/match/camp), the opportunity to complete part or all of the placement at another time shall be offered, which in some cases may lead to a reduced pace of study.

## 8. Examinations (forms of assessment)

### 8.1 Examination at another location

#### Point of departure

Elite sports agreements are considered special circumstances, which is why such students have the right to take examinations elsewhere under the following conditions:

“Examinations are normally conducted at the place where the course is given or is location-dependent. If special circumstances exist, a student may be given the opportunity to take the examination elsewhere. A student who wishes to take an examination elsewhere must apply to the responsible department at least one month before the examination in question.

The examiner may decide that an examination may be conducted at another location if it can be conducted in a manner equivalent to that at the main location and a venue can be arranged at a reasonable cost to the department and that the examination can be conducted at the same time as the examination at the main location. Student athletes who have an elite sports agreement with Umeå University are considered to have special circumstances for taking the examination elsewhere.”<sup>6</sup>

If the student cannot attend the regular examination session at the time of the examination due to a competition, match or training camp elsewhere, the student may take the examination at the place where they are, on the same day and at the same time as other students, provided that the examination is conducted in a legally compliant manner. The student must sit for the examination at another government authority, preferably at another higher education institution. If this is not possible, an office of the Swedish Public Employment Service, a police station, a learning centre or similar can be contacted. The student is responsible for notifying the relevant staff of the need to take the examination elsewhere and for investigating the alternatives.

In dialogue between the programme/study counsellor, the teacher concerned and the student, a decision is made regarding who will contact the relevant authority to schedule the examination. Any additional costs for examinations are the responsibility of the department responsible for the course. Please see section 9.1 for additional information about financial compensation.

The School of Sport Sciences can be contacted for help with the booking of a venue and invigilators. There are established partnerships with other Swedish National Sports Universities and elite-sports-friendly universities.<sup>7</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> Reg. no.: FS 1.1.-574-22 Rules for grading and examination

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.rf.se/RFarbetarmed/Elitidrott/riksidrottsuniversitetochelitidrottsvanligalarosaten>





## UMEÅ UNIVERSITET

## 8.2 Examination at another time

### Point of departure

It is always the student's responsibility to give advance notice of absence and to be able to provide a valid reason for the absence on request.

When both the examination and the make-up examination conflict with a sports activity, the student should be offered an additional make-up examination in the near future (within 2 months from the date of the make-up examination). The timing of the additional examination should be agreed between the student and the teacher based on the rules and guidelines for first-cycle (undergraduate) programmes.

When both examinations and make-up examinations conflict with international championships such as a European Championship, World Championship, the Olympics and the Paralympics, the student-athlete should be offered an additional examination opportunity in close proximity.

In the case of other training and competition activities at international level, the student should be offered an additional test opportunity in the near future. This is done to allow the student to follow their regular (or individual) study plan and to promote a good student completion rate.

Similarly, when examinations and make-up examinations conflict with national competitions and league matches, the department should endeavour to offer an additional examination opportunity in the near future.

The timing of the additional examination should be discussed with the student in advance so that it is scheduled according to their ability to complete the examination.

If the student is not able to take the examination at the regular session or at the make-up examination session, the department/unit should review whether the student can take the examination with another course group in the near future. This is done in order to avoid students having to take several examinations at the January/August resits.

## 8.3 Other forms of assessment

If a student with an elite sports agreement due to competition/camp/training is not able to take part a compulsory element, such as a take-home examination, oral examination, participation in compulsory educational components, group assignment, memorandum, laboratory work or seminar, the teacher should investigate the possibility of the student being assessed online or whether the compulsory element can be replaced with another assignment of a scope that is in reasonable proportion to the element. see "Rules for first and second-cycle grading and examinations".<sup>8</sup>

The examiner has the right to interpret and make decisions in each individual case.

If an alternative form of assessment is not available, students should be referred to the make-up examination session. If it is not practically possible for the student to participate in the make-up examination session because it conflicts with a sports activity, the student shall be offered another make-up examination session.

---

<sup>8</sup> Reg. no: FS 1.1.-574-22 Rules for grading and examination



## UMEÅ UNIVERSITET

### 8.4 Examination timing

In cases where a student athlete needs to sit for an examination earlier or later than the rest of the student group, for example due to travel to and from competitions or matches, this should be possible, provided that the examination can be conducted in a legally compliant manner. This means, for example, that the examination session time can only marginally overlap the regular session time, and before a decision on overlapping is made, it must be ensured that students who take the examination earlier/later do not have the opportunity to interact with the other students.

### 8.5 Bachelor's and Master's thesis

Students with an elite sports agreement shall be given the opportunity to write their Bachelor's and Master's (60 or 120 credits) theses individually, even if the department's practice requires students to write in pairs.

## 9. Finances

### 9.1 Compensation to faculties/departments/units/teachers

Each year, the School of Sport Sciences receives an undergraduate education grant from University Management. These resources are distributed in full to the faculties in October/November under the name "elite sports funds".<sup>9</sup> The funds are distributed as a percentage based on the number of student athletes at each faculty. Each faculty then distributes the funds to the respective department/unit as compensation for overheads relating to the student athletes, such as extra hours for teachers or costs relating to examinations elsewhere.

---

<sup>9</sup> Operational plan 2015 and Resource allocation/budget 2015, Faculty of Social Sciences, page 65 (Chapter 7, Faculty joint decisions).