

Report WP2: Criteria for transnational Dual Career in Europe

Introduction

"Athletic migration: Dual Career and qualification in sports (AMiD)" promotes and supports good governance in sport and Dual Career of athletes by building a network for the exchange of best practices, by developing skills and competences in Dual Career, especially addressing migrating student-athletes. The current situation in European Dual Career migration was investigated via literature review, best practices, and new empiric data and was described in the WP1 report. The empiric data were collected from 300 student-athletes (half of them with migration experience) in the five project partner countries and at the EUSA Games 2018. These data showed that challenges in Dual Career migration depend on several characteristics that are elaborated in this report. This implied that support services should be specific, accounting for different student-athlete needs and cases of migration (see WP1 report).

A future step in the project is the implementation of support services. To develop specific services, it is necessary to identify criteria that classify student-athletes' migration as well as the academic and sport institutions involved. The aim of WP2 was to define such criteria, based on the findings of WP1. This report describes different characteristics of student-athletes that are relevant in migration cases, requirements from academic and from sports institutions.

WP2.1: Status of migrant student-athletes

At the time of migration, the basic requirement for student-athletes is that both of their career pathways are actively pursued. Otherwise one may simply be a migrating student or a migrating athlete. If a second career starts after migration, it may not be considered a Dual Career migration because the second career is not affected by the difficulties of migration. The objective of WP2.1 was to outline the criteria that relate specifically to active students, elite/talented athletes, and migration itself. This helps to classify migrating student-athletes and to define - later

in the project - specific support services that depend on the characteristics of the specific case of Dual Career migration.

We compared the requirements in institutions and services (universities, funding associations, governmental services) to be considered an active student and an elite/talented athlete in all partner countries. For students, the requirements vary among EU countries. They range from enrolment to the collection of at least 30 ECTS per semester. In many EU countries, the proof of enrolment is the only requirement to be considered as active student. Therefore, we decided to accept every enrolled student as active student in the AMiD project.

Also the criteria for elite/talented athletes are not strictly defined across countries and services. They range from a confirmed membership in a federation to a defined competition level or ranking results. In the literature (see WP1 report), a commonly used variable to assess the level/potential of an athlete is training hours per week. At least 10 training hours per week were associated with elite/talented athletes. As the competition level itself does not determine the difficulties of Dual Career and the challenges faced emerge from intense time commitment and overlap, the time commitment seems an appropriate criterion to consider athletes as elite/talented. Moreover, the approach of the project is not to strengthen only the ones who are successful at the moment already but to implement support structures that may allow becoming successful in the future. Therefore, each athlete has been considered as support-worthy if training time exceeds 10 hours per week.

Hereby, we defined the levels of careers (reported as a necessity in WP1.2). One is considered an active student-athlete if the criteria in both careers are fulfilled (i.e. university enrolment and at least 10 hours of training per week).

The next step was the definition and classification of migration. Findings in report WP1 define migration as a change of location (i.e. relocation). A Dual Career migration considers two career pathways being already pursued at the time of migration. Migration can be required or beneficial for many student-athletes. Athletes travel continuously abroad to practice their athletic career and/or to take part in competitions. They usually consider this relocation as temporary and have an intention to return back to their home countries. Students take part in exchange

programs to learn from specialised experts in the field and to work with specific technologies and measurements.

However, practices and services in place outline that there is no minimal requirement or specification for the kind of migration. All kinds of relocation are considered as migration and different sorts of relocation are required or considered beneficial for one of the career pathways (either academic or athletic pathway). As WP1 showed, this stands even if the migration happens only in frequent trips and short-term stays abroad. All kinds of migration can affect the Dual Career and create obstacles. The challenges however are diverse and depend on the kind of migration. Therefore, the project partners have defined criteria that differentiate between different types of migration. Based on WP1, the following factors may affect the challenges and needs faced by the student-athlete.

Location: There are different challenges when migration takes place within national borders compared to going abroad. In international migration, additional challenges in language, mentality, culture and managing daily life may come up. Compared to migration within the EU, student-athletes may require extra arrangements when leaving or entering the EU. And even if both pathways are located in the same city, frequent travels for the sake of one career may cause disruptions in the other one. Therefore, a student-athlete who is enrolled at a university and competes for a club in the same city must be considered a case of Dual Career migration, if frequent travels are required (e.g. to train or compete at different locations, to do an internship or collect ECTS points at other universities).

Intention for migration: It appears that the need of migration may occur for academic, athletic or both reasons. Both academic and athletic careers may benefit from migration. It is often the case however that a migration is undertaken for the purpose of one of the two careers. Then, a beneficial impact on the prioritised career is to be expected and obstacles in the second career are very likely. Migrating student-athletes often reported that the second career suffered during the migration and that they find themselves behind their peers when they come back. This was observed for both intentions of migration (for sports and for academics). The support by the sector that is *not* the reason for migration is very important to maintain progress and performance in that pathway. Student-athletes report a lack of support by academics when they migrate for sports as well as a lack of support by sports when they migrate for academics.

Duration and frequency: Short-term migration compared with long-term migration raises different challenges. Going abroad only for a short time is easier to arrange and only temporary adaptations are required. On the other hand, they may take place more frequently and require in total a high number of adaptations at multiple times. Differently, in long-term migration, transitions into new environments need to be organised (e.g. daily life, long-term training facilities and arrangements, recognition of achievements in foreign institutions). Once a long-term transition succeeded and both careers can be pursued, challenges are expected to decline. It seems reasonable to classify a minimum of three different durations: Short-, mid-, and long-term migration [e.g. up to one month, up to one semester (i.e. usually 6 months), more than one semester, respectively]. Short-term migration is considered to have little impact. Good organisation and adaptations can avoid obstacles and difficulties can be compensated. Mid-term migration up to one semester does not require full transitions into new environments but certainly creates challenges that cannot be ignored during the migration and compensated afterwards. The duration is too long to pause one career and catch up afterwards. The active pursuit of both pathways during the migration, as well as recognition of achievements, must be organised well. Long-term migration requires full transitions. When a migration scenario is assessed on the basis of duration and frequency, also the period must be considered. For example, two cases of migration of the comparable duration have a different impact on the academic pathway depending on whether they take place during the semester or during vacation time. Also for sports, a migration during the off-season is more feasible than during the season.

WP2.2: Eligibility of academic institutions

Academic institutions vary in numerous criteria that can facilitate or hinder a Dual Career migration. Such key criteria are awareness of Dual Career, the willingness to cooperate with other institutions in a case of inter-institutional exchange or migration, flexibility in the implementation of regulations and recognition of achievements, and the providence of distance learning opportunities.

One example of good cooperation is the management of language barriers. It is a desirable aim that European academic institutions provide courses in English. Although this could also be

beneficial for local students, reality shows that this is not the case everywhere. Being able to work in English and act professionally beyond national borders widens opportunities and increases impact. When there are no regular courses available in English, it is reasonable to adapt to a specific migration case and hold specific courses in English or at least to provide English material to allow participation. This must be in the interest of the universities and can be expected from an institution of higher education at EU levels. Universities all over the world aim for reputation and relevance in science and teaching, the higher the level the better. Therefore, international reputation, exchange, and programs are relevant for the universities. The possibility of an English speaking environment is a fundamental basis to develop international relevance and must be a goal for each university. When content in English is not available, language lessons could be helpful especially for long-term migrations.

Academic flexibility is probably the most frequently addressed issue in Dual Career, especially in Dual Career migration. Flexibility in attendance is very supportive when attendance is not possible because of migration. Deficits in attendance can for example be compensated by additional works done by the student-athlete (e.g. writing an essay on the topics lectured in the lessons that were not attended). Flexibility in schedules, in the first place, can prevent missing lectures. To adapt the schedule of complete courses may not always be feasible, depending on the number of participants. However, it is feasible to adapt exam dates and format (e.g. individual oral exam) for migrating student-athletes. The flexibility to participate in courses at other institutions and have them recognised by the own university also helps to pursue the academic path during migration. Findings from WP1 and also from the WINNER project showed that, for the majority of student-athletes, flexibility is the missing in Dual Career support.

Many of the discussed types of flexibility can be implemented thanks to distance learning methods and the willingness to cooperate. An institution that allows participation in courses and exams via Skype can reduce difficulties in Dual Career migration. Online material allows migrating student-athletes to study on their own during absence. Any kind of flexibility creates the opportunity to adapt to specific needs. However, a migrating student-athlete has to engage with the academic staff, to depict the specific situation, and then - if flexibility and cooperation is given - adaptations can be applied and solutions found.

Planning a Dual Career migration is essential to coordinate both pathways. Therefore, schedules and duties must be known in advance to allow such planning. Academic schedules should be known for at least one semester in advance. This is mostly the case but spontaneous changes of dates can create massive troubles. Again, also changes of dates can be managed if there is the willingness to cooperate and find solutions. Solutions can only be found if the academic staff is aware of the difficulties. However, well planned and fixed schedules are clearly favourable for the planning of a Dual Career migration.

Awareness on Dual Career and migration and the willingness to cooperate at an institution can be observed in the existence of Dual Career services and academic staff that is dedicated to the topic and ready to communicate and support.

WP2.3: Eligibility of sports services

The eligibility of sport services and institutions for a Dual Career migration can be expressed by four key criteria: Awareness and positive attitude towards education and international experience, specific coaching and tutoring (systematic or individualised), professionalism in planning and organisation, and financial support.

Only with awareness on Dual Career, there can be awareness of the needs of student-athletes. Only with a positive attitude towards education in general and towards international experience in the specific case of migration, there is a good will to cooperate. Ideally, sport staff actively supports in the pursuit of the second pathway. That means that sport services should support the athletes also in their studies. WP1 data show that conflicts with coaches occur surprisingly often. Therefore, awareness and the acknowledgment of the pursuit of a Dual Career are needed in sports services. This allows adaptations and arrangements with and by sports staff to coordinate both pathways. To support student-athletes in the best possible way, sports staff should be familiar with recommendations such as Guidelines for “Dual Career” (EU 2011). In the worst scenario, a sports club strictly does not permit a parallel academic education. This underlines the importance of that criterion. The attitude towards a Dual Career and towards migration can and should be explored in prior discussions with the involved staff members.

One active way of support in Dual Career migration by sports services is mentoring and counselling for the student-athletes. Such kind of support helps to handle sport and academic challenges but also daily life requirements. This can effectively reduce stress from side activities and increase focus on the careers. This is well recognised by sports clubs at professional levels, which provide counselling even to single career athletes who are challenged by side activities. Such support can be expected even more relevant and effective for migrating student-athletes. The fact that these services are already in place in specific clubs indicates the feasibility to implement them. The reduced distraction from side activities and the increased focus on the career suggest counselling services appropriate for migrating student-athletes. According to the AMiD questionnaire results, only 42% of the student-athletes received counselling support and only 22% of that support came from the sports sector.

AMiD data (WP1) also show that the schedules of both academic and sport pathways are causing severe difficulties. Unfortunately, sport services and academic institutions cannot always manage to adapt training and course schedules to the needs of a specific group, despite the good willingness. However, sports services can account for the requirements of academic attendance and attempt to schedule trainings accordingly whenever it does not negatively affect the training. Good communication about schedules is mandatory. Moreover, early and mandatory scheduling is a key to plan and coordinate both pathways. If a student-athlete is informed early about a future training schedule, the coordination with the other career is facilitated and academic courses and dates may be selected accordingly. Then, adaptations by academic and sport staff members may not even be required and overlaps can be avoided. Individual planning by the student-athlete can work well but only if the information on future schedules is reliable and available in advance. The absence of schedules for a long time and spontaneous (unannounced) changes in schedules can lead to major troubles in both pathways. If the lack of academic activities cannot be avoided, sports services should at least enable student-athletes to fulfil their academic duties via distance learning. For example, this can be the organisation of extra time to study between training sessions in a training camp and the availability of internet to access the required material or attend lessons online.

Financial support by the sports sector seems to be reasonable if the student-athlete represents the club/federation professionally in competitions. Especially if the migration benefits

the sports career and if it is undertaken primarily for the sports career, monetary services (e.g. covering expenses) are justified. It is clear that not all clubs and federations have the capacities to afford that. Half of the student-athletes of the AMiD questionnaire did not receive any financial support at all. However, 38% of all financial services came from the sports sector. This makes sports the biggest single source of financial support. Sports services should consider that these financial contributions were reported to support the Dual Career migration and performance in the careers effectively.