

Athletes Friendly Education Handbook



Award for Educational Institutions
supporting the Dual Career of Athletes

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ATHLETES FRIENDLY
EDUCATION



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1 Athletes Friendly Education

Athletes Friendly Education (AFE) is a type of education which is continually planning, organizing and improving a system of adaptations included in the educational process and infrastructure. These adaptations are implemented voluntarily and in a benevolent, systematic, comprehensive and transparent manner with the explicit aim to help athletes engage in sport, and simultaneously achieve goals and competencies set out in the educational programme and thus complete their education.

2 General information about the project “Athletes Friendly Education”

2.1 The objectives and legacy of the project

Athletes Friendly Education (AFE) is an award for educational institutions which support Dual Career of Athletes.

The Athletes Friendly Education certification programme is focused on the promotion of Dual Career of athletes and the support to innovative educational approaches and good governance in sport. It is relevant to the objectives of the EU policies in the field of sport and in pursuit of the objectives from the European Union Commission Guidelines on Dual Career of athletes. The legacy of the project is to find the most effective way to improve athletes’ education through an innovative educational approach that can be implemented in Dual Career programmes in the EU framework and at the national levels of the EU member states.

The AFE project is therefore aiming to:

- Spread the awareness and good practice among the institutions which are already supporting athletes under these terms;
- Set the minimum quality standards of Educational and Training institutions at the EU level. Also, reach and connect various stakeholders, policymakers and experts in the field of supporting athletes' education and employability;
- Establish the certification system as a framework at the level of certification of such institutions;
- Create new instruments of cooperation and securing sustainable partnership between higher education and business, and establish a list of educational programmes at the EU level, with already developed mechanisms;
- Raise awareness on the importance of education of the athletes at the national levels and offer tools for athletes, managers, coaches, and parents to make responsible decisions about the athletes' education.

2.2 Project partner organizations

The AFE award has been developed as part of an Erasmus+ project, Project No.: 603523-EPP-1-2018-1-SI-SPO-SCP: ATHLETES FRIENDLY EDUCATION – AFE, involving eight partner organizations from six European countries under the coordination of the Olympic Committee of Slovenia:

- **Olympic Committee of Slovenia (SLO) - Coordinator,**
- **Olympic Committee of Portugal (POR),**
- **Belgian Olympic and Interfederal Committee (BEL),**
- **German Olympic Academy (GER),**
- **Croatian Olympic Academy (CRO),**
- **University of Maribor, Faculty of Organizational Sciences (SLO),**
- **University of Rijeka, Faculty of Maritime Studies (CRO),**
- **Volleyball Federation of Macedonia (MKD),**
- **EUSA Institute (SLO).**

Due to country-specific conditions, there are different departments responsible for the submission of the award. Representatives of all partners, experts in different fields of the dual-career support of athletes are involved in each process of award development and its regulations, providing their respective national experiences.

2.3 Management of the project

Mr. Ales Solar [Olympic Committee of Slovenia, SLO]

Prof. Dr. Marko Ferjan [University of Maribor, Faculty of Organizational Sciences, SLO]

Mrs. Petra Robnik [Olympic Committee of Slovenia, SLO]

2.4 Contributors to the AFE project documentation

Table 1: Contributors to the AFE project documentation

Organization Name	Project team
Olympic Committee of Slovenia – Association of Sports Federations (coordinator)	Blaz PERKO
	Ales SOLAR
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University of Maribor, Faculty of Organizational Sciences	Prof. Dr. Iztok PODBREGAR
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3 Athletes Friendly Education

3.1 Starting definitions

Athletes Friendly Education (AFE) is a type of education which is continually planning, organizing and improving a system of adaptations included in the educational process and infrastructure. These adaptations are implemented voluntarily and in a benevolent, systematic, comprehensive and transparent manner with the explicit aim to help athletes engage in sport, and simultaneously achieve goals and competencies set out in the educational programme and thus complete their education.

Athletes Friendly Education has the following **attributes**:

- adaptations;
- rather than being discrete, these adaptations constitute a system;
- adaptations are organized and managed by school management;
- institutions introduce the adaptations voluntarily;
- adaptations are based on pre-existing legal frameworks and internal institutional regulations;
- institutions need to possess adequate competencies or experience. In other words, they need to be "trustworthy".

Adaptations have the following possible contents:

- collective ambitions of schools – general;
- competence for working with athletes;
- commitment to work;
- organizational model;
- learning organization – related to working with athletes;
- split organization;
- processes inside a school;
- learning contents;
- educational materials;
- implementation;
- recruitment of staff;
- material training resources in school;
- human resources for training;
- organizational training resources.

Some adaptations are specified in the AFE Questionnaire. National adaptations of the questionnaire are possible.

A **system of adaptations** is a collection of individual components that form a logical whole; the interconnections between them are all aimed at a common goal. Adaptations aim to help athletes to engage in sport and simultaneously achieve goals and competencies set out in the educational programme and complete their education.

A systematic approach requires that all following criteria are met:

- Individual elements are interconnected and form a whole (e.g., the curriculum);
- Elements may be adapted simultaneously or as part of a coordinated roll-out;
- Adaptations help athletes to achieve their goals and competencies and complete their education while pursuing their sports careers.

3.2 Philosophy of evaluations

The evaluation consists of observation and valuation. The point of assessment is to find what needs to be improved and to improve it.

Understanding evaluations means understanding the principles by which evaluators must operate.

1. **Systematic Inquiry:** Evaluators conduct data-based inquiries that are thorough, systematic, and contextually relevant.
2. **Competence:** Evaluators provide skilled professional services to the stakeholders.
3. **Integrity:** Evaluators behave with honesty and transparency to ensure the integrity of the evaluation.
4. **Respect for People:** Evaluators honour the dignity, well-being, and self-worth of individuals and acknowledge the influence of culture within and across groups.
5. **Common Good and Equity:** Evaluators strive to contribute to an equitable and just society's joint good and advancement.

The objectives of the evaluation always refer to:

- an organization as such;
- the content of the processes that occur within an organization;
- and the state of the conditions for implementing the procedures.

Each evaluation relates to an organization. The evaluation addresses:

- a definite circle of people that can be distinguished from the rest of the environment;
- hierarchical relationships between these people and their internal rules of behaviour;
- the procedures and processes that these people perform and which form a whole or at least part of a whole, bearing in mind the way people conduct the operations, not the content of the processes themselves.

3.3 Calibration

The circumstances we have described require the calibration of evaluators before the evaluation takes place. The word "calibration" comes from a technique, more specifically from measurements. **Calibration** is a comparison between a known measurement (the standard) and the perceived reality.

We all want the evaluations to be as objective as possible. As mentioned above, an evaluator must find the facts and evidence to base his/her evaluation conclusions. In practice, the "subjective factor" of the evaluator is significant in the evaluation process. It is a phenomenon of perception and cognition. People, as such, can perceive the same thing differently, and the inclusion of the social environment can intensify differences.

From a medical point of view, perception can be described by the fact that the object of perception is first perceived by the senses (e.g., eyes, ears), and the "perceived signals" are transmitted from the senses via the nervous system to the brain. They are mentally processed in the brain. Based on perceived stimuli and mental processing, a "re-establishment" occurs in the brain – perception. From a medical standpoint, the occurrence of perception has a purely physical background. Perception involves multiple processes. A "mechanistic" perception of stimuli from the environment, the conversion of stimuli (e.g., light, sound) into electrical impulses, the transmission of signals over the nervous system, and the re-establishment in the brain, which medicine can at least to some extent explain with the laws of physics and biochemistry.

Cognition or cognizance occurs when the social environment is involved in the process. Cognition is a **process of understanding** based on the perception of stimuli from the physical world and its interactions with the physical and social environment. The social climate is thus also included in the process of cognition. Some (socio) environmental factors that affect the output of the cognition process are:

- **socio-environmental situation factor:** the same perception (the same input to the process of cognition) in different socio-environmental situations can lead to entirely different outputs;

- **the time component** means that the same perception at different periods can lead to entirely different cognition;
- cognition may be a **result of a past action** or behaviour;
- cognition can also be an **adaptation to the environment**.

It is inappropriate for the evaluator to talk about the following during the interview:

- how things are done elsewhere;
- comment on matters;
- take sides or express opinions, etc.;
- lecture interlocutors.

3.4 **Philosophy of accreditations**

The word "accreditation" has several meanings:

- the fact of being officially recognized, accepted, or approved, or the act of formally recognizing, accepting, or approving of something;
- a systematic quality assurance process in which the government or peers external to the institution creates and evaluates quality standards, competencies, integrity, and credibility. Accreditation is the process in which certification is presented;
- the official award that the institution receives once the standards of quality are met;
- the process through which an accrediting agency reviews a school's services and operations to determine if the school meets the minimum requirements necessary to provide quality education.

Accreditation can be compulsory or voluntary.

Public study programmes in countries must be accredited. They are accredited by agencies for quality in higher education.

Voluntary accreditations are also well established. The philosophy of voluntary accreditation is based on the concept of social responsibility.

The term "*social responsibility*" means that companies voluntarily assume responsibility for various social, economic, environmental, and cultural issues.

When referring to the definitions of social responsibility, the "*Carroll Pyramid*" is often mentioned. It provides a hierarchy of four responsibilities:

Economic responsibility is binding. The number one obligation and responsibility of a company is to be profitable. Profitability is the only way for a company to survive and is beneficial for society in the long run.

Legal responsibility is binding. It is an obligation to abide by laws and regulations.

Ethical responsibility is voluntary. It is the responsibility and willingness of a company to act morally and ethically.

Philanthropic responsibility is voluntary. It is the responsibility and willingness to give a part of the profits back to society. The responsibility is discretionary but still significant.

The principle of voluntary accreditation is very similar to the "brand" philosophy, too. The organization's brand also contains a "promise." A "promise" can be written or not. Similar to the "brand," accreditation acts as an unwritten assurance contract. The assurances relate in particular to:

- **Trust** – belief in the fulfilment of a "promise".
- **The legitimacy of action** – compliance with legal norms, appropriateness and desirability of activities in terms of socially accepted standards, values, and expectations.
- **Correctness and consistency** – is focused on the management's performance in project implementation.
- **Reliability** – means competencies, benevolence, and integrity:
 - **competencies** are knowledge and abilities;
 - **benevolence** expresses a willingness to solve potential problems and do good things;
 - **integrity** means respecting social norms and ideals.

Accreditation agencies develop standards for accreditation that serve as benchmarks for accreditation decisions. As part of a school's self-study, school personnel, students, and the community address each standard by describing how well the school meets it and, if the school does not meet a certain standard, how it plans to do this in the future.

When it comes to accreditation, the evaluator needs to review the curricular aspects: objectives of education, content, organizational forms and methods, educational materials, and implementation. As mentioned earlier, accreditation nevertheless represents a "promise". The evaluator must create his/her statement of transparency, efficiency, credibility, and integrity.

3.5 The aim of AFE accreditation

The aim of evaluating Athletes Friendly Education is to find facts and proof of the Athletes Friendly Education attributes in an institution.

The AFE accreditation is voluntary. The principle of voluntary certification is very similar to the "**brand**" philosophy. The brand also contains a "**promise**".

The essence of the accreditation philosophy is the verification of:

- transparency,
- efficiency,
- credibility,
- and integrity.

The aim of awarding the AFE award is not to achieve a specific ranking or compete with other schools. The aims of awarding the AFE award are:

- to raise awareness about the importance of including an adaptation system for professional athletes in the educational processes and infrastructure;
- to raise awareness about the importance of planning and organizing the introduction and implementation of the adaptation system, which must be in the purview of the management;
- to identify, exchange and promote good practices;
- to establish a plan for continuous improvement.

4 Regulations of the Athletes Friendly Education award

The AFE award is intended as an incentive in the field of education in order to:

1. Support athletes with the information regarding their choice of educational institutions and programmes with optimal educational opportunities, with the intent to support athletes in completing their education.
2. Provide educational institutions with an added value by validating their comparative advantage (sports programmes, other programmes) and giving the educational institutions a basis for obtaining systemic resources aimed at supporting athletes and their dual careers.

The legacy of the project is to find the most effective way to improve the athlete's education through an innovative educational approach that can be implemented in the Dual Career programmes in the EU framework and at the national levels of the EU Member states.

This handbook provides a protocol on how to implement the evaluation and how to award educational institutions that offer special dual career services for athletes. For the successful implementation, it is recommended to follow the procedure established.

4.1 Award Committee guidelines

The Award Committee is the authority (body) at the national level which nominates and appoints the members of the Expert Group and confirms (or rejects) the final decision regarding the granting of the award Athletes Friendly Education.

The Award Committee is entitled to the following tasks and responsibilities:

1. The selection criteria for members of the Expert Group.
2. The recruitment guidelines of members of the Expert Group.
3. The tender for members of Expert Group.
4. The action plan for the Expert Group.

On the basis of the task and responsibilities, the Award Committee is entitled to the recruitment and evaluation of the candidates for members of the Expert Group. The procedure shall be transparent and the assessment and selection minutes shall be conducted.

The Award Committee is entitled to decisions regarding the national Expert Group and their tasks, responsibilities, and rights.

The Award Committee confirms (or rejects) the proposed decisions of the Expert Groups regarding the evaluation process of the certification and implementation of the award Athletes Friendly Education.

The Award Committee should be represented on behalf of the key stakeholders at the national level.

For the Award Committee, it is of special importance to follow **impartiality** as a core principle of the work of the Award Committee and the Expert group. Each individual expert must perform his/her work impartially and take all measures to prevent any situation where the impartial and objective implementation of the

evaluation is compromised for reasons involving economic interest, political affinity, family or emotional ties or any other shared interest ('conflict of interests').

Every candidate will be asked to complete and sign a **conflict of interest declaration** to confirm that the expert is aware of the rules related to impartiality. Any possible conflicts of interest (e.g., positions held in organizations or institutes in the last ten years) will need to be included in the declaration. If a conflict of interest arises at any part of the evaluation and certification process, the expert needs to declare this interest directly to the organization.

4.2 **Expert Group guidelines**

The Expert Group is a group of experts at the national level nominated by the Award Committee. The members of the Expert Group are included in all evaluation steps. It is important to note that only the members of the Expert Group can evaluate candidate schools for the AFE award.

In the evaluation procedures, the members of the Expert Group shall be appointed in groups of experts consisting of three (3) members only, exceptionally at least two (2) members are appointed.

The members of the Expert Group are nominated for the period of four (4) years.

The members of the Expert Group are included in all evaluation steps of the certification in accordance with the regulations of the AFE Award.

Candidates for the members of the Expert Group are requested to sign a conflict of interest declaration.

Candidates for the members of the Expert Group of the Athletes Friendly Education award are selected based on a public call.

Based on the scope of the system of the evaluation process, the minimum quality requirements (priorities) for the selection of the members of the Expert Group are as follows:

- representative of sports organizations;
- representative of the educational institution;
- familiar with the sport system at the national level;
- familiar with the education system at secondary school and at the university level;
- personal integrity: taking into account potential conflicts of interest;
- ability to use ITK equipment;
- working background or experience in the field of sport and education:
 - on the coordination of sport and education,
 - in relation to athletes – education,
 - in relation to athletes – work,
 - in relation to the adaptation of education,
 - in relation to the dual-career support and the EU Guidelines on the dual career of athletes,
 - in relation to the national and EU legislation and guidelines.
- possible experience as a former elite athlete;
- possible experience as a coach of prospective and top athletes;
- the willingness of contributing to the development of sport and education;
- involvement in the network of educational institutions;
- involvement in the network of sports organizations;
- the ability to work in a group.

Impartiality is a core principle of the work of the Expert Group. Each individual expert must perform his/her work impartially and take all measures to prevent any situation where the impartial and objective implementation of the evaluation is compromised for reasons involving economic interest, political affinity, family or emotional ties or any other shared interest ('conflict of interests').

Every candidate will be asked to complete and sign a **conflict of interest declaration** to confirm that he/she is aware of the rules related to impartiality. Any possible conflicts of interest (e.g., positions held in organizations or institutes in the last ten years) will need to be included in the declaration. If a conflict of interest arises at any part of the evaluation and certification process, the expert needs to declare this interest directly to the organization.

The following situations are automatically considered as a conflict of interest:

- the expert was involved in the preparation of the application for the award;
- the expert is a director, trustee or partner or is in any way involved in the management of an applicant institution;
- the expert is currently employed or has recently (last 12 months) been contracted by the applicant institution.

In this case, the expert must be excluded from the evaluation.

4.3 Application form for schools and faculties

The information regarding the award has to be disseminated and published at each national level. It is important that the relevant institutions, their representatives and the public authorities know about the award and where to apply for it. Each partner organization has to provide a contact for interested people at their respective national level. The award may be given to educational institutions of secondary or tertiary education. There is no exclusion of any educational level or a certain number of athletes at school.

4.4 The importance of a questionnaire

We define Athletes Friendly Education as a type of education which is continually planning, organizing and improving a system of adaptations included in the educational process and infrastructure.

The questionnaire is only a list of possible adaptations. It should be used as a reminder.

It is not necessary that all adaptations from the AFE Questionnaire are realized. Different schools have different situations.

The evaluator must see the "big picture". He/she needs to find facts and proof of the existence of the adaptations.

The adaptations are not scored. The ranking system within the AFE accreditation does not exist.

4.5 The use of the award

The AFE award is given to institutions that are actively supporting the dual career of athletes. The AFE award can be used for self-promotion as well as for self-assessment as it provides criteria for reviewing the institutions' own services.

Athletes get the information that an educational institution which is labelled as "Athletes Friendly Education" is aware of the Dual Career challenges and supports their efforts.

4.6 Validity of the award

The AFE award is valid for four (4) years. If an institution reapplies within this period, it is allowed to present the award until the results of the reapplication.

5 The AFE evaluation protocol

5.1 Starting Definitions

The **first evaluation** is a process that seeks to establish whether a school can formally be recognized as having included Athletes Friendly Education attributes as part of its educational processes and infrastructure by its own volition and from moral, ethical, and philanthropic motives.

Each subsequent evaluation seeks to establish whether the school has made progress since its last review. Progress is assessed on an annual basis by conducting assessments. Reassessment is planned in the final year before the period of the AFE award validation termination. If the educational institution has already achieved excellent (high level) evaluation scores, the reassessment process does not apply.

5.2 Aims of the AFE evaluation

The aim of the first AFE evaluation is to find and confirm Athletes Friendly Education attributes as follows:

- a school voluntarily implemented the adaptation system for professional athletes into its educational processes and infrastructure;

- the introduction of an adaptation system was not done by chance, but rather as a planned and organized process;
- the school's actions are voluntary, and its motives moral, ethical, philanthropic, well-meaning, consistent, and transparent.

The AFE evaluators look for facts and proofs that attributes of Athletes Friendly Education do exist. Some possible attributes are:

- adaptations;
- the adaptations constitute a system;
- the adaptations are organized and managed by school management;
- the institutions introduce the adaptations voluntarily;
- the adaptations are based on pre-existing legal frameworks and internal institutional regulations;
- the institutions need to possess adequate competencies or experience. In other words, they need to be »trustworthy«.

Before extending the award's validity, the evaluation process aims to establish whether there have been any improvements since the previous evaluation.

5.3 Evaluation materials

The school is required to apply with the following:

- basic information about the institution (school name, address, type, level, etc.);
- clarification of whether the application is for the school as a whole or just an individual educational programme;
- a short presentation of primary arguments, facts, and evidence following the evaluation questionnaire.

The school needs to demonstrate that it possesses the attributes of Athletes Friendly Education, notably an educational process and infrastructure adaptation system.

To receive the award, the school must demonstrate that a) it has a plan in place (several adaptation elements), b) the adaptations have a common goal, c) they are managed by school management and d) that they consist of a system.

If the evaluation occurs at a remote location, the materials must be made available before the review. The application must likewise contain a data protection clause.

At the start of the evaluation process, the school must submit the following lists:

1. teachers or responsible administration who work with athletes;
2. administrative staff who work with athletes;
3. reachable secondary-school/university student-athletes;
4. the in-house mechanism adopted by the school about adaptations aimed at athletes;
5. sports institutions with which the school collaborates.

At the evaluators' request, the school must provide documents supporting the application's claims. Requests for documents may be made to school management, but not to other employees – management has the sole authority to provide these documents. The committee then reviews the papers but it is not allowed to make copies or remove them from school premises. The school is required to show its infrastructure to the evaluators.

The evaluators write a draft in real-time. They should complete the final version of the report within 15 days. They send a copy to the school.

The school may prepare written comments on the minutes within 8 days. The proposal is suggested with the aim to ensure the process accordingly.

5.4 Evaluation participants

Evaluators have to be members of the Expert Group, nominated by the Award Committee. The evaluation is conducted by three (3) members, only exceptionally at least two (2) members are appointed. At least two (2) evaluators should be present for the interviews.

The school needs to be represented by:

1. at least one representative of the school management or a person responsible for the dual career inside the school system (Dual Career Support Provider);
2. one person from the list of teachers (selected teachers who work with athletes);
3. one person from the list of administrative staff (a randomly selected school administrator or a professional associate who works with athletes);
4. one person from the list of secondary-school/university students (a student-athlete is randomly chosen).

5.5 Evaluation methods

An appropriate method of evaluation must be chosen to find the facts and evidence on which the conclusions of the assessment will base.

The evaluation aims to gather facts and evidence to establish whether the school has the necessary AFE attributes or not.

The methods applied in these evaluations are:

- interviews,
- benchmarking,
- working with documents,
- observations.

Remote interviews, remote assessment, and remote meetings are possible.

5.6 Interviews

The evaluators usually interview the management, administrative staff, teaching staff, students, and graduates. Usually, the interview is not a direct observation of the object, so this method is not suitable for measuring variables' values. The evaluators are interested in facts, arguments, proof, and concrete examples.

However, it is well known that people very often do not tell facts but may give their subjective interpretations and opinions.

Evaluators try to avoid questions about personal opinion, subjective interpretation, and especially about interpersonal relationships.

Interviews have to be structured, which means that evaluators should differentiate the questioning aspects for each group and prepare questions in advance. During the interview, the interviewers have to record the observations regularly.

Interviews are conducted separately for the management, the administrative staff, and the students.

If the interviews reveal inconsistencies, they are continued. The evaluators must guarantee the anonymity of the person who exposed the inconsistency.

The role of the evaluators is to use the questionnaire to identify any AFE attributes.

If evaluators already have all the facts and evidence concerning a particular attribute or some features are already part of the system in a specific country, they can skip those questions.

However, the evaluators must ascertain whether certain groups of answers or answers related to a particular attribute (provided by the management, teaching staff, administrative staff, and students) show signs of inconsistency. There might be inconsistencies between the provided documents and what is said during the interviews.

If inconsistencies arise, they are recorded. In this case, the participants' names are left out.

5.7 Observation

Observation is part of the evaluation process. Evaluation by direct observation means that the evaluator is physically present. We distinguish between random or non-systematic observation and systematic observation. The random observation is characterized by the observer's perception of what is currently attracting attention.

In case of systematic observation, aspects of observation are selected in advance. The aspects of observation must be related to the aims of evaluation.

When observing, an evaluator should focus only on their perceptions. The evaluator must be vigilant not to allow their perception to become clouded by anyone from the school they are evaluating.

5.8 Benchmarking

Benchmarking means comparison. Benchmarking creates a point of reference against which something can be measured. The advantage of this method is that it allows the exchange of good practices.

5.9 Documents

Evaluators review different documents: curricula, schedules, and internal rules of the organization. Evaluators can review a financial statement, too. Financial statements are documents from which it can be very precisely discerned how an organization operates.

5.10 Evaluation contents

The evaluation contents relate to the adaptations that, as previously mentioned, are:

- part of a system and not an individual;
- organised and managed by school management;
- voluntarily introduced by the institution;
- part of a broader legal basis and subject to the internal rules of the institution; the institution must display "trustworthiness" by having the necessary competencies and experience.

5.11 Existence of adaptations

The evaluator must find facts and evidence to support adaptations and establish that they are part of a system. The existence of adaptations is verified using the AFE evaluation questionnaire e.g., using the curriculum item:

Does the following exist?

- adapted learning material for secondary-school/university student-athletes;
- special teaching aids for athletes;
- flexibilities for not being able to be physically present during courses, exams;
- possibility to focus on self-study of specific subjects of the course (inclusive teaching aids, study material, etc.);
- special ICT equipment for athletes;
- adjusted timetable for athletes (class hours);
- possibility to use school infrastructure as training facilities.

The evaluator's job is to ascertain whether these are individual examples of an adaptation or the adaptations comprise a whole system.

5.12 Planning and organization of adaptations

The evaluator must observe facts and evidence showing that the adaptations were not implemented by chance but were planned and organised. This can be done using the evaluation questionnaire, e.g.:

- Does the school have its own (general) mission statement?
- Does the school have a (common) vision?
- Does the school influence the community (e.g., influencing general national political discourse and providing expertise)?
- Does the school have developmental milestones (from that time on, we have done things this way)?
- Does the school have well-defined strategic priorities (in general)?
- Does the school have its brand (a slogan, a pledge – in general)?
- Does the school have its code of ethics – in general?

- Do the managers have a distinct way of acting, are they recognizable, different from others – in general?
- Can the school prove that its staff and students participate in day-to-day decision-making – in general?
- Can the school show its involvement in the community (sports associations) when setting athletic education goals?

There can also be other grounds for establishing facts. The evaluator may examine other documents as well, for example:

- minutes from professional and management bodies;
- financial plans and reports;
- etc.

5.13 Volition, good intention and ethical behaviour

The evaluator must uncover facts and evidence showing that the institution in question is implementing the adaptations voluntarily, with good intentions, encouraging transparency, and is driven by philanthropic motives.

They can achieve this either through an observation and by conducting interviews or by referring to questions from the evaluation questionnaire, for example:

- Does the school systematically measure staff enthusiasm?
- Does the school employ a shared mental model – related to working with athletes?
- Does the school share a shared vision – related to working with athletes?

An experienced evaluator can use the mental model and shared-vision questions to get a good idea of the collective ambitions and organizational model and the staff's competencies and enthusiasm.

5.14 School's internal rules

The evaluator must observe facts and evidence showing that the institution complies with the law and has internal rules, which must be readily available.

They can achieve this either through observation and by conducting interviews or by referring to questions from the evaluation questionnaire, for example:

- Are the institution's activities governed by rules (general rules which apply to secondary-school/university students)?
- Is the criterion for achieving athlete status written down?
- Is the duration of this status defined?
- Are the special rights granted by athlete status clearly defined?
- Are the obligations intrinsic to this status also defined (e.g., an obligation to represent the school, etc.)?
- Is the criterion for achieving athlete status defined?

5.15 Competences and experience

The evaluator must observe facts and evidence showing that the educational institution is competent, experienced, and involved in the community.

They can achieve this either through observation and by conducting interviews or by referring to questions from the evaluation questionnaire, for example:

- Can the school prove its prior experience of working with athletes?
- Can the school prove the use of specific know-how for working with athletes?
- Can the school show that it follows specific methods for working with athletes?
- Can the school show that it interacts with sports associations?
- Can the school show that it interacts with professional sports associations (e.g., the school's collaboration with the world of sport)?

6 Questionnaire

Instructions:

The questionnaire is prepared for the evaluation of educational institutions. All questions relate to the educational institutions from secondary school education and above (i.e., secondary schools, faculties/colleges, or universities) in your country. The answers represent your assessment of the situation. Following the self-assessment, structured interviews with the stakeholders of the educational process (e.g., teachers, coaches, clubs, athletes, parents, other important persons in the educational support of athlete) will take place.

Answer meaning:

1. Almost without exception (95% or more) NO
2. Usually (more than 75% and less than 95%) NO
3. Some (more than 25% and less than 75% of schools) YES
4. Usually (more than 75% and less than 95%) YES
5. Almost without exception (95% or more) YES

Answer with an "X" if you cannot estimate the situation in schools

Table 2: Questionnaire

		X	1	2	3	4	5
Collective ambitions of educational institution – general							
1.	Do educational institutions have a defined mission of organization?						
2.	Do educational institutions have a defined vision (a defined academic concept; a defined athletic concept)?						
3.	Do educational institutions demonstrate an environmental impact (e.g., general government policy, professional solutions)?						
4.	Do educational institutions have milestones in their development? (“We have been doing it this way ever since.”)						
5.	Do educational institutions have strategic priorities identified (transparent targets and transparent tasks of all stakeholders/persons involved)?						
6.	Do educational institutions have their own brand (slogan, promise, etc.)?						
7.	Do educational institutions write down their values?						
8.	Do school leaders behave in a distinctive/typical/different way from others?						
9.	Can educational institutions demonstrate staff and student participation in management?						
10.	Can educational institutions demonstrate the participation of the environment (sports federations) in the formulation of objectives – related to the education of athletes?						
Competences for working with athletes							
11.	Can educational institutions demonstrate any existing experience in working with athletes?					... years	
12.	Can educational institutions demonstrate the use of specific skills in working with athletes (is there a scientific monitoring/supervision/consulting established)?						
13.	Can educational institutions demonstrate the use of methods of working with athletes (e.g., adaption of the training schedule to the framework competition and training schedule of sports organizations)?						
14.	Can educational institutions demonstrate involvement in interaction with sports federations (e.g., referring to talent scouting or performing diagnostics)?						
15.	Can educational institutions demonstrate interaction with professional associations in the field of sports (e.g., school involvement with the sports sphere)?						
Commitment to work							
16.	Do educational institutions systematically measure staff engagement in general?						
17.	Do educational institutions systematically measure staff engagement in working with athletes?						

Organizational model							
Rational organization							
18.	Is the operation of educational institutions rule-based (general rules relating to students)?						
19.	Are the criteria for gaining student-athlete status written?						
20.	Is the duration of student-athlete status defined?						
21.	Are special rights arising from student-athlete status defined?						
22.	Are special duties arising from student-athlete status defined (for instance, the student-athlete also represents the institution, etc.)?						
23.	Is the procedure for obtaining student-athlete status formally defined?						
24.	Are the responsibilities, rights and duties of the school staff clearly defined?						
25.	Is the internal organization of educational institutions impersonal (processes function in the same way, regardless of who is employed)?						
26.	Is the work done by specialists (for example, is a psychologist really a psychologist by education...)?						
27.	Is there a hierarchy and authority within the educational institutions (is there a federal or a state programme with different gradations)?						
Learning organization – related to working with athletes							
28.	Is there a common mental model within educational institutions – related to working with athletes (are there institutionalised annual interviews with parents, coaches, and athletes)?						
29.	Is there a shared vision within educational institutions – related to working with athletes (are there institutionalised qualification measures for the school staff related to athletic professional topics)?						
30.	Is there teamwork in educational institutions – related to working with athletes?						
31.	Is there systematic problem-solving and systemic thinking present in working with athletes (an evaluation of problem-solving in working with athletes; concepts of how to deal with dropouts)?						
Institutionalized organization							
32.	Is there a general code of ethics for students in educational institutions? (How is the ethic code implemented? Is this code only for students or do also the teachers/coaches/parents/...commit to this code?)						
33.	Is there a general code of ethics for the staff in educational institutions?						
34.	Is there a general perception of fair and just treatment of all employees in schools?						
35.	Is there a general perception of fair wages for employees in schools?						
36.	Is there a general perception of fair pay differentials, based on the complexity of work, in schools?						
37.	Is there a general perception of a culture of quality in schools?						
38.	Is there a general perception in educational institutions of a difference/distinction of the organization from others?						
39.	Is there collaboration with other educational institutions at the national or international level?						

Split organization						
40.	Do school staff emphasize the (same) essential features of the organization – related to working with athletes?					
41.	Do school staff outwardly convey the same (non-contradictory) messages – related to working with athletes?					
Evaluation processes						
Defining educational goals						
42.	Can educational institutions demonstrate social importance – related to working with athletes?					
43.	Are educational institutions monitoring the social environment and supporting social development (e.g., monitoring trends in athlete education)?					
44.	Are school objectives subject to regular self-evaluation?					
45.	Are school objectives subject to regular external evaluation?					
Choice of learning content						
46.	Are there adjustments made to learning content (personalized programme) for student athletes (e.g., e-learning options; supporting learning coaches/teachers)?					
Preparation of educational materials						
47.	Are there specific material resources for the education of athletes?					
48.	Special classrooms for athletes?					
49.	Special didactic aids for athletes (e.g., possibilities to individualize the athletes learning process)?					
50.	Special ICT equipment for athletes?					
51.	Special changing rooms for athletes?					
52.	Special canteens for athletes?					
53.	Special libraries (well equipped with athletic professional literature)?					
54.	Special residential facilities for students (student dormitory/boarding house) for athletes?					
55.	Special premises for athletes to socialize?					
56.	Car parks for athletes (bicycle storage rooms, etc.)?					
57.	Are the educational institutions well connected to public transport?					
Recruitment						
58.	Is there any formal criteria in the educational institution for the required teacher education – general?					
59.	Do all the teachers have the required formal education – general?					
60.	Is there training provided to school staff for working with athletes (to support teachers athletic competence/skills)?					
61.	Is there a guidance counsellor – related to working with athletes?					
62.	Is there an educator – related to working with athletes?					
Implementation						
63.	Are school rules publicly available (brochure/web)?					
64.	Do educational institutions publish a guide for students – general?					
65.	Is there a formally defined method of informing students of the schedule – general?					
66.	Is there any tutoring (additional learning aid for athletes)?					
67.	Is there a student affairs office for students – general?					
68.	Is there a formal mechanism for monitoring student performance?					
69.	Is there an individual approach in educational institutions to an individual athlete?					

70.	Are there activities outside the prescribed curriculum, designed to develop the integral development of athletes (new knowledge and skills)?								
Material training resources in schools									
71.	Is there an annual training infrastructure in educational institutions (multi-annual training and education concepts; facilities enabling all sports)?								
72.	Is there a winter training infrastructure in educational institutions (for training sessions during winter time)?								
73.	Is there a health care facility for athletes in the proximity of educational institutions?								
74.	Is there an option for athlete transport in educational institutions?								
75.	Are there sports changing rooms in educational institutions?								
76.	Are there canteens serving sports nutrition in educational institutions?								
77.	Are premises for sports equipment available in educational institutions?								
78.	Are there facilities to wash clothes and sports equipment in educational institutions?								
Human resources for training									
79.	Is physiotherapy for athletes available in educational institutions (number of hours of physiotherapists available per week)?								
80.	Are rehabilitation services for athletes available in educational institutions (number of hours of a pedagogical worker available per week)?								
81.	Is psychological support for athletes available in educational institutions (number of hours of sport psychologists available per week)?								
Organizational training resources									
82.	Is there a customised schedule for athletes in educational institutions (conduct of lessons)?								
83.	Is there time set aside for training in educational institutions?								
84.	Is there time set aside for regeneration in educational institutions?								
Are educational institutions provided with a stable source of funds for:									
85.	Salaries?								
86.	Professional staff development?								
87.	Building maintenance?								
88.	Energy, services?								
89.	Storing material resources for education?								

7 Implementation

In this chapter, we will summarize the course of the phases of obtaining accreditation. The accreditation process begins with the school submitting an application and ends with the award ceremony.

7.1 Start of the process of accreditation

The process begins after receiving a school application form.

7.2 Appointing an evaluation committee

Only the members of Expert Group can evaluate the candidate schools for the AFE award. The evaluators may only do their work once officially appointed. In the evaluation procedures, the members of the Expert Group and the evaluators shall be appointed by Award Committee.

7.3 Pre-evaluation tasks and time frame of the evaluation

During the co-ordination phase, the school and the evaluators do not communicate (e.g., regarding the evaluation date and sending draft reports). All pre-process communication takes place between the Award Committee and the evaluated school. Co-ordination is assumed by the institution that issues the AFE award at the national level.

The candidate school and the institution that issues the AFE award prepare a time frame of evaluation. The time frame of the evaluation should be prepared before the evaluation. The time frame should include the following activities:

- an introductory meeting with the management;
- a meeting with all participating parties from the school – presentation of the evaluation process;
- a meeting with the management;
- a meeting with teachers;
- a meeting with administrative staff;
- a meeting with secondary-school/university students;
- joint meeting – summary of findings.

All evaluation tasks can be done in one day. The deadline is three days. (Pre-evaluation activities are not included.)

7.4 Final assessment and writing the report

At the end of the evaluation, the evaluators write an evaluation report. The report should contain the following formal elements:

- names and surnames of the evaluators;
- date of the report;
- date of finished evaluation;
- information about the evaluated school/programme;
- list of individuals from the school/programme who took part in the evaluation;

- opportunities for improvement;
- signatures of the evaluators.

The evaluators must create a statement about the facts and evidence if a school meets the AFE accreditation criteria or not:

- an evaluation report is positive when the school meets the AFE accreditation criteria; it is not necessary that all adaptations from the questionnaire are completed;
- an evaluation report is negative when the school does not meet the AFE accreditation criteria.

The questionnaire is only a list of possible adaptations. It should be used as a reminder. The evaluator must see the "big picture" and find facts and evidence that:

- adaptations for athletes do exist;
- adaptations constitute a system;
- adaptations are organized and managed by school management;
- these adaptations constitute a system;
- a school introduces the adaptations voluntarily;
- adaptations are based on pre-existing legal frameworks and internal regulations;
- a school possesses adequate competencies or experience.

The evaluators send the final version of the evaluation report to the Award Committee.

7.5 Final decision

The Award Committee is responsible to make the final decision about accreditation. The Award Committee can confirm and accept the evaluation report. On the other hand, the Award Committee can reject accreditation, if any reasons do exist.

7.6 Award ceremony

Educational institutions receive the award document at the ceremony.

8 Frequently asked questions (FAQs)

What is the aim and essence of AFE accreditation?

The aim of evaluating Athletes Friendly Education (AFE) is to find facts and proof of Athletes Friendly Education attributes. Athletes Friendly Education has the following attributes:

- adaptations;
- the adaptations constitute a system;
- the adaptations are organized and managed by school management;
- the institutions introduce the adaptations voluntarily;
- the adaptations are based on pre-existing legal frameworks and internal institutional regulations;
- the institutions need to possess adequate competencies or experience. In other words, they need to be »trustworthy«.

AFE accreditation is a voluntary accreditation. The essence of the accreditation philosophy is the verification of transparency, efficiency, credibility, and integrity.

Do all adaptations from the questionnaire need to be completed?

Not at all.

It is not necessary to realize all adaptations from the AFE questionnaire. Different schools in different countries have different situations.

The evaluator must see the "big picture." He/she needs to find facts and proof of the existence of adaptations. The adaptations must constitute a system. They must be organized and managed by school management, and the institutions must introduce the adaptations voluntarily.

Are adaptations scored? Does the school score a point for each adaptation?

No. Adaptations are not scored.

Does the ranking system within the AFE accreditation exist?

No. There is no ranking system within the AFE accreditation.

Then why do we have the questionnaire?

The questionnaire is only a list of possible adaptations. It should be used as a reminder.

How do we know that a school meets the AFE accreditation criteria?

A school meets the AFE accreditation criteria when:

- it has adaptations for athletes;
- these adaptations constitute a system;
- adaptations are organized and managed by school management;
- it introduces the adaptations voluntarily;
- the adaptations are based on pre-existing legal frameworks and internal regulations;
- it possesses adequate competencies or experience.

Can the report be negative?

Yes. The report may also be negative.

An evaluation report is positive when the school meets the AFE accreditation criteria.

An evaluation report is negative when the school does not meet the AFE accreditation criteria.

The evaluator must, through evaluation, create his/her statement about transparency, efficiency, credibility, and integrity.

What should the evaluation report include?

The evaluator must create a statement about the facts and evidence if a school meets the AFE accreditation criteria. Including the facts and evidence that:

- adaptations for athletes do exist;
- adaptations constitute a system;
- adaptations are organized and managed by school management;
- a school introduces the adaptations voluntarily;
- adaptations are based on pre-existing legal frameworks and internal regulations;
- a school possesses adequate competencies or experience.

In the evaluation process, the evaluator must create his/her statement about transparency, efficiency, credibility, and integrity.

As mentioned earlier, any evaluation's primary purpose is to find what needs improvement and improve it. The evaluator can also put forward suggestions for improvement.

ATHLETES FRIENDLY EDUCATION HANDBOOK: AWARD FOR EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS SUPPORTING THE DUAL CAREER OF ATHLETES

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Abstract (AFE) is a type of schooling, continually planning, organizing, and improving a system of adaptations included in a school's educational process and infrastructure. These adaptations are implemented voluntarily and in a benevolent, systematic, comprehensive, and transparent manner, with the explicit aim to help athletes engage in sport and simultaneously achieve goals and competencies set out in the educational program and thus Athlete friendly education has the following attributes: adaptations; rather than being discrete, these adaptations constitute a system; adaptations are organized and managed by school management; institutions introduce the adaptations voluntarily; adaptations are based on pre-existing legal frameworks and internal institutional regulations; institutions need to possess adequate competencies or experience; they need to be "trustworthy," in other words. AFE accreditation is voluntary. The principle of voluntary certification is very similar to the "brand" philosophy. The brand also contains a "promise."

Keywords:

athletes
friendly
education,
dual
career,
adaptations,
evaluation,
accreditation



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