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FONTYS ELITE SPORT POLICY AND ELITE ATHLETES SCHEME (2022)

Fontys Elite Sport Policy

1. Background

In 2013, Fontys University of Applied Sciences co-signed the Flexible Education and Elite Sport Programme (Flexibele Leergang Onderwijs en Topsport), or FLOT¹, with the Netherlands Olympic Committee* Netherlands Sports Confederations (NOC*NSF), 15 universities of applied sciences and ten research universities. The text of this action plan was revised in 2019.

The FLOT action plan incorporates the following: *'The sports and higher education sectors both seek to promote quality, to train talented students and to allow them to excel. An elite student athlete is an exceptional talent who is also challenged and encouraged particularly in higher education to progress to a high level. The higher education sector not only ensures the retention and development of talent and the competences needed in the rest of students' careers, but equally plays a crucial role in encouraging and developing student careers in elite sports.'*

The FLOT action plan gives higher education institutions pointers on how to support elite student athletes in such a way that they can develop optimally in both their sports and academic careers. The key objectives of the action plan are: 'a competence-oriented choice of study programme', 'flexible education', 'studying is kept financially feasible for elite athletes', 'a transparent offer of special arrangements' and 'embedment in policy'.

The FLOT action plan is aimed primarily at elite athletes who have been granted the NOC*NSF-recognised status of talented or elite athlete by their sports association.

Fontys recognises the elite athlete status described in the FLOT action plan. In addition, it grants its own statuses to talented people in and around sports. These talent statuses are laid down in the Fontys Elite Athletes Scheme.

In its strategic plan, *Fontys For Society 2021-2025*², Fontys expounds on its view that the main duty to society of a university of applied sciences is the development of talent. Hence, Fontys has expressed the ambition to be talent-focused by 2025: *'We are renowned as an accessible educational institution at the vanguard of flexibilisation and digitalisation (online learning and working), particularly since the coronavirus pandemic. This also means that we cater to the individual ambitions, learning methods and learning questions of our students as much as possible.'*

This is in line with Fontys' motto: *'Fontys welcomes everyone with the right prior education who wants to come and develop their talent with us. All of our graduates join the labour market equipped with at least the following: a solid foundation of applied knowledge, supplemented with useful and modern skills (including research skills), close ties with the professional field, a strong sense of our responsibility to society, and an open, tolerant and therefore intercultural attitude.'*

¹ See <https://nocnsf.nl/athlete-services/teamnlwork-onderwijs/hoger-onderwijs>, page 1

² See <https://fontys.nl/Over-Fontys/Fontys-for-society-1.htm>, page 11

Fontys is committed to welcoming and developing everyone's talent. *'Thanks to the flexibilisation and digitalisation of the educational process, Fontys is able to handle the increasing diversity of its student body in terms of prior education, development needs, learning styles and opportunities.'*

2. Characteristics of elite athletes and talents

A student is characterised as an elite athlete if, in accordance with the target group designated in the FLOT action plan, they have been granted the NOC*NSF-recognised status of talented or elite athlete by their sports association.

Fontys has expressed the ambition to be talent-focused by 2025. In addition to the status categories referred to in the FLOT action plan, Fontys also applies the Elite Athletic Talent status categories.

The elite athletes and athletic talents described in the Fontys Elite Sport Policy and Elite Athletes Scheme are those students who have been granted the status of elite athlete or talent by Fontys on the basis of the above characteristics.

3. Principles of the Fontys Elite Sport Policy

Fontys has adopted the following principles as a basis for its Elite Sport Policy and for its implementation in the Fontys Elite Athletes Scheme. These principles apply to all Fontys institutes:

- Fontys University of Applied Sciences recognises the positive impact of elite athletes and talent by creating a climate in every Fontys institute that will allow both elite athletes and talent to excel.
- The Fontys Elite Sport Policy and the Fontys Elite Athletes Scheme facilitate elite athletes and talent in the organisation (though not the content) of their study programme. All students must meet the same exit qualifications in order to obtain the study programme diploma. Where possible, Fontys will make special arrangements for elite athletes and talents to allow them to meet the exit qualifications.
- Special arrangements as regards the organisation of the study programme of an elite athlete or talent are the joint responsibility of the student and the study programme. This will require a proactive attitude on the part of the student. Skills that are characteristic of a proactive attitude include planning (not losing track, identifying bottlenecks), communication (asking for cooperation) and orientation (knowing what to ask for and what not to ask for).
- Fontys has a central point of contact for elite sport matters for current and prospective students as well as employees. That person is the Elite Sport Coordinator (or their deputy). They work closely with the Student Facilities department and can provide current and prospective students as well as employees with information on the Fontys Elite Sport Policy and the Fontys Elite Athletes Scheme.
- The Fontys Elite Sport Policy and the Fontys Elite Athletes Scheme are the responsibility of the Student Facilities department. The Elite Sport Coordinator (and their deputy) is employed by Fontys Sporthogeschool.
- Every Fontys institute has at least one elite sport contact person, who can provide current and prospective students as well as employees with information on the application of the Fontys Elite Sport Policy and the Fontys Elite Athletes Scheme at the relevant institute.
- Fontys and the elite athlete or talent concerned accept that practising elite sport combined with studying may mean incurring a study delay.

This Fontys Elite Sport Policy supersedes the Fontys Elite Sport Policy of 1 September 2017 and was adopted by the Executive Board on 26 April 2022, subject to the consent of the Central Participation Council.

The latter granted consent on 12 May 2022.

The Fontys Elite Sport Policy will enter into force on 1 September 2022.

Fontys Elite Athletes Scheme

Article 1 Definitions

Elite athlete	A student who performs at the highest senior level in an elite sport discipline recognised by NOC*NSF and has therefore been granted the status of elite athlete by NOC*NSF and/or the Royal Netherlands Football Association (KNVB).
Talent	A student who performs at a level below the level for which an elite athlete is granted the status of elite athlete. The level differs by branch of sport and is explained in detail in Article 3b of this Elite Athletes Scheme.
Elite Sport Coordinator	The Elite Sport Coordinator makes proposals relating to the Elite Sport Policy and the Elite Athletes Scheme and ensures that the policy is implemented in the broadest sense in conjunction with the Student Facilities department. The Elite Sport Coordinator is the first point of contact for current and prospective students as well as employees.
Deputy Elite Sport Coordinator	The deputy Elite Sport Coordinator works with the Elite Sport Coordinator to coordinate the Elite Sport Policy and the Elite Athletes Scheme and deputises for the latter in their absence.
Elite Sport Contact Person	The Elite Sport Contact Person is the first point of contact within a Fontys institute for all matters related to elite sport. Each institute has an Elite Sport Contact Person who supports elite athletes and talents in the broadest sense.
Student coach	The student coach is a coach who supports the student in matters related to academic progress and who stimulates the development of the student's personal and professional identity, departing from the student's talent and personal leadership capabilities.
Committee for Elite Sport and Talent Status	A committee, consisting in any case of the Elite Sport Coordinator and their deputy, which grants or rejects Fontys Elite Sport or Talent status based on the proof submitted. The Committee works in accordance with internal regulations.
Profiling Fund Scheme	Scheme that provides for student support in the form of granting graduation support from the Profiling Fund.
Intake interview	A discussion between a prospective elite athlete student and the Elite Sport Coordinator on the feasibility of the chosen study programme in combination with practising the relevant sport. This intake interview takes place together or in consultation with the Elite Sport Contact Person for the relevant study programme. It ideally takes place before the prospective student applies for the study programme.

Special arrangements interview A discussion between a student who has been granted Elite Athlete or Talent status by Fontys and the Elite Sport Contact Person for the relevant study programme during which the student applies for special arrangements in order to meet the exit qualifications for the study programme, in accordance with the Elite Athletes Scheme. If granted, special arrangements take effect at the beginning of the study programme in any case and as often as deemed necessary thereafter.

FLOT Flexible Education and Elite Sport Programme (see Elite Sport Policy)

Article 2 Aim and scope of the Fontys Elite Athletes Scheme

The aim of the Fontys Elite Sport Policy is to create a climate that will allow elite athletes and talent to excel. The aim of the policy has been implemented in the Fontys Elite Athletes Scheme in the form of special arrangements that an elite athlete or talent may apply for. Furthermore, the scheme sets out the conditions that must be complied with regarding eligibility for the relevant special arrangements.

The Fontys Elite Sport Policy and the Fontys Elite Athletes Scheme facilitate elite athletes and talent in the organisation (though not the content) of their study programme. All students must meet the same exit qualifications in order to obtain the study programme diploma. Where possible, Fontys will make special arrangements for elite athletes and talents to allow them to meet the exit qualifications. The Fontys Elite Athletes Scheme applies to all Fontys students. Eligibility for the special arrangements under the Fontys Elite Athletes Scheme may vary per study programme. This is at the discretion of the Examination Board, if necessary in consultation with the study programme.

Article 3a Granting and registration of the Fontys Elite Athlete status

Elite Athlete status is granted and registered centrally by Fontys' Committee for Elite Sport and Talent Status.

Students are eligible for the status of Elite Athlete if they have been awarded A, Selection, Association, International Talent, National Talent or Promising status by NOC*NSF. These statuses are registered in the NOC*NSF Student Athlete Status (SSO) database. The Elite Sport Coordinator (and their deputy) has access to the SSO.

Students are also eligible for the status of Elite Athlete if they have been awarded International Talent, National Talent or Promising status by the KNVB. These statuses are registered in the KNVB database. The Elite Sport Coordinator (and their deputy) has access to the KNVB database.

The Fontys Elite Athlete status is granted in the following manner:

- a) The elite athlete registers as an elite athlete each year when enrolling/re-enrolling through Studielink or the Fontys website.
- b) The Fontys Elite Sport Coordinator verifies whether the elite athlete has been entered in the NOC*NSF Student Athlete Status (SSO) database and on that basis, provided they have been authorised for that purpose by the Committee for Elite Sport and Talent Status, either grants the student the status of Fontys Elite Athlete or rejects it.
- c) The Fontys Elite Athlete status is granted for the duration of one academic year or, if the status is granted in the course of the academic year, for the remainder of the academic year.
- d) The Elite Sport Coordinator registers the granted Elite Athlete status with the Student Facilities department. The student will receive an email confirming that the status has been granted. The Elite Sport Coordinator sends regular updates to the Elite Sport Contact Person for the institute where the elite athlete is studying.
- e) The elite athlete subsequently applies for a special arrangements interview to discuss their individual needs with the Elite Sport Contact Person for the relevant study programme. During this interview, the student applies for special arrangements in order to meet the exit qualifications for the study programme, in accordance with the Elite Athletes Scheme.

Given NOC*NSF's status as the overarching Dutch confederation for elite athletes, only Dutch students may apply to Fontys for Elite Athlete status. However, international students may apply for Talent status.

Article 3b Granting and registration of the Fontys Elite Talent status

Talent status is granted and registered centrally by Fontys' Committee for Elite Sport and Talent Status.

The following students are eligible for the status of Talent:

- Students who perform at the highest international junior level (European and World Championships and the Youth Olympic³ Games) in an elite sport recognised by NOC*NSF.
- Students who perform at the highest student sport level (the Universiade and the Student World Championships) in an elite sport recognised by NOC*NSF.
- Students who perform at the highest junior or senior level in an elite sport recognised by NOC*NSF.
- Students who have been awarded RS1 status from an Olympic Network or who can demonstrate that they are performing at that level.
- Students who perform at the highest international senior level (European and World Championships) in an elite sport recognised by NOC*NSF.

Students who perform at the highest level in an elite sport recognised by NOC*NSF as a trainer/coach or official also qualify for Talent status.

The following criteria apply to trainers/coaches:

- They must be active as a head coach or trainer with a sports association or club for a minimum of 16 hours per week, and
- they must be active as a head coach or trainer of athletes who have been granted a status by NOC*NSF, the KNVB or a similar body.⁴

The following criteria apply to officials:

- They must be official at competitions of athletes who have been granted a status by NOC*NSF, the KNVB or a similar body, and
- they must be affiliated as an official to the training programme or a sports association or club, or
- they must train and prepare as an official for a minimum of 16 hours per week.

The Fontys Talent status is granted in the following manner:

- a) The talent registers as a talent each year when enrolling/re-enrolling through Studielink or the Fontys website.
- b) When enrolling/re-enrolling, the talent attaches proof of the level at which they practice a sport. Examples of proof include:
 - a. a copy of the Elite Sport pass from the Olympic Network;
 - b. a copy of a player's licence stating the team/club level;
 - c. an official letter from the sports association confirming the level;
 - d. an official letter from the club confirming the level;
 - e. recent results that demonstrate that the athlete performs at the required level.

³ For references to 'Olympic' in the text, also read 'Paralympic'.

⁴ An NOC*NSF or KNVB status is only available to athletes, not to trainers/coaches/officials. Nevertheless, such a status is an indication of the level of performance of the athlete to which a student who applies for Talent status provides training or coaching or serves as an official.

- c) Athletes who apply for a talent status because they perform at the highest senior level (European and World Championships) in an elite sport NOT recognised by NOC*NSF may be asked for additional information if the proof they submit is insufficiently clear, for example:
 - a. information on how the sport is organised and on the selection criteria for performance at the highest international level;
 - b. information on the nature of the special arrangements required under the Elite Athletes Scheme.
- d) Trainers/coaches or officials who perform at the highest level in an elite sport recognised by NOC*NSF as a trainer/coach or official may be asked for additional information if the proof they submit is insufficiently clear, for example:
 - a. information on the working relation that the trainer/coach has with the club or sports association that employs them;
 - b. information on the training programme that the official attends at the sports association or club;
 - c. information on the nature of the special arrangements required under the Elite Athletes Scheme.
- e) The Committee for Elite Sport and Talent Status grants the Fontys Talent status based on the submitted proof, or alternatively rejects it.
- f) The Fontys Talent status is granted for the duration of one academic year or, if the status is granted in the course of the academic year, for the remainder of the academic year.
- g) The Elite Sport Coordinator registers the granted Talent status with the Student Facilities department. The student will receive an email confirming that the status has been granted. The Elite Sport Coordinator sends regular updates to the Elite Sport Contact Person for the institute where the elite athlete is studying.
- h) The talent subsequently applies for an interview to discuss their individual needs with the Elite Sport Contact Person for the relevant study programme. During this interview, the student applies for special arrangements in order to meet the exit qualifications for the study programme, in accordance with the Elite Athletes Scheme.

Article 4 Special arrangements

Special arrangements are granted locally by the study programme that the student is attending.

- a) Students who have been granted Elite Athlete or Talent status (hereafter: 'students') may apply for special arrangements to facilitate the organisation of their studies. To that end, each Fontys institute has at least one Elite Sport Contact Person.
- b) The student will make agreements with the Elite Sport Contact Person within the institute. These agreements will be documented in writing and signed by the Elite Sport Contact Person and the student. The student will then submit the agreements to the Examination Board for approval. If necessary, the Examination Board will also inform others within the department.
- c) The Examination Board can authorise the Elite Sport Contact Person to make some or all of the decisions concerning the special arrangements granted to the student. Other interested parties in the department, such as a team leader or coordinator, or others who have authority in this context, can also delegate their authority with regard to elite athletes to the Elite Sport Contact Person.

The Fontys Elite Sport Policy and the Fontys Elite Athletes Scheme facilitate elite athletes and talent in the organisation (though not the content) of their study programme. All students must meet the same exit qualifications in order to obtain the study programme diploma. Where possible, Fontys will make special arrangements for elite athletes and talents to allow them to meet the exit qualifications.

Students may submit an application for special arrangements to facilitate the organisation of their studies to the Examination Board or another person responsible within the department. In any case, the special arrangements pertain to the following areas:

Special arrangements to adapt the academic timetable to suit training and competition schedules:

- a) The student may apply to the relevant lecturer for special arrangements with regard to attendance.
- b) If this does not resolve the problem, the student may apply to the team leader or coordinator or another person responsible within the department for special arrangements with a view to modifying the timetable.
- c) If modifying the timetable does not solve the problem either, the student may apply to the Examination Board for a replacement assignment.

Potential special arrangements regarding the academic timetable:

- Attending courses and educational activities at other times or in other groups;
- Asking the lecturer to record the lecture;
- Attending online by arranging an MS Teams call or similar with the lecturer or a fellow student;
- Catching up fully with the missed information on the basis of available information sources and/or notes taken by fellow students.

Special arrangements regarding attendance requirements:

Course content permitting (and at the discretion of the Examination Board), a student may apply for exemption from the attendance requirement or for a reduced attendance requirement.

Special arrangements regarding group work:

- a) If a student is unable to take part in any group assignments or can only take part in a limited number of assignments on account of training and competition obligations, they may make arrangements with the supervising lecturer and fellow students regarding their roles or tasks within the group. This comes with the proviso that such arrangements do not have an adverse effect on quality and/or on the fair distribution of the work within the group.
- b) If arrangements cannot be made in this regard, the student must apply to the Examination Board for a modified assignment or for the deadlines for assignments to be changed.

Potential special arrangements regarding group work:

- Taking on a role or tasks that may be carried out at a different time;
- Taking on a role or tasks that may be carried out in a different way, e.g. online or remotely.

Special arrangements regarding work placements and graduation projects:

- a) Study programmes will assist students in finding elite sports-friendly work placement locations.
- b) Students can apply to the Examination Board for their work placement, final-year placement and/or graduation project to be tailored to their needs.

Potential special arrangements regarding work placements and graduation projects:

- Reorganising work placement days, e.g. by working fewer work placement hours per day spread out over more work placement days
- Spreading out the work placement over a longer period
- Taking on work placement assignments that are bound by neither place nor time

Special arrangements regarding tests and exams:

- a) If a student is unable to take any or can only take a limited number of exams/tests on account of training or competition obligations, they may apply to the Examination Board for special arrangements regarding tests and exams.
- b) They may also apply to the Examination Board for an additional test opportunity in order to have two test opportunities per academic year, as provided for in Article 28 of the Teaching and Examination Regulations (TER).

Potential special arrangements regarding tests and exams:

- Applying for an additional test opportunity if the student is unable to make use of a resit opportunity on account of elite athlete obligations
- Taking a test at a different opportunity than the regular one
- Taking a test in a different manner, e.g. online
- Applying in good time for special arrangements regarding the submission of professional products

Modified first-year arrangement:

Participation in elite sport by students who have been granted Elite Athlete or Talent status as set out in the [Elite Athletes Scheme](#), is regarded as a special circumstance, on the basis of which study advice *may* be deferred.

A minimum number of credits these students must earn in order to be eligible for such a deferment has been established. If a student expects that they will not be able to earn this number of credits, they may apply to the Examination Board for an exemption from this requirement.

Procedure for the granting of special arrangements regarding the organisation of the study programme

To qualify for special arrangements of the nature described above, the student must follow the procedure outlined below:

- a) At the start of the academic year, the student must draw up an annual/semi-annual plan incorporating both their study programme and sport schedule, and discuss it with the Elite Sport Contact Person.
- b) Prior to the course period, the student must draw up a weekly plan incorporating both their study programme and sport schedule. The student must personally identify conflicts and take the initiative to discuss these with their student coach and/or the Elite Sport Contact Person prior to the course period.
- c) If the plan within the meaning of b) is not compliant with the TER, the student must submit a request to the Examination Board to be exempt from the TER or be granted a special arrangement. This request may, if desired, be submitted together with a recommendation from the Elite Sport Contact Person.

Article 5 Profiling Fund Scheme

Students who have been granted an Elite Athlete or Talent status and incur a study delay on account of practising elite sport can apply for graduation support under the Profiling Fund Scheme.

Students are entitled to make use of the special arrangements under this [scheme](#) if they meet the following conditions:

- a) The student meets the requirements for applying for graduation support.
- b) The Elite Athlete or Talent status has been registered by the Student Facilities department.

In principle, the Profiling Fund Scheme applies to all Dutch full-time and dual-degree students.

If a student incurs a study delay on account of practising elite sport, they must contact one of the student counsellors.

Article 6 Disputes

In the event of a dispute relating to the conferment of Elite Athlete or Talent status or the granting of one or more special arrangements, the following legal protection procedures may be followed:

- *Elite Athlete or Talent status:*
If the request relates to the conferment of Elite Athlete or Talent status, the student must first take the issue to Fontys' Committee for Elite Sport and Talent Status. If necessary, an objection can subsequently be submitted to the Executive Board pursuant to Article 48 of the Students' Charter.

- *Special arrangements:*
If the request relates to a refusal by the Examination Board to grant special arrangements, a student may appeal to the Examination Appeals Board, as described in Article 46 of the Students' Charter.

The legal protection procedures for student are set out in Chapter 7 of the Students' Charter. If students experience problems with regard to their Elite Athlete or Talent status, they may seek assistance at all times from the student coach, the Elite Sport Contact Person for their study programme, the Elite Sport Coordinator (or their deputy) and/or a student counsellor.

Article 7 Entry into force

This Fontys Elite Athletes Scheme supersedes the Fontys Elite Athletes Scheme of 1 September 2017 and was adopted by the Executive Board on 26 April 2022, subject to the consent of the student representatives on the Central Participation Council. The latter granted consent on 12 May 2022. The Fontys Elite Athletes Scheme will enter into force on 1 September 2022.