EQUALITY SCREENING PRO - FORMA

Policy Title: Student Athlete Policy

Decision: Screen out (with mitigation)

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Date of Completion: 17 September 2026

Part 1: Policy Scoping

Information about the policy

Name of the Policy
Student Athlete Policy

Is this an existing, revised, or new policy?
This is a merger of a number of operational documents concerning Elite Athletes and Talented Athletes, followed by a significant revision.

What is it trying to achieve?
This Policy formalises the University's commitment to enabling student athletes to succeed in higher education and provides a consistent institutional framework to guide staff and students in ensuring that Student Athletes are supported to pursue academic study and sporting achievement concurrently.

Are there any Section 75 categories which might be expected to benefit from the policy? If so, explain how below.

Note: The Section 75 categories are:

- religious belief
- political opinion
- racial group
- age
- marital status
- sexual orientation
- sex (men and women generally)
- disability
- dependants

No. The new policy is not intended to have a differential impact on members of any protected characteristic group. The definition of a student athlete, provided they are recognised by their relevant governing body, allows for the athlete to be a para-athlete, or to be an international sportsperson from any country, and it encompasses sports which typically involve older athletes as well as those which typically involve young athletes. It also encompasses male and female athletes.

Who initiated or wrote the policy?
This Policy was initiated following a policy review in 2025 by the Learning Enhancement Directorate that identified operational documents related to this matter had required an update. This revised Policy was updated by the Talented Athletes Task and Finish Group.

Who owns and implements the policy?
The policy is owned jointly by UU Sport (sporting aspects) and the Learning Enhancement Directorate (academic aspects), with day-to-day implementation carried out by designated staff within UU Sport and Schools.

Implementation factors

Are there any factors which could contribute to or weaken the intended aim or outcome of the policy?

Other: UK visa requirements for international student athletes; Sport Ireland Accreditation for Student Athlete Support accreditation; consistent application of the policy across stakeholders.

Main stakeholders affected

Who are the internal and external stakeholders (actual or potential) that the policy will impact upon?

- Staff
- Students (namely students meeting the definition of Student Athlete)
- Prospective students

Other policies with a bearing on this policy

Policy: Admissions Policy
Policy owner: Chief People Officer

Policy: Tuition Fee Liability Policy
Policy owner: Chief Finance Officer

Policy: Deregistration Policy
Policy owner: Chief People Officer

Policy: Student Conduct Ordinance
Policy owner: University Secretary

Policy: Fitness to Study Policy and Procedure
Policy owner: Pro-Vice Chancellor Academic Quality and Student Experience

Available evidence

What evidence or information (both qualitative and quantitative) have you gathered to inform this policy? Please specify details for each of the Section 75 categories below.

Religious Belief

The University's EO data were reviewed. On 6 February 2026, our staff profile was 53.9% Catholic and 46.1% Protestant. Compared with 6 February 2021, this indicates a 3.9% increase in Catholic staff.

In the Academic Year (AY) 2025 to 2026, 70.1% of our students identified as Christian and 12.9% identified as having 'No Religion'. Compared with AY 2020 to 2021, this indicates a 3.7% increase in students who identified as Christian and a 2.4% increase in students who identified as having 'No Religion'.

Specifically for our Talented Athletes scheme, 150 students entered through this route in AY2025-2026. 88.7% identified as Christian, 6.7% identified as having 'No Religion and 4.6% indicated they would 'Prefer not to say'.

Political Opinion

The University does not collect information on Political Opinion or make assumptions regarding Political Opinion based on Community Background.

Racial Group

The University's EO data were reviewed. On 6 February 2026, our staff profile was 92.0% White and 8.0% Black and Minority Ethnic (BME). This indicates a 2% increase in BME staff compared with 2021.

In AY 2025 - 2026, 11.6% of students identified as BME. This indicates a 5.8% increase in BME students compared with AY 2020 to 2021.
Our BME profile suggests that we are twice as diverse as the local population, as the Northern Ireland Census 2021 suggests that 3.4% of the NI population is BME.

Specifically for our Talented Athletes scheme, 150 students entered through this route in AY2025-2026. 95.3% reported their ethnicity as white, 2.7% as BME and 2% indicated they would 'Prefer not to say',

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Age

The University's EO data were reviewed. On 6 February 2026, 29.7% of our staff were in the 46-55 age band and 26.0% of staff were in the 36-45 age band. 25.2% of staff were aged '56 and above', which represents a 0.8% increase in staff aged '56 and above' compared to 2021.

In AY 2025 to 2026, the majority of students (57.2%) were aged '21 and under 40'. This indicates a 7.6% decrease in students in this category since AY 2020 to 2021. The proportion of students within the '18 and under 21' category has increased by 9% compared to 2021, sitting now at 33.7%.

Specifically for our Talented Athletes scheme, 150 students entered through this route in AY2025-2026. As of the 1st October 2025, 68% were aged 18, 29.3% aged 19, and 2.7% aged 20-23.

Marital Status

The University's EO data were reviewed. In February 2026, 55.1% of staff were 'Married or in a Civil Partnership', a decrease of 4.8% compared to 2021.

In AY 2025 to 2026, 77.8% of students were 'Single', a 9.3% increase compared with AY 2020 to 2021.

Specifically for our Talented Athletes scheme, 150 students entered through this route in AY2025-2026. 97.3% were single, and 2.7% indicated they would 'Prefer not to say'.

Sexual Orientation

The University's EO data were reviewed. In 2026, 75.5% of staff were 'Heterosexual'; 5.0% were 'Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual (LGB)' and 19.5% were 'Not Known'. This indicates a 2.3% increase in LGB staff compared with 2021.

Although we collect student data on sexual orientation, this is not considered to be reliable.

Specifically for our Talented Athletes scheme, 150 students entered through this route in AY2025-2026. 93.3% identified as 'Heterosexual', 3.3% as LGB and 3.3% indicated they would 'Prefer not to say'.

Men and Women generally

The University's EO data were reviewed. In 2026, 58.0% of staff were 'Female'. This indicates a 2% increase in female staff compared with 2021.

In AY 2025 to 2026, 58.8% of students were 'Female', a 0.4% decrease compared with AY 2020 to 2021.

Specifically for our Talented Athletes scheme, 150 students entered through this route in AY2025-2026. 47.3% were female and 52.7% were male.

Disability

The University's EO data were reviewed. In 2026, 7.2% of staff declared a disability, an increase of 2.3% compared with 2021.

In AY 2025 to 2026, 8.3% of students declared a disability, a decrease of 3.8% compared with AY 2020 to 2021.

Our disability declaration rate is lower than expected, compared with the local population. The NI Census (2021) found that 24% of the NI population stated that their day-to-day activities were limited because of a long-standing health problem or disability.

Specifically for our Talented Athletes scheme, 150 students entered through this route in AY2025-2026. 48.7% declared themselves as having a disability and 51.3% stated they did not have a disability.

Dependants

The University's EO data were reviewed. In 2026, 43.4% of staff had dependants. This indicates an increase of 5% compared with 2021. In AY 2025 to 2026, 11.2% of students declared they had dependants, a decrease of 1.4% compared to AY 2020 to 2021. Specifically for our Talented Athletes scheme, 150 students entered through this route in AY2025-2026. 96.7% declared they had no dependents, 1.3% declared other relatives or friends as dependents and 2% indicated they would 'Prefer not to say'.

Needs, experience and priorities

Taking into account the information referred to above, what are the different needs, experiences and priorities of each of the following categories, in relation to the particular policy or decision?

Religious Belief
Anecdotally, people with differing religious belief may require additional flexibility in regard to how and when they participate in sport-related activities.

Political Opinion
None identified

Racial Group
The policy will have particular relevance for international student athletes, who may require clear guidance on visa conditions, travel, attendance and the availability of altered study modes.

Age
The Talented Athlete admissions route is focused on school-leavers and is therefore unavailable to students older than 18, although Dual-Career Athlete designation remains available after admission.

Marital Status
None identified

Sexual Orientation
Implementation should ensure student athletes can access support and participate in university sport without discrimination.

Men and Women generally
Eligibility, competitive pathways and scholarship opportunities may vary across sports and should be monitored by sex to support equitable access.

Disability
The policy is relevant to athletes with existing disabilities, or those athletes who may develop disabilities or long-term conditions during their dual-career, and should operate alongside reasonable adjustments and existing disability support.

Dependants
Student athletes with caring responsibilities may need this to be considered when agreeing sporting commitments and support available under the policy.

Consultation

Consultation with relevant groups, organisations or individuals about the policy can provide useful information about issues or opportunities which are specifically related to them (that is evidence to inform the policy).

Please indicate whether you carried out or intend to carry out any consultation exercises prior to equality screening?

Yes, the following were consulted in the development of this policy:

- Talented Athletes Task and Finish Group, which included representation from current student athletes.
- Academic Standards and Quality Enhancement Committee.
- Senate.

Part 2: Screening questions

Introduction

The answers to the following screening questions will assist the University in making a decision whether or not there is a need to carry out an equality impact assessment on the policy. The following information is provided to help you to identify and comment on the level of likely impact of the policy in question 1 to 4.

Select 'major' impact if:

a) The policy is significant in terms of its strategic importance;

b) Potential equality impacts are unknown, because, for example, there are insufficient data upon which to make an assessment or because they are complex, and it would be appropriate to conduct an equality impact assessment in order to better assess them;

c) Potential equality and/or good relations impacts are likely to be adverse or are likely to be experienced disproportionately by groups of people including those who are marginalised or disadvantaged;

d) Further assessment offers a valuable way to examine the evidence and develop recommendations in respect of a policy about which there are concerns amongst affected individuals and representative groups, for example in respect of multiple identities;

e) The policy is likely to be challenged by way of judicial review;

f) The policy is significant in terms of expenditure.

Select 'minor' impact if:

a) The policy is not unlawfully discriminatory and any residual potential impacts on people are judged to be negligible;

b) The policy, or certain proposals within it, are potentially unlawfully discriminatory, but this possibility can readily and easily be eliminated by making appropriate changes to the policy or by adopting appropriate mitigating measures;

c) Any asymmetrical equality impacts caused by the policy are intentional because they are specifically designed to promote equality of opportunities for particular groups of disadvantaged people;

d) By amending the policy there are better opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity and/or good relations;

e) Differential impact observed and opportunities exist to better promote equality of opportunity and/or good relations.

Select 'none' if:

a) The policy has no relevance to equality of opportunity or good relations;

b) The policy is purely technical in nature and will have no bearing in terms of its likely impact on equality of opportunity or good relations.

Taking into account the evidence presented in Part 1, please complete the screening questions (Question 1 to 4).

Screening questions

1. What is the likely impact on equality of opportunity for those affected by this policy, for each of the Section 75 categories? Please provide details of the likely policy impacts and determine the level of impact for each Section 75 category below.

   Details of the likely policy impacts on **Religious Belief**
   The Policy is unlikely to impact on equality of opportunity for this group as it largely technical in nature.

   What is the level of impact?
   None

   Details of the likely policy impacts on **Political Opinion**
   The Policy is unlikely to impact on equality of opportunity for this group as it largely technical in nature.

   What is the level of impact?
   None

   Details of the likely policy impacts on **Racial Group**
   The Policy is likely to impact on equality of opportunity for this group, where it concerns international students designated as student athlete. Visa requirements are such that these students may be unable to avail of the full flexibility afforded by the policy.

   What is the level of impact?
   Minor

   Details of the likely policy impacts on **Age**
   The Policy is unlikely to impact on equality of opportunity for this group as it largely technical in nature.

   What is the level of impact?
   None

   Details of the likely policy impacts on **Marital Status**
   The Policy is unlikely to impact on equality of opportunity for this group as it largely technical in nature.

What is the level of impact?
None

Details of the likely policy impacts on **Sexual Orientation**
The Policy is unlikely to impact on equality of opportunity for this group as it largely technical in nature.

What is the level of impact?
None

Details of the likely policy impacts on **Men and Women generally**
The Policy is unlikely to impact on equality of opportunity for this group as it largely technical in nature.

What is the level of impact?
None

Details of the likely policy impacts on **Disability**
The Policy is unlikely to impact on equality of opportunity for this group as it largely technical in nature.

What is the level of impact?
None

Details of the likely policy impacts on **Dependants**
The Policy is unlikely to impact on equality of opportunity for this group as it largely technical in nature.

What is the level of impact?
None

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2. Are there opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity for people within the Section 75 categories?

Religious Belief
No, the policy is largely technical in nature and is not intended to have a differential impact on members of any protected characteristic group.

Political Opinion
No, the policy is largely technical in nature and is not intended to have a differential impact on members of any protected characteristic group.

Racial Group
Yes, in regard to the very small number of international students who are bound by UK visa requirements who may also be designated student athletes. However, the policy is not unlawfully discriminatory per said visa regulations and any residual potential impacts on international students cannot not be mitigated at this time.

Age
No, the policy is largely technical in nature and is not intended to have a differential impact on members of any protected characteristic group.

Marital Status
No, the policy is largely technical in nature and is not intended to have a differential impact on members of any protected characteristic group.

Sexual Orientation
No, the policy is largely technical in nature and is not intended to have a differential impact on members of any protected characteristic group.

Men and Women generally
No, the policy is largely technical in nature and is not intended to have a differential impact on members of any protected characteristic group.

Disability
No, the policy is largely technical in nature and is not intended to have a differential impact on members of any protected characteristic group.

Dependants
No, the policy is largely technical in nature and is not intended to have a differential impact on members of any protected characteristic group.

3. To what extent is the policy likely to impact on good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group? Please provide details of the likely policy impacts and determine the level of impact for each of the categories below.

Religious Belief
Details of the likely policy impacts on **Religious Belief**
The policy is unlikely to impact on good relations for this group. It is largely technical in nature and has no relevance to good relations.

Level of impact
None

Political Opinion
Details of the likely policy impacts on **Political Opinion**
The policy is unlikely to impact on good relations for this group. It is largely technical in nature and has no relevance to good relations.

Level of impact
None

Racial Group
Details of the likely policy impacts on **Racial Group**
The policy is unlikely to impact on good relations for this group. It is largely technical in nature and has no relevance to good relations.

Level of impact
None

4. Are there opportunities to better promote good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group?

Religious Belief
No, the policy is largely technical in nature and has no relevance to good relations.

Political Opinion
No, the policy is largely technical in nature and has no relevance to good relations.

Racial Group
No, the policy is largely technical in nature and has no relevance to good relations.

Additional considerations

Multiple identity

5. Generally speaking, people can fall into more than one Section 75 category. Taking this into consideration, are there any potential impacts of the policy or decision on people with multiple identities?

   Yes

   Please specify the relevant Section 75 categories concerned below.
   Provide details of the policy impact and data which describes the policy impact.

   Race: All those impacted by this Policy comprise multiple identities, and it is envisaged that its focus on delivering an enhanced student athlete experience through consistency and standardisation of approach will benefit all student athletes, regardless of ethnic group, depending on visa requirements where applicable.

Disability Duties

6. Does the policy provide an opportunity to encourage disabled people to participate in University life?

   Yes, the definition of a student athlete, provided they are recognised by their relevant governing body, allows for the athlete to be a para-athlete, therefore the policy provides an opportunity to encourage disabled people to participate as a student athlete.

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7. Does the policy provide an opportunity to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people?

   Yes, the definition of a student athlete, provided they are recognised by their relevant governing body, allows for the athlete to be a para-athlete, therefore the policy provides an opportunity to promote positive attitudes towards disabled student athletes.

Part 3: Screening decision

Based on the evidence considered and outlined in Part 1 and the responses to the screening questions (Part 2), please indicate the screening decision for this policy.

Note: The University should take particular care not to screen out policies that have a procurement aspect if there is potential to promote equality of opportunity through the procurement of services.

☐ **Screen in** the policy (that is, subject to an Equality Impact Assessment). The likely impact is **major** in respect of one, or more of the equality of opportunity or good relations categories.

☐ **Screen out** the policy without mitigation or an alternative policy proposed to be adopted (that is, **no** Equality Impact Assessment). The likely impact is **none** in respect of all of equality of opportunity or good relations categories.

☒ **Screen out** the policy and **mitigate the impacts on equality** by **amending or changing the policy**, or by **developing an alternative policy or action** (that is, **no** Equality Impact Assessment). The likely impact is **minor** in respect of one or more of the equality of opportunity or good relations categories.

If the decision is to subject the policy to an equality impact assessment (that is, 'screen in' the policy), please provide details of the reasons.

Not applicable

If the decision is not to conduct an equality impact assessment (that is, 'screen out' the policy), please provide details for the reasons.

Not applicable

If the decision is not to conduct an equality impact assessment (that is, 'screen out' the policy), and mitigate the impacts on equality of opportunity by amending or changing the policy, or by developing an alternative policy or action, please provide

reasons to support your decision, together with the proposed changes, amendments or alternative policy.

The likely impact is **minor** in respect of one or more of the equality of opportunity or good relations categories.

This Policy formalises the University's commitment to enabling student athletes to succeed in higher education and provides a consistent institutional framework to guide staff and students in ensuring that Student Athletes are supported to pursue academic study and sporting achievement concurrently. The Policy is likely to have a differential impact on equality of opportunity regarding racial group, where it concerns the very small number of international students who are bound by UK visa requirements who may also be designated student athletes. However, the policy is not unlawfully discriminatory per said visa regulations and any residual potential impacts on international students cannot not be mitigated at this time.

In line with University policy, the final approved policy will be reviewed 2 years post-implementation, and if necessary, amended.

Timetabling and prioritising

If the policy had been **'screened in'** for an equality impact assessment, then please answer the following questions to determine its priority for timetabling the equality impact assessment.

On a scale of 1 to 3, with 1 being the lowest priority and 3 being the highest, assess the policy in terms of its priority for equality impact assessment.

Priority rating for timetabling the equality impact assessment in terms of effect on equality of opportunity and good relations:

Not applicable

Priority rating for timetabling the equality impact assessment in terms of social need

Not applicable

Priority rating for timetabling the equality impact assessment in terms of effect on people's daily lives

Not applicable

Priority rating for timetabling the equality impact assessment in terms of relevance to the University's functions

Not applicable

Note: The Total Rating Score will be used to prioritise the policy in rank order with other policies screened in for equality impact assessment. This list of priorities will assist the University in timetabling. Details of the University's Equality Impact Assessment Timetable will be included in its quarterly Screening Reports.

Is the policy affected by timetables established by other relevant public authorities?

Not applicable

Approval and authorisation



Screened by:
Position or Job Title: Pro-Vice Chancellor Academic Quality and Student Experience
Date screened: 16/09/26



Approved by:
Position or Job Title: Chief People Officer
Date approved: 17 September 2026

Review

This policy is due for review (in terms of its impact on equality of opportunity and good relations) by the policy owner on: 17 September 2028