



DiscoverU

DISCOVERING UNIVERSITY SPORT AND DUAL CAREER

Collection of Good Practice



Co-funded by
the European Union

SUMMARY



Discovering university sport and supporting dual career (DiscoverU) enhances sport and physical activity opportunities for students in higher education and increase their participation in these activities, engaging partner organisations through blended learning, sharing experiences, gaining new information and skills. The partner consortium is composed of six partners, bringing together two European NGO entities (EUSA Institute and EAS), national university sport bodies in three countries (Croatia, Hungary, Poland) and a university (Salerno, Italy).

Project focuses on two areas: research - gathering information and sharing good practice examples in the partner countries; and on implementation of educational and sports activities.

This collection consists of selection of good practices in partner countries, connected to organization and management of sport events, non-sport related activities and dual career practices.

Following organizations – DiscoverU project partners have contributed to the collection of good practices and examples within the before-mentioned areas:

- EUSA Institute, Slovenia
- European Athlete as Student (EAS), Malta
- Croatian Academic Sports Federation (CASF/HASS), Croatia
- Hungarian University Sports Federation (HUSF/MEFS), Hungary
- University Sports Association of Poland (AZS), Poland
- University of Salerno (UNISA), Italy

SPORT EVENTS MANAGEMENT AND ORGANIZATION



Croatian Academic Sports Federation has a detailed and multi-layered structure that ensures transparency on many fields of their activities and enables quality organization of sport events on regional, national and international level.

CASF organizes competitions for 30.000 students in 18 sports on annual basis, additionally engaging in organization of international events as well.

Lifecycle of the event

- Bidding process
- Strategic planning
- Operational planning
- Event delivery
- Evaluation and reporting

Management of the sports events is well planned – has specific stages, which are well-defined and support the overall process of the organization. The longest phase is the operational planning phase which includes defining the organizational structure, confirmation of the functional areas, roles and responsibilities and scope of operations.

General Tips:

- è Hard working team that matches the tasks.
- è Good practice example may be dedicated app for the event – with the schedules, scores and more information.
- è Involvement of students in the organization may be beneficial in terms of creativity and knowledge of the participants' needs.
- è It's important to pass the knowledge and "know-how" of the events to the next organizers of the events.
- è Cooperation with sport federations may support not only a technical side of the events, but also logistical – in terms of adjusting the date of the event.

Hungarian University Sports Federation (MEFS) has been one of the main organizers of the 2024 European Universities Games in Debrecen and Miskolc. The topic of safety and security is especially important during big-scale events like this, which enables the sharing of various good practices.



MEFS must ensure the safety of not only participants but also organizers, volunteers, and general public during the event. Various tools have been used to monitor the situation and minimize the risks of dangerous situations.

Elements of Safety and Security Measures:

Accreditation system during events

The system of accreditation allows for constant control and monitoring of who is entering the venues and whether the person has a right to do so. A detailed accreditation and venue plan is needed to divide areas and create a system where only necessary persons can enter specific areas in the venues.

Accommodation safety measures

Events during which the organizer is providing the accommodation, it is crucial to ensure the security measures also in those areas. MEFS created regulations that indicate solutions for various scenarios connected to safety and security. That included information on the security in the building, access rules, no drinking policy, and quiet hours.

Medical services

During big-scale events, constant access to the medical services is necessary to ensure the safety of the participants. Various solutions are considered, including access to the hospital, on-site ambulance, and medical staff during competition.

General Tips:

- è During organization of any sport activities, it is necessary to check the local law and regulations that may cause the organizer to put in place additional safety measures.
- è Establishing regulations of the competition may ensure that the participants will be obliged to follow the rules.
- è It may help to establish the clear responsibilities of the organizer and the participants before the event.

LONG-TERM SYSTEM OF VOLUNTEERS ENGAGEMENT – Croatian Academic Sports Federation



Croatian Academic Sports Federation is a great example of effective recruitment and management of volunteers. They have designed a thoughtful program aimed at delivering quality volunteers' programs for one event and keeping them in the system for future events and engagement. Volunteers are an important part of organisation of sport events and can support various aspects of organization.

CASF developed their program for a big international event in 2016 – European Universities Games Zagreb-Rijeka, after which a UniSport VILA – Volunteers and Leadership Academy has been established – the first systematic educational program intended for future employees in sports management.

Main Elements of Successful Volunteers Management:

Establishment of missions and goals

It is important to realize why it is crucial to develop and implement quality volunteering programs.

The benefits of involvement of volunteers are clear, but it needs to be ensured if it can also contribute to the organization's general goals and missions.

Thoughtful planning of the volunteering programs

It is necessary to consider all areas and elements of the programs – functional areas, procedures, persons responsible for specific departments, accommodation, transportation, insurance, and benefits for the volunteer.

Promotion of the program

A marketing plan – campaign should be developed to ensure that the information about the opportunities will reach its target groups. The tools of promotion can vary – from local newspapers to university student boards and social media.

Selection & Education

To ensure the satisfaction of volunteers from the program, the right selection for a specific department is important. After that, specific training and preparation for the future role is necessary to prepare them for what is to come during their involvement.

General Tips:

- è Give volunteers a chance for development of knowledge, skills and competences throughout educational programs
- è Organize quality volunteering programs with specific tasks for volunteers – no one likes to volunteer and do nothing
- è Use a chance to cooperate with high schools and universities - it's crucial to be able to reach target group with information about opportunities
- è Think about volunteer benefits – uniforms, promotional materials, insurance, accommodation etc.

NON-SPORT RELATED ACTIVITIES



INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION & MUTUAL PROJECTS

Croatian Academic Sports Federation & University Sport Association of Poland



In 2023 Croatian Academic Sports Federation & University Sport Association of Poland developed and implemented a project based on the mobility young leaders from Poland, that attended aa European Universities Combat Championships organized in Zagreb, Croatia. It has been a great example of cooperation and partnership between organizations of similar profile as well as developing the quality of the organized sport events

Project enabled for the leaders to gain additional experience and learn from their peers in another country as well as brought additional quality to the event, having more experience leaders from Poland participating. Both organizations benefited from the cooperation and developed their partnership. Project has been co-funded by the European Union through the Erasmus+ Programme, Key Action 1 Mobility of Sport Staff.

Main Elements for Successful Cooperation and Partnerships:

Build relations with various stakeholders

Partnerships are created by sport organizations with various institutions – both private and public and on various levels. But in all of them it is crucial to keep good relations and be fair to the ones organization cooperates with. It builds on mutual experience that can benefit long-term.

Partnerships can support development of organization

Cooperation and the exchange of good practices between various organizations can greatly improve and develop organizations' capacity. Both on the national and international level it is important to grow and develop new practices that will allow the organization for consistent development.

Opportunities created by public funding

In the frame of sport, many opportunities are created by various public institutions supporting promotion of physical activity and sport. It can be organizations directly involved in sport (like Ministry of Sport), but also local or regional authorities.

General Tips:

- è Check the priorities in the frame of sport of public institutions – they may support the kind of implemented activities.
- è Develop relations with organizations of similar profile on the international level – it may bring quality exchange of practices.
- è Use a chance to cooperate with non-sport organizations like universities or schools – they may be interested in the promotion of sport.

FOSTERING NETWORKING FOR JOINT COLLABORATION



EUSA, consisting of 47 member organisations from all over Europe, provides the vital platform for exchanging best practices among national university sports associations and their representatives during various events every year. These events, amongst which we can find: EUSA Convention, which serves as a key training program for organizers of the European Universities Championships and Games, biannual EUSA Seminars, EUSA Conferences, and Forums, foster a collaborative environment, encouraging knowledge sharing and strengthening connections within the European university sports community.

Good Practices:

- è Fostering open communication – encouraging transparent dialogue among member organisations to share insights and identify common challenges.
- è Facilitating experience sharing and networking: organising regular gatherings and panel discussions at conventions and conferences. Representatives can share best practices and engage in debates, fostering a supportive networking environment for advice and collaboration.
- è Encouraging joint efforts and funding opportunities: promote partnerships between national associations and provide insights on funding programs, like Erasmus. By sharing successful funding experiences, member organisations can effectively utilize resources to enhance university sports initiatives across Europe.

General Tips:

- è Foster transparent dialogue to identify challenges and develop joint solutions
- è Organise regular gatherings and panel discussions to exchange best practices and experiences
- è Create a supportive networking environment
- è Promote partnerships between member associations and provide insights on funding programs for collaborative projects
- è Share successful funding applications and realisation of the funded projects to empower organisations in using resources and fostering initiatives in university sports across Europe.

MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

Promotion of sport and physical activity

University Sport Association of Poland has built their media and communication strategy for years and became a reliable partner and organization with a wide reach of their news and activities – having a professional approach to the media coverage of all areas of work.



For an effective media and communication strategy, it is important to keep the consistency and the quality of the provided content. Good quality photos, videos and presentations of organization's activities are key to gaining and then keeping the attention of target groups.

Key Elements to Media and Communication Strategy:

Press Office

Professional journalist/media content creator can enable creation of high-quality news and content for the use of the internal media of the organization as well as internal media outlets that may promote the activities and events. They ensure that the media content is created in a timely manner that highlights the news's importance.

Usage of new media – social media

It is crucial to match the news, target group and the tools organization uses for communication about its activities. With these possibilities, nowadays social media can be a low-cost way to create quality content and above all, reach the information to the wide group of recipients.

Devoted website for university sport news

A website has been established to inform about all news related to university sport – on the local, regional, national, and international level. Local press officers have been nominated to report and promote events held in their regions.

General Tips:

- è Plan your strategy in a long term – it is important to keep the website, social media and other information outlets updated.
- è Create high quality content – photos, videos of good quality will improve the image of the organized activities.
- è Communication and used tools should be adapted to the target group and the potential recipients of your content.

LEARNING THROUGH SPORT

FederCUSI (Federazione Italiana dello Sport Universitario, former Centro Universitario Sportivo Italiano) is dedicated to promotion of sports and physical activity within universities across Italy. Established to foster a culture of healthy living among students, CUSI organizes various sports events and educational programs.



Progetto SEL (Sport e Educazione alla Legalità) is one of CUSI's most innovative initiatives, blending sports, education and language learning, aiming to help foreigners living in Italy acquire the Italian language more effectively through engaging sports activities. By taking part in this project, its participants not only enhance their language skills but also immerse themselves in Italian culture and develop physical skills through sport activities. This integration, using training sessions and competitions, fosters social connections, enabling individuals to build friendships and feel better in their new environment.

General Tips:

- è Create inclusive teams and supportive environment – ensure trained staff and promote inclusivity and encouragement
- è Encourage social interaction – team-based activities that require collaboration bring better results
- è Establish a feedback system for continuous program improvement

DUAL CAREER SERVICES



ACADEMIC DUAL-CAREER PROGRAM AT ACADEMY OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION IN WARSAW

Overview:



The purpose of the programme for Academy of Physical Education in Warsaw is to support student-athletes as best as possible in their efforts to achieve the best results in sports and in education. The target audience are the students of Academy of Physical Education in Warsaw.

Programme is based on support given in various areas – financial, didactic, sports, social and psychological, scientific and administrative. Its goal is to support athletes, but also the teachers and professors who work with the student-athletes in various courses.

Objectives:

The main objective of the programme is to support the educational and sports career of students.

Specific objectives include:

- Development of the Academy through encouraging the best athletes to become students;
- Enabling the athletes access to various tools – depending on what they need the most;
- Supporting the teachers and encouraging them to provide additional help to those in the programmes.

Main Features:

Financial:

1. Free dormitory - for outstanding athletes (medallists of the Olympic Games, World Championships, European Championships)
2. Rector's scholarship for high sports achievements from the first year
3. Social scholarship
4. Minister's scholarship for significant sports achievements

Didactic:

1. Additional funds for organization of individual course or study
2. Additional points in the recruitment
3. Individual organization of studies
4. Distance learning
5. Additional short- and long-term leaves

University is cooperating on that matter with the University Sport Association Club in their Academy – implementing also programs created and managed by the national University Sport Association of Poland.

The channels used to promote the program are the website, social media, and personal sessions. Participants are mainly contacted by email and MS Teams platform.

Success Factors:

- Dedicated Committee and staff in various areas – administrative, didactic etc.;
- Focus on various aspects – different participants need support in various areas hence the holistic approach;
- Involvement in programmes organized by University Sport Association of Poland, Ministry of Education or Ministry of Sport and Tourism;
- Involvement of Student-Athletes as Ambassadors of the programme and promoting it among students and potential students.

ATHLETES FRIENDLY CERTIFICATION OF EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN SLOVENIA

Overview:



The Olympic Committee of Slovenia - Association of Sports Federations with the support of the Slovenian Ministry of Economy, Tourism and Sport runs various activities, projects and programs at the national level to support athletes and their dual careers, which includes support in education and support in recruiting athletes. With this, it implements the NOC Slovenia strategy and its Action Plan, in accordance with the guidelines of the European Union for the field of dual careers of athletes and the guidelines of the International Olympic Committee (IOC).

The certificate "Athlete-friendly education" is a certificate awarded to educational institutions, to encourage and support activities in the field of dual careers of athletes.

Objectives:

The purpose of the certificate is to recognize environments and educational institutions that enable customized education for athletes. The main goal is the completion of the secondary school level of education and the facilitation of transitions to the higher/university level of education through the establishment of a network of partner institutions; and to support education in tertiary education.

The certificate directly supports and enables a system of notification and information for athletes, when deciding which educational institution has better conditions for education, with the aim that athletes complete at least a high school level of education. It also represents positive added value for educational institutions, in the way of comparative advantage (sports programs, other programs) and as a basis for criteria for the allocation of system resources in the field of supporting athletes and their dual careers.

Process:

The process of awarding certificates Athlete-friendly education is provided by a public call, which is the basis for obtaining recognition and a certificate. This can be awarded to secondary level education institutions and higher level education institutions on two levels.

In the first phase of the evaluation, NOC Slovenia awards the recognition for a developed approach to promoting a dual career and providing athletes with a friendly education. In the final certification phase, the organisations are checked for minimum conditions that the educational institutions must have at each level of education in order to be able to receive the Athlete Friendly Education certificate. All conditions and criteria are precisely defined in the Regulations. Proposals of conclusions of the Expert Group of the Athlete-Friendly Education certificate are approved by the NOC Slovenia Executive Committee, in accordance with the procedure.

Reach:

The recognition and certification phase currently end of 2023 encompassed 22 secondary schools and 39 faculties in higher education, spread between 4 universities and other independent higher education institutions.

Legacy:

Based on the good practice in Slovenia, the initiative was translated into a collaborative partnership in the field of sport, co-financed by the European Union through Erasmus+ Programme. Athletes' Friendly Education (AFE) project brought together Olympic Committee of Slovenia (SLO), National Olympic Committee of Portugal (POR), Belgian Olympic and Interfederal Committee (BEL), German Olympic Academy (GER), Croatian Olympic Academy (CRO), University of Maribor's Faculty of Organizational Sciences (SLO), University of Rijeka's Faculty of Maritime Studies (CRO), Volleyball Federation of Macedonia (MKD) and EUSA Institute (SLO).

DUAL CAREER SUPPORT PROGRAMME IN MALTA

Overview:



Following a successful implementation of dual career support programme at the University of Murcia (UCAM), a project Developing an Innovative European Sports Tutorship Model for the Dual Career of Athletes (ESTPORT), Co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union, was carried out between 2015 and 2017.

The University of Malta (UM) was one of the partners in the project consortium, and implemented dual career support programme first in pilot phase, and now systematically.

Background:

The University of Malta has 14 faculties and a number of interdisciplinary Institutes and centres providing expertise related to the needs of the country.

The Institute for Physical Education and Sport (IPES) was set up in 2002 to provide courses in Physical Education, Physical Activity and Sport and to carry out research in various fields related to these areas. IPES also services the Faculty of Education in the preparation of Physical Education teachers since its establishment in 1978. The Institute provides professional development programme and cooperates with various local associations in the training of their sports personnel. It also collaborates with many European universities and contributes actively in international sport related activities.

Methodology:

workshop targeting key stakeholders with a direct interest in such a project was held. Representatives from SportMalta (Malta Sports Council), the Maltese Olympic Committee (MOC), the Malta University Sports Club (MUSC), and the University of Malta Registrar's office attended the workshop, together with student-athletes and lecturers. During this workshop, the EU guidelines on the Dual Career of athletes (2008) were presented and discussed, with a particular reference to examples of good practice in other Universities which could be emulated locally.

An open invitation to join a pilot Sports Tutorship project was launched, engaging nine students from two faculties, having been assigned two sport-tutors. After the evaluation, the programme was extended to all faculties. Seminars were held for Sports Tutors and for the student-athletes in the beginning of the programme.

Key Lessons Learned:

Student-athletes acknowledged that it is challenging to balance their academic work and sporting demands and to cope successfully with both, some student-athletes chose not to seek support and not to come forward to join such a programme. Although the support given by sports tutors is very important, particularly if it is related to University demands, this might not be sufficient. Such a project needs to involve clubs and associations from its start, as in some cases they are putting too

much pressure on their athletes and do not always understand the demands of academic studies. A Dual-Career Support Programme committee was set up following the project pilot phase, working together with the University of Malta Registrar's office, Institute for Physical Education and Sport, student athletes and sports clubs; later transformed to Student Athlete Support Programme.

Legacy:

University of Malta students benefit from free use of a number of sport facilities.

The sports hall, adjacent to the National Pool Complex may be booked for basketball, handball, badminton, volleyball and netball. Students may also book and make use of the five-a-side football pitches.

Students may benefit from special rates for use of both the Olympic size swimming pool and The Kinetika Gym at the National Pool Complex. The gym is open daily during workdays, as well as during weekends. Squash courts are also available within the same building.

The Student Athlete Support Programme (SASP) strives to assist student-athletes who practice sport on a regular basis at national and/or international level. Through the SASP the University encourages and supports student-athletes to find a balance between their academic and sporting commitments.



DiscoverU

DISCOVERING UNIVERSITY SPORT AND DUAL CAREER

Co-Funded by the European Union.

Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them.



**Co-funded by
the European Union**



Hrvatski akademski
sportski savez
Croatian Academic
Sports Federation



Akademicki
Związek
Sportowy



UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI
DI SALERNO