

## Education Profiling for East Java Student-Athletes: Planning, Process, Assessment, and Expectations

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### Abstract

Dual-career student-athletes must be supported by rigorous training and academic processes that suit their needs. Unfortunately, student-athletes' academic performances are not as satisfactory as their sports achievements. Their sports training and the academic process are needed. This qualitative study aimed to analyze the academic services student-athletes receive from faculty and their expectations. A total of 30 student-athletes who had achieved sports achievements at regional, national, and international levels were interviewed about academic services ranging from planning, materials, learning processes, assessment, and expectations. The data were analyzed using the NVivo application. The findings of this study are that student academic services are stated to be the same between student-athletes and non-athletes. The faculty has provided special licensing services for student-athletes; there needs to be a better alignment of faculty and lecturer-level licensing. Student-athletes feel that the allocation of academic activities needs to be lowered, assignments are not by the conditions of student-athletes, and students need special athlete classes that are flexible to rigorous sports activities.

**Keywords:** Academic services; dual-career, higher education; student-athletes

## 1. Introduction

A comparison of average gross monthly income shows that elite athletes earn significantly more than their peers in the population (Wicker et al., 2020). The income of being an elite athlete seems attractive to many that they are willing to invest their lives in sports. Significant income differences between male and female athletes do not even influence it (de Subijana et al., 2020; Wicker et al., 2023). So, elite athletes can be said to be a career choice that promises welfare in the future.

To gain prosperity through sports, students need to pursue their chosen sports seriously to become elite athletes because the competition to become the world's top athletes is very tight. A report from the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) states that the likelihood of student-athletes in college becoming professional athletes is very low; the average athlete becoming the world's top athlete is only 9.9% for baseball, 1.2% for male basketball, 0.8% for female basketball, 1.6% for soccer, and 7.4% for male ice hockey (NCAA, 2020). These conditions do not reduce the number of students willing to spend their resources to undergo training in sports to achieve the world's top achievements.

In the last decade, the number of students motivated to undergo dual careers to achieve academic and sports achievements has increased (de Subijana et al., 2015; Fortes et al., 2010; Harrison et al., 2014).

Behind the increase in the number of students motivated to become the world's top athletes, there is a significant risk in the future due to students needing to be more focused on sports training and competition. One such risk is losing time to focus on academics, as student-athletes spend more time on sporting activities than non-sporting ones (Huml et al., 2019). The subsequent risk is that they will not continue to excel in the sport they are engaged in due to productivity decreasing with age; a severe problem arises; many student-athletes are often not ready to enter the job market after graduating from college (Wendling & Sagas, 2020). This results in student-athletes tending to experience anxiety about getting a career in the future (Park et al., 2018). For this reason, universities need to provide the right majors to develop student-athletes' potential to succeed in pursuing this dual career.

Student-athletes need to make the right decision in choosing a major that matches their talents and interests and is compatible with sports and non-sport activities. Selecting the appropriate significant impacts on harmonizing sports and academic pursuits (Czekanski & Barnhill, 2015). Student-athletes tend to choose majors that provide flexible learning services so they can carry out their dual career optimally, and it even happens that student-athletes change majors to majors that are more in line with sports activity schedules (Foster & Huml, 2017). This activity of changing majors proves that there is an incompleteness of learning for student-athletes and their sports activities. As is well known, sports activities have a standard and rigid program so that non-sports activities cannot interrupt training. As student-athletes, the main activity besides sports should be the academic process. The standardized and rigid sports activities schedule should be balanced with flexible academic activities so that both can run harmoniously and successfully (Brown et al., 2015). Hoping that flexible academic activities can complement the dual career of student-athletes, on the other hand, there is much evidence that student-athletes fail in their academic performance (Horton, 2015; Levine et al., 2014; Rubin & Moses, 2017) due to their vulnerability to learning success, performance, and perseverance in academic activities (Parker et al., 2016). For this reason, it is essential to conduct this research to gather information about the academic services provided to student-athletes and their expectations regarding participation in the academic process and sports activities.

## 2. Method

This qualitative research was conducted in four steps: planning, data collection, data analysis, and presentation (Bengtsson, 2016). Data collection began with developing semi-structured interview questions, subject recruitment, data collection, and data analysis. Questions in the semi-structured instrument focused on two significant topics in the form of information on differences in services to student-athletes and their expectations for the future. The differences in educational services targeted were planning, providing lecture content (material), lecture process, and assessment (Walton-Fisette & Sutherland, 2020). To reveal these three aspects, the questions asked to the subject include seven things, namely: (1) licensing services; (2) study planning services; (3) materials; (4) learning process; (5) assessment; (6) assignments; and (7) exams. In addition, the subjects were also asked to describe student-athletes' expectations about the educational services they would like to get in the future.

Research subjects were selected by simple random sampling from a population of 118 student-athletes at the Faculty of Sports and Health Sciences at Universitas Negeri Surabaya. A total of 30 student-athletes were selected and participated in a complete interview session with the following characteristics.

**Table 1. Characteristics of research subjects**

	Characteristics	Description
Age (years)	Mean	19.6
	Oldest	22
	Youngest	18
Gender	Female	12
	Male	18
Highest achievement	Regional	15
	National	5
	International	10

The interview procedure was conducted using a semi-structured protocol. Guidelines were prepared as a reference for questions before conducting interviews so that interviews could be conducted to obtain the specified target data. Subjects were asked questions according to the interview guidelines, but the questions were carried out flexibly and not rigidly.

The data analysis stage started with transcribing the interview results, entering the transcript into the NVivo application, marking the information in the transcription in the form of code, grouping the code according to the theme, displaying the results according to the theme, concluding the analysis results, checking by other researchers as a validation process. The validity of the data displayed was triangulated with the multiple data sources technique based on the perspective of data sources of at least three subjects who stated the same thing (Natow, 2019). As the main instrument, the researcher collaborated with independent researchers to determine the study's main findings.

### 3. Result

The results are described according to the target topics to be discussed, namely: (1) licensing services; (2) study planning services; (3) materials; (4) learning process; (5) assessment; (6) assignments; (7) exams; and (8) special treatment expected by student-athletes. The results of the coding grouping in the data analysis process can be seen in Table 2 as follows.

**Table 2. Code and references of selected topics based on student athletes' answers**

Code	$\sum$ References Special Treatment	$\sum$ References Equal Treatment	$\sum$ References Expectations
Licensing service	5	3	7
Study planning service	2	10	-
Material	1	5	8
Learning process	1	7	2
Assessment	1	9	2
Assignment	-	6	-
Exam	1	5	-

Based on the Table 2, it can be explained that student-athletes obtain special licensing services; this information comes from 5 references. It does not fulfill data triangulation for other codes because it comes from fewer than three references. All codes meet the triangulation requirements on the source of students who get the same treatment with the number of references of 3-10. Codes that meet the triangulation requirements on student expectations are only on licensing services (7 references) and materials (8 references). The findings, according to the research aspects, can be explained as follows:

## Licensing service

All students require permission services only to attend lectures occasionally. Each university has a standard mechanism for students to apply for permission in the form of dispensation not to attend lectures. There are differences in perceptions between students who claim to get special treatment and those who do the same. According to student-athletes who feel they get special treatment, they argue as follows.

"Dispensation to attend training and competitions is made easier by the school." [interviews from subjects 1, 9, 12, 16, and 22 on December 13, 2023].

The opinions of student-athletes who generally feel they get the same treatment as students are as follows.

"Student-athletes take care of licensing the same as non-athlete students because there are many student-athletes on campus, so dispensation management uses the standard flow that applies in the faculty. So far, there are no obstacles if it is for the benefit of training centers, training, tryouts, and competitions." [interviews from subjects 4, 5, and 24 on December 13, 2023].

The student-athletes' expectations for licensing are as follows.

"Processing a dispensation letter is not enough, but it is necessary to strengthen the status of the dispensation to the hands of the lecturer in charge of the subject so that it can ensure that the subject lecturer revokes the permission." [interviews from subjects 13, 14, 21, 22, 24, 27, and 30 on December 13, 2023].

## Study planning service

Student study planning in higher education is expressed as a Course Selection Sheet. Preparing study plans should be easy because universities provide services through the online information system.

"Students carry out the preparation of the study plan through the information system provided by the campus with the guidance of the supervisor; it was also found that sports assistants (lecturers) assisted in filling out the Course Selection Sheet of student-athletes." [interviews from subjects 2, 3, 4, 5, 21, 24, 29, and 30 on December 13, 2023].

## Material

Lecture materials should be standardized by the lecture planning prepared by the lecturer. In addition, lecture materials are held by the learning outcomes that are the learning targets. Student-athletes feel the material provided is the same as the description of their answers.

"Students in the faculty of sports science are many athletes, so the lecture material is equalized between student-athletes and non-athletes." [interviews from subjects 1, 4, 5, 20, and 24 on December 13, 2023].

Student athletes' expectations for the lecture material they receive are as follows.

"Student-athletes need to be given the same material in different forms; lecturers need to provide services to provide material for student-athletes personally easily; it could be that the material is given additionally to the academic supervisor so that the student can ask for material

that is left behind through the academic supervisor." [interviews from subjects 11, 13, 14, 16, 22, 27, and 30 on December 13, 2023].

### **Learning process**

The learning process is carried out to provide learning interactions between lecturers and students. Student-athletes feel that the learning process is carried out equally for student-athletes and non-athletes. Their statements are as follows.

"Student-athletes learn together with non-athlete students so that when student-athletes take part in training, special programs, and matches, they must follow the learning by adjusting the learning mode given by the lecturer; there is no special treatment, especially since many students in the faculty of sport are athletes." [interviews from subjects 1, 2, 4, 5, 24, 27, and 29 on December 13, 2023].

### **Assessment**

Lecturers' assessment follows lecture planning by the course achievement targets. Students feel no special treatment in implementing learning, so student-athletes and non-athletes use the same criteria. The description of their answers is as follows.

"Student-athletes must not pass a course and repeat because they do not achieve the specified assessment indicators; the principle of fairness in assessment is applied by lecturers so that student-athletes and non-athletes are equal." [interviews from subjects 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 20, 21, 24, and 29 on December 13, 2023].

### **Assignment**

Tasks are one aspect of the assessment prepared by the lecturer. Description of student athletes' answers and the tasks given by lecturers to students are as follows:

"The lecturer gives the type of assignment and the time that has been determined; the lecturer does not want to know about the task submission carried out by students so that student-athletes must adjust even though they are undergoing training camps and events." [interviews from subjects 4, 5, 20, 24, and 27 on December 13, 2023].

### **Exam**

Lecturers generally give practical or written exams during the midterms and end-of-semester exams. Student athletes' views on taking exams are as follows.

"Like other ordinary students, student-athletes still take exams together, such as the midterms and the end-semester exams; there is no special treatment; it is just that there are lecturers who provide flexibility in the use of exam modes (online or offline) to student-athletes so that athletes who take part in training camps and events can take exams on schedule." [interviews from subjects 4, 5, 20, 24, 25, and 27 on December 13, 2023].

### **Special treatment expected by student-athletes**

Student-athletes put much effort into their studies to succeed in two different roles and achieve academic and sporting achievements. For this reason, they expect special treatments that are different from non-athlete students. The expectations of student-athletes can be summarized in Table 3.

**Table 3. Student-athletes' expectations of education services**

Form of Difference	Description and Source
Time allocation	Time allocation needs to be adjusted; student-athletes should be allocated less time than non-athlete students [Subject 15].
Form of assignment	The assignment form should be adjusted to student-athletes' conditions; it can be simpler than for non-athlete students [Subject 15].
Special classes	Particular sports or achievement classes are needed so athletes do not miss the material in contrast to non-athlete students who can attend lectures regularly [Subjects 7 and 29].

#### 4. Discussion

This research aims to discuss the services that student-athletes receive following their undergraduate education, starting from planning, implementation, and assessment, which generally become a package of learning activities. Planning is prepared to determine the process up to the achievement targets to be mastered so that the planning quality will determine the results to be achieved (Williams, 2021). The achievement of student outcomes can be evaluated through an assessment process that can provide diagnostic information on their performance so that student completeness can be determined in participating in the learning process (Mannion, 2022). Through this evaluation stage, the quality of university services for students will be discovered.

In general, student-athletes are familiar with the study planning stage in college only in the form of a Course Selection Sheet, which is filled in at the beginning of each semester at the direction of the academic supervisor. At the same time, academic supervisors provide study planning services for future career choices. Academic supervisors provide individual managerial skills in determining their future careers. Individuals with higher plans and expectations for the future show higher career adaptability and are better prepared (Nikander et al., 2022). The readiness of student-athletes to determine their future careers needs to be directed so that they prepare for their sports and academic performance. Student-athletes career planning can be encouraged using the Career Self-Management conceptual framework, which has been shown to address career concerns and examine career planning as well as transition of professional athletes (Demulier et al., 2013).

In the learning process, student-athletes feel that they get the same treatment as non-athlete students with their conditions that they must carry out training and participate in competitions. Running a dual role for student-athletes takes work. They must proportionally carry out their roles as athletes and students so that their achievements can be optimal. The dual role overlaps the two, often creating conflict among student-athletes (Graham & Dixon, 2014). As a result of this conflict, student athletes' academic performance tends to be lower than non-athlete students (Levine et al., 2014).

To enhance the academic performance of student-athletes, it is essential to provide special treatment that enables them to align their learning process with their training and competition activities. Universities must provide a supportive environment for student-athletes dual careers by focusing on individual student-athlete service strategies and understanding and optimizing the environmental conditions that support them to optimize their dual careers (Henriksen et al., 2020).

Dual-career student-athletes involve two different environments, namely the sports environment and the academic environment. At the exo-level, the determinants of student-athletes who can undergo

their dual career are government, finance, policy, academics, medicine, and parent-teacher associations (Sum et al., 2017). For this reason, universities, as institutions that have the authority to determine policies on the academic side, are fully responsible for the quality of the learning environment. Student-athletes need access to different lectures of the same quality as non-athlete students. Distance learning is suitable for student-athletes because it can be accessed flexibly for student-athletes undergoing training and competition (Dinata et al., 2020). Unfortunately, although distance learning has become a trend in learning development in the last two decades (Huba & Kozák, 2016), the use of technology in learning in Indonesia is still low (Wuryaningsih et al., 2019). Educator training costs, feelings of isolation, and technology gaps are considered problems that need to be solved to optimize distance learning (Castro & Tumibay, 2021).

In the assessment domain, students can be motivated to acquire the ability to learn independently, enabling them to engage in self-assessment. This ability is important for student-athletes to be successful in following the educational process in college (Mannion, 2022). Self-assessment encourages student-athletes to become active learners by independently evaluating the processes and achievements that have been mastered (Harris & Brown, 2018). The ultimate target of the activity is self-reflection based on information about one's performance that can help find strengths and weaknesses to improve future performance (Papanthymou & Darra, 2018). In addition, the conversion of athlete performance into course-relevant academic performance could be considered for assessment. The performance of student-athletes and non-athletes compared nationally was significantly different, with student-athletes having higher academic performance than non-athletes (Storm & Eske, 2022).

Student-athletes expect to get less time allocation compared to non-athlete students. They must perform two roles simultaneously and have limited time to follow standard lecture procedures. Student-athletes are highly committed to sports, leaving little time and energy to engage in non-sport-related activities such as planning for the future and academic activities (Wendling et al., 2018). Another study mentioned that student-athletes need at least 20 hours/week to practice sports, while academic activities are similar. Although educators believe students can succeed academically, students must allocate twice the time (Pellegrini & Hesla, 2018). In Indonesia, implementing the university curriculum is ideal if it is close to 20-credit courses (Susetyo, 2020). This time allocation of academic activities is one of the intense stressors student-athletes face due to the tight schedule of training and competition (Cosh & Tully, 2015).

Time allocation for student-athletes for academic activities must at least be utilized for routine lectures, completing assignments, and examinations. To the expectations of student-athletes that there is special treatment for assignments for academic processes, the conversion of sports to academic achievements can be considered. The theoretical and conceptual idea is that the transferability of skills and expertise gained from elite sports to education is possible because elite sport teaches athletes competencies that can be applied to academic studies, such as goal setting, self-awareness, planning, and discipline (Storm & Eske, 2022). Recognition of sporting achievements as a result of conversion into course assignments should be easy for student-athletes in the sports faculty. The mental skills developed by student-athletes during their time as athletes will support academic performance (Firth-Clark et al., 2019); however, the relevance of sporting achievements to academic tasks must be considered.

## 5. Conclusion and Recommendation

Student-athletes are familiar with study planning only through their study programs each semester. Student athletes typically view study planning as just selecting courses each semester, but they should be provided with comprehensive study planning from the outset of their dual-career status, including setting academic goals and strategies to achieve them. The learning process desired by student-athletes

is flexible, with a relatively short time allocation and assignments that are not heavy. Assessment of student athletes' academic performance should utilize the self-assessment method so that the indicators of achieving the assessment target are understood, and student-athletes can adjust their learning style to get maximum scores. In addition, the conversion of sports achievements into academic achievements needs to be considered as long as it is relevant to the specificity of specific courses.

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