



Enhancements to the UC Berkeley Student-Athlete Admissions Process

2016-17 Enhancements

Entering the 2016-17 academic year, under the leadership of the then-Director of Athletics and the Associate Athletic Director of Compliance, the athletic department, along with the Office of Undergraduate Admissions, implemented a number of new policies and processes to strengthen the Student-Athlete Admissions Process. These measures were intended to uphold the integrity of the process by ensuring that student-athletes admitted to UC Berkeley were high performing athletes who would become active, contributing members of the varsity athletic teams at Cal.

- **Holistic Review by the Office of Undergraduate Admissions.** A new Student-Athlete Admissions Policy was implemented in 2015-16 by the Admissions, Enrollment and Preparatory Education (AEPE) Committee of the Academic Senate, requiring all prospective student-athletes to receive a holistic review by the Office of Admissions.
 - Under the previous policy, applicants who were designated as student-athletes and who met specified academic benchmarks did not receive a further review from the Office of Undergraduate Admissions.
 - Under the new policy, applicants designated as student-athletes are reviewed on numerous factors, including their academic record, extracurricular activities, personal essays, etc. All applicants are instructed to list their extracurricular activities and awards on their application for admission. If an applicant who is designated as a student-athlete fails to list a sufficient level of athletic activities and achievements, the Office of Admissions and the Athletic Compliance Office conduct a further review to determine whether the student qualifies to receive consideration as a special talent athlete under the policy.
- **Endorsement of Athletic Talent.** Coaches must submit an Admissions Request Form to request that a prospective student receive consideration for admission pursuant to the University's Student-Athlete Admissions Policy. Starting in 2016-17, in order for non-scholarship student-athletes to receive consideration, the coach has had to provide an endorsement of the student-athlete's athletic talent to demonstrate that he or she was a high performing athlete. The coach is also required to sign an acknowledgment affirming that the student is a high performing athlete.
 - The endorsement is reviewed by the Office of Admissions and the Athletic Compliance Office. If the prospect is not adequately endorsed as a high performing athlete who can contribute to the team's athletic success, the Athletic Compliance Office and Office of Admissions conduct a further review (e.g., internet search) and may request further

documentation from the coach to determine whether the student qualifies as a special talent under the policy.

- **One-Year Participation Policy.** Starting in 2016-17, non-scholarship students admitted pursuant to the Student-Athlete Admissions Policy were required to remain active, contributing members of the varsity athletic team for a minimum of one academic year, and coaches are required to acknowledge as such when requesting that the student receive consideration as a student-athlete on the Admissions Request Form. Failure to remain on the team for a year is presumed to be a violation of the policy unless evidence exists that such outcome resulted from a situation beyond the coach and student-athlete's control (e.g., significant injury).
- **Monitoring of Rosters.** The Athletic Compliance Office monitors rosters and tracks when non-scholarship student-athletes leave the team to determine whether student-athletes are remaining on the team for at least one academic year. Those who depart the team prior to the start of their second year are reviewed to determine whether they are related to any Cal donors.
- **Pre-Existing Relationships.** Starting in 2016-17, coaches were required to flag for their sport administrator any prospective student-athlete who is a relative or family friend of a coach, University staff member or donor.
- **Education.** Coaches are continually educated on the new policies and processes. For example, they are informed that it is a violation of the Student-Athlete Admissions Policy to designate a student for admission if the student is not a high performing athlete, or if the coach knows or has reason to know that the student only intends to participate in a tryout for the team, or intends to become a team manager.
- **Penalties.** Coaches are informed that any violations of the policy may result in penalties to the sport program and coach, up to and including termination.

2019-20 and 2020-21 Enhancements

Over the past four years, the Office of Athletic Compliance and the Office of Undergraduate Admissions have continually evaluated and enhanced the policies and processes that were established in 2015-16 and 2016-17. This includes implementing numerous enhancements recommended by the University of California after a two-phased audit in 2019 and 2020, as well as recommendations from an outside review and the state audit in 2020.

- **Review of Donor Status.** Prior to approving a prospective student (scholarship or non-scholarship) to be designated for admission as a student-athlete, the Athletic Compliance Office conducts a review through the University Development and Alumni Relations (UDAR)'s Cal Advancement Data System (CADS) to determine whether the prospective student-athlete is a relative of any UC Berkeley or Cal Athletics donor.
- **Disclosure of Pre-Existing Relationships and Referrals.** Coaches are required to disclose on the Admissions Request Form any pre-existing relationship they have with the prospective student-athlete or family, and any involvement of other university personnel or donors in referring the student to the coach or in promoting the student's recruitment.
- **SAAC Review of Donors, Pre-Existing Relationships, and Referrals.** The Student-Athlete Admissions Committee (SAAC) is provided a biannual report on prospective student-athletes who are relatives of donors and those with whom coaches have a pre-existing relationship, to provide an additional layer of review related to potential conflicts of interest. Entering 2020-21, this review will also include prospective students who have been referred to the coach by other university personnel or donors.

- **Supporting Documentation of Athletic Talent.** When coaches submit an Admissions Request Form to ask that a prospective student be designated as a student-athlete, in addition to providing an endorsement of the student's athletic talent, they must provide supporting documentation (e.g., media articles, awards, athletic performance results, recruiting rankings) to demonstrate the student's athletic talent.
- **Expanded Athletic Talent Review to Include Scholarship Student-Athletes.** As noted above, starting in 2016-17 coaches were required to provide an endorsement of the athletic talent for all non-scholarship prospects. Entering the 2019-20 year, coaches were also required to provide an endorsement and supporting documentation for those who would receive a minimal athletic scholarship (books scholarship). Starting in 2020-21, the policy was further enhanced to require that coaches provide an endorsement and supporting documentation for all prospective student-athletes, including those receiving full athletic scholarships.
- **One-Year Participation Agreement.** Starting in 2019-20, all incoming student-athletes who were not receiving a scholarship and those on a minimal (books) scholarship were required to sign a Student-Athlete Admissions Agreement, acknowledging that they were admitted via the Student-Athlete Admissions Policy and, as such, were required to be an active member of the sport team for a minimum of one academic year. Starting in 2020-21, all incoming student-athletes, including those on full athletic scholarships, will be required to sign the Student-Athlete Admissions Agreement prior to accepting their offer of admission.
- **Prohibition on Development Communication and Solicitation of Gifts from Recruit Families.** Development staff members are precluded from communicating with athletics staff and admissions staff regarding the recruitment or admission of particular students. Coaches and sport staff members are prohibited from soliciting a donation from the family of any prospective student-athlete whom they are recruiting who has not yet enrolled at the University of California, Berkeley. Development staff members are prohibited from soliciting a donation from the family of any prospective student whom they are aware is being recruited by a sport program.
- **Rowing-Specific Requirements.** The sport of rowing has a history of developing successful student-athletes in college who have little or no experience competing in the sport prior to college. A policy has been created which requires prospective rowing student-athletes to demonstrate ergometer times that are consistent with student-athletes on the current team. Prospective coxswains are now required to have prior competitive experience as a coxswain. Coaches are required to provide documentation of erg times/team status when submitting an Admission Request Form. The Athletic Compliance Office refers any such students with minimal experience in their sport to the Student-Athlete Admissions Committee for an additional layer of review.

Note: Document last updated 9/21/20