

# Athlete Transitions Policy

**Owner:** Pathway Performance Team  
Director

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WESTERN AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE *of* SPORT

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## **1. Purpose**

This policy provides direction to WAIS staff for the management of WAIS athletes going through transitional experiences within their athletic lifecycle.

## **2. Background**

- 2.1. A transition is being defined as “a set of specific demands related to practice, competitions, communication, and lifestyle that athletes have to cope with in order to continue successfully in sport or to adjust to the post-career” (Alfermann & Stambulova, 2007, p. 713).
- 2.2. In relation to an athlete on scholarship, transitions are divided into three types, Entry, Within and Exit transitions.
  - 2.2.1. An ‘Entry’ transition refers to the process by which a person is brought on to WAIS scholarship for the first time.
  - 2.2.2. A ‘Within’ transition refers to processes that occur while the athlete is on scholarship. Examples include changes in scholarship level (e.g. moving from Emerging to Developing or Developing back to Emerging), changes in competitive level (e.g. moving from age group to open competition, national to international competition), and changes in living circumstances or education/vocational commitments (e.g. school to university, moving out of the family home).
  - 2.2.3. An ‘Exit’ transition refers to the process by which an athlete ceases to be on scholarship.
- 2.3. Traditionally, transition policies in sports institutes have focussed on negative consequences upon retirement from sport. More recent approaches to transitions acknowledge the relevance of other types of transitions such as entry to high performance sport and progression from junior to senior levels of competition.
- 2.4. Athletes will face transitions that are unique to being a high performance athlete along with those that occur in other aspects of life. Readers are referred to Wylleman and Lavallee’s (2004) developmental model for a good overview of the transitions faced in a sporting career alongside those that might occur in an individual’s psycho-social setting and academic/vocational commitments.
- 2.5. Athletes respond differently to transition with some thriving on the challenge presented and others experiencing high levels of psychological distress. This is not limited to the exit/retirement transition.

## **3. Standards**

- 3.1. All WAIS Sport Program, Partner Program and Individual Athlete Support Program scholarship holders are covered by the Athlete Transitions Policy.
- 3.2. All athletes will take part in an induction process upon becoming a WAIS athlete.
- 3.3. All athletes will be given fair warning that their scholarship may be terminated except when the decision is made based on a code of conduct violation.
- 3.4. Decisions not to renew an athletes scholarship will be made based on evidence and will be communicated verbally and in writing.
- 3.5. At the conclusion of their scholarship, all athletes will be offered a package of support to facilitate their transition.
- 3.6. All athletes will have the opportunity to provide feedback to WAIS at the conclusion of their scholarship.

3.7. All athlete exit transitions will be monitored by WAIS Personal Excellence Advisors to ensure WAIS is compliant with the Athlete Transition Policy.

#### **4. Transition Processes**

##### **4.1. Entry Transitions**

The entry transition is to be facilitated by an induction process. This will include the completion of all screening and scholarship requirements, a squad induction session and other activities to be determined by the coach and performance enhancement team.

##### **4.2. Within Transitions**

As within transitions are varied in nature they will be considered within normal Performance Enhancement Team (PET) processes to determine any additional support that may be required.

##### **4.3. Exit transitions**

The goal of providing transition services to athletes exiting WAIS is to support them to engage with other community resources in a manner which will sustain them for the next phase of their life. Athletes leaving WAIS are requested to go through a series of steps aimed at engaging them in their departure in a constructive manner. To achieve this goal, a range of services will be available for an approved period of time to assist scholarship holders as they progress through the next stage of their life. The WAIS Personal Excellence Advisors have responsibility for monitoring and recording the exit transition process.

#### **5. Exit Transition Pathways**

##### **5.1. Scholarship Cancellation**

5.1.1. An athlete scholarship may be cancelled via the following 2 methods:

Athlete initiated - An athlete wishing to withdraw from IASP may do so at any time by informing their WAIS Performance Team Director in writing.

WAIS initiated - An athlete's program scholarship may be suspended or terminated where he or she breaches the WAIS Athlete Code of Conduct or the Athlete Scholarship Terms and Conditions.

5.1.2. In the event that an athlete scholarship is cancelled, they will still be entitled to all the follow-up activities and support detailed in 5.3 below.

##### **5.2. Scholarship non-renewal**

5.2.1. Warning period - When ongoing monitoring of an athlete's conduct as a WAIS scholarship holder (including progress towards training and performance targets such as being rated 1 on a critical success factor) and/or information provided by the athlete's NSO, identifies that the athlete is unlikely or at risk of not having their scholarship renewed, the coach/NSO HPD and PET Team Director (PTD) should convene a meeting with the athlete. At that meeting, the athlete should be made aware (a) that their scholarship is under consideration for non-renewal, (b) of specific criteria required within a timeframe that will form the conditions upon which the athlete will be retained as a scholarship holder; and (c) receive an assessment by the psychologist as to their risk for problematic transition. A written record of this meeting will be made, sent to the athlete and retained by WAIS.

- 5.2.2. Non-renewal-based on evidence that the athlete has not met the criteria set in the warning period and there are no significant mitigating circumstances, the PTD may decide not to renew the athlete’s scholarship.
- 5.2.3. A case discussion will occur between relevant PET members (Core: PTD, Coach/NSO HPD, PE Advisor, Psychologist; as required S&C coach, Physiotherapist, Doctor, Physiologist) to develop an action plan to meet the athlete’s immediate transitional needs. The PTD, coach/NSO HPD and athlete will meet to discuss the reasons for leaving/non-selection. At that meeting the PTD will utilise the WAIS Transitions handbook to discuss with the athlete the services available to them to support their transition. If the athlete has an existing medical condition or injury they will be requested to see the Chief Medical Officer (CMO) or alternative WAIS approved sports physician for final medical review.
- 5.2.6. Athlete exit letter prepared and sent.
- 5.2.7. The athlete will be invited to meet with their PE Advisor. The invitation and response will be documented in accordance with 5.5 below.

5.3. Athlete Transition to National Program

- 5.3.1. When a WAIS scholarship holder transitions into a national team or program, WAIS support staff will provide a handover to assist the athlete integrate into the new daily training environment.
- 5.3.2. A modified series of follow-up activities, monitoring and services compared to that specified in 5.4, 5.5 and 5.6 below will be determined and provided on a case-by-case basis.

**6. Commitment to the athlete**

6.1. Follow up activities:

- 6.1.1. One month post scholarship: PTD to conduct exit interview with the athlete or invite the athlete to complete an online questionnaire.
- 6.1.2. The athlete will be contacted by phone (or email in the case that attempts to phone are unsuccessful) by the following people following the athlete’s end of scholarship.

Time following exit	Staff member to contact
1 month	Coach, PE Advisor, Psychologist
2 months	PE Advisor
3 months	Psychologist
4 months	Coach
5 months	PE Advisor
6 months	Psychologist
9 months	PE Advisor
12 months	Coach, PE Advisor, Psychologist

6.2. Monitoring the exit transition process

- 6.2.1. The exit transition process will be monitored by the PE Advisor associated with the athlete.
- 6.2.2. The PE Advisor will use the Transitions Database and Athlete Recording Transitions Database to monitor the exit transitions process.

6.3. The exit transitions services available are:

- 6.3.1. Gym access for 3 months during times normally associated with the athlete's sport or at other times by arrangement with the PTD.
- 6.3.2. PE Advisor: Up to 4 sessions with a PE Advisor within 24 months of leaving to consolidate work and or education plans.
- 6.3.3. Psychologist: Up to 6 sessions with a sport or clinical psychologist within 24 months of leaving to support positive mental health.
- 6.3.4. Strength Coach/Physiologist: Up to 2 sessions within 6 months of leaving to discuss training for health and wellbeing or programming for future sporting challenges.
- 6.3.5. Nutritionist: Up to 2 sessions with 6 months of leaving to assist with planning a diet compatible with health and wellbeing.
- 6.3.6. Medical: At the discretion of the CMO or other sport physician, some future medical costs (including physiotherapy) may be covered by WAIS.
- 6.3.7. Additional services may be approved at the discretion of the PTD on a case by case basis.
- 6.3.8. Opportunity to attend a Transitioned Athletes workshop following exit.
- 6.3.9. Details on how to access support services throughout the transition period are contained in the Athlete Transitions Handbook

## 7. Supporting Documents

### 6.1. Athlete Recording Transitions Database and Transitions Database

The Athlete Recording Transitions Database and Transitions Database are documents to record each individual's progress through their transition. The Transitions Database provides an overall summary of all athletes who have ended their scholarship period with WAIS. The Athlete Recording Transitions Database contains records of all communication and interactions with individual athletes who have ended their scholarship period with WAIS.

## 8. Other relevant Policies

- WAIS Athlete Mental Health Policy
- WAIS Athlete Benefits Policy
- WAIS Athlete Categorisation and Selection Policy
- WAIS Individual Athlete Support Program Athlete Selection Policy
- WAIS Sports Medicine and Injections Policy
- WAIS Athlete Code of Conduct

**Athlete Transition and Decision Making**

