

A2B Study Visit Report Loughborough University

John Beckwith Seminar Room, 17 November 2010 (8:30 – 17:00)

Gymnastics Seminar Room, 18 November 2010 (9:00-10:30)

Participants A2B:

Surname	First Name	Organisation
Dreyfus	Jérôme	INSEP
Girdler	Steve	Adecco UK
Glennon	Patrick	Adecco
Gölden	Marcel	German Athletes Commission
Hellmund	Folker	EOC EU Office
Hülsen	Andreas	Olympic Center Berlin
Iteman	Marc	INSEP
Kalmari	Markus	Sport Academy of Turku Region
Kozsla	Tibor	Semmelweis University
Lindström	Bengt	Dalarna University
Luk	Vick	Foundation for Leadership through Sport
Nybelius	Bengt	EAS
Rodewald	Marion	EOC Athletes Commission
Rodheim	Stefan	Dalarna University
Strauch	Melanie	EOC EU Office
Trinker	Michael	EOC EU Office

Speakers:

Surname	First Name	Organisation
Aherne	Ben	Loughborough University
Borrie	Andy	Loughborough University
Emmett	Joanne	Loughborough University
Favier	Michelle	Loughborough College
Henry	Ian	Loughborough University
Smith	Julie	EIS
Van Aardt	Helen	Loughborough College



Contents

1. Introduction	3
2. Loughborough University	3
2.1. Good Practices	3
3. Dalarna University.....	5
3.1. Good Practices in Web Based Learning.....	6
4.0. Conclusion.....	6



1. Introduction

The study visit to Loughborough University has been the fourth initiative in the range of A2B visits to institutions active in the field of dual career. It focused on identifying good practices for combined sports and academic education at the renowned UK education institution.

During the seminar, the topics of reconciling sport and education both, at Loughborough University and College, the involvement in the London 2012 Olympics and Paralympics and research on dual career have been explored. It further contained insights on performance lifestyle athlete support and an athlete career development programme, provided by the English Institute of Sport. This was followed by a tour of the different sports facilities on campus.

The seminar was enriched by a presentation of Dalarna University from Sweden notably renown for the provision of web based learning as an alternative way of studying whilst competing as a performance athlete.

Both universities are considered as good practice examples ensuring the necessary levels of flexibility and accessibility of support provision for the specific needs of their student-athletes.

2. Loughborough University

Loughborough University is a leading UK public institution in the combination of sporting and academic achievement and has a reputation for turning out world class sportsmen.

It is home to almost 50 sports offering a diverse range of study programmes including engineering, science and social sciences & humanities.

Currently, it hosts 18,000 students with 250 international athletes studying there. 70 per cent of student-athletes are not involved in a sports programme.

Loughborough University also plays a key role in the preparation of athletes for the London Olympics 2012 serving as a base for both, the Great Britain and Japanese team.

2.1. Good Practices

The following practices have been identified as efficient measures and could thus serve as recommendations for the development of athlete friendly higher education in Europe.

- **Philosophy**

Loughborough University's philosophy includes to deliver sporting excellence and support academic achievement. This mirrors that the University recognises the dual demands placed upon student-athletes and sees a responsibility in assisting them to meet these demands.



- **Supportive University Board and Staff**

University chancellors have always shared a passion for sports and today, sport is forming part of the five key drivers in the university's strategic plan. Raising the institution's profile, it is inspiring to staff members who are in turn motivated to support both goals of their student-athletes.

- **Availability of Mentoring Programmes**

Loughborough University provides roughly 150 student-athletes with dual career advice. These services are available three to four times a year and upon request. Mentoring teams consist of a lead mentor who is required to have been an elite athlete himself and 16 mentors from diverse University departments. Their responsibilities include to manage schedules, link with academic departments, track academic performance and offer problem solution support. These mentors are not particularly paid for their role but are fairly easy to find since they share a passion for sports.

- **Policies**

At Loughborough University, athlete friendly policies provide elite sportspeople with larger flexibility while studying.

- a) The **assessment flexibility policy** offers internationally competing athletes the possibility to take flexible exams when being prevented by an event.
- b) The **stretched degree policy** offers student-athletes a reduced study load due to high level sporting commitments and thus provides a larger timeframe for the completion of their studies.

There also exist regulations concerning the leave of absence and entry concessions.

Partnerships

- **Loughborough College**

The link with Loughborough College plays a significant role, not only in the shared use of sports facilities but also in the mutual exchange of practices. Located next to Loughborough University, the college offers academic and vocational studies. It is more advanced in distance learning and provides larger flexibility while involving parents and coaches in the academic progress of student-athletes who often move on to Loughborough University for higher studies.

- **Talented Athlete Scholarship Scheme (TASS)**

TASS is a government-funded sports scholarship programme assisting 16 to 25 year old athletes to balance their sporting ambitions with a University or college education. Scholars are nominated via their sport's governing body and do not receive direct monetary support. Instead, they will be able to train in a multi-sports environment like Loughborough University and access diverse services such as EIS support (see below) and additional specialist coaching. The value of TASS scholarships can reach up to the value of 3500 £ (more than 4000 €) per academic year and is only provided to a limited number of student-athletes.



- **English Institute of Sport (EIS)**

The English Institute of Sport is integrated into an athlete's training plan and delivers support services out of a High Performance Centre based on campus. Next to physiotherapy and medical support, the EIS Performance Lifestyle Programme helps student-athletes in their personal and professional development by providing individual coaching and mentoring service. It also offers an Athlete Career Development Programme (see below) to engage sportspeople with the labour market.

- **British Olympic Association (BOA)**

The relationship between Loughborough University and BOA, the United Kingdom's major non-governmental sports body is currently developing and overall focuses around the preparations of the Great Britain Team in the run up to the 2012 Olympic Games. Nevertheless, the university plans to extend the relationship to include dual career within the near future.

- **Profession Related Career Support**

The EIS Athlete Career Development Programme seeks to supply athletes with work experience and potential employment opportunities at national and regional scale. In this approach, EIS collaborates with partners and suppliers of the British Olympic Association, Adecco and others.

Furthermore, students are deployed in the Olympic operations of Loughborough University regarding the London Summer Olympics and Paralympics in 2012. This offers student-athletes the possibility to gain working experience and establish contacts with the London Organising Committee (LOCOG), national governmental bodies or other.

Another approach providing student-athletes with professional experience is the university's current ambition to develop on campus volunteering in areas such as coach assistance helping in the daily management and administration of operations.

- **Proximity of Services**

At Loughborough University, student-athletes do not only have access to both studies and sporting facilities but also to the full range of support services needed to carry out their dual career ambitions. These include mentoring, coaching, on campus physiology, physiotherapy, and medical consultancy. The range of EIS support services further involves personal lifestyle and employment programmes which are vital for the successful transition into a future post-competition career.

3. Dalarna University

Dalarna University is a Swedish higher educational institution hosting more than 10,000 students. It offers sports facilities for seven different sports and a wide variety of subject areas including culture and tourism, economics, media, and diverse sport focused study programmes. For top athletes in particular, the Dalarna University scheme is a possibility to combine a sports career with an academic



pursuit. Its distance education system offers web based courses available in a multitude of languages which is used by 65 per cent of enrolled students. The system is based on modern technology offering students to study in “virtual classrooms” while being in constant exchange with their teachers and classmates from across the globe.

3.1. Good Practices in Web Based Learning

The following key factors have been identified as good practices in the web based education system:

- **Supportive University Management**

Dalarna University’s board has been supportive of using the internet as pedagogical tool early on and thus started its involvement in online learning. It provided investments to develop online teaching to the newest technologies and offer courses to a greater population internationally.

- **Innovative Teachers**

Teachers bring up new ideas concerning the outline of online lessons, course material and online collaboration.

- **Strong and Alert IT Support**

The University’s IT department resolves technical problems within short time and is working on constant improvement.

- **“Easy to Use” Learning Management System**

The rather simple learning management system allows students to use self-service, personalize content and reuse knowledge.

4.0. Conclusion

The Loughborough Study Visit has provided an example of effective and committed collaboration of an education institution with its well arranged network of stakeholders giving athletes the possibility to profit of a maximum of sports, education and profession related services. The key factors put in place include scholarships, flexible study conditions specific to elite level sportspeople and work experience opportunities within the university and with enterprises.

Moreover, the example of Dalarna University illustrates web based learning as alternative curriculum servicing the needs of student-athletes. This could be an appropriate future means to help overcome some of the timing difficulties in dual career.

