

## **University of California, Berkeley Student-Athlete Admissions Policy**

(effective for admissions starting in academic year 2015-16)

### **Introduction**

This policy was developed by the Admissions, Enrollment, and Preparatory Education (AEPE) Committee of the Berkeley Division of the Academic Senate, which conducted its own research and took into account recommendations and analytic information offered by the Chancellor's Task Force on Athletics and Academics in the fall of 2014. This document supersedes all previous such documents.

AEPE reaffirms its belief that the system of holistic review, where all prospective students are evaluated using multiple measures of achievement and promise, is sufficiently robust to encompass the admission of the vast majority of recruited student-athletes through the normal Freshman and Junior Transfer admissions processes. AEPE believes that holistic review can achieve this, with a level of predictability and confidence that will satisfy all demands for academic accountability without compromising the ability to recruit and retain competitive athletic talent.

This document acknowledges the myriad reports done on campus on the topic of intercollegiate athletics, including an especially influential one written by a 1991 committee chaired by Neil Smelser, professor of sociology. That committee called upon Cal to compete "across the board at the top levels" of the then Pacific 10 Conference. "This implies," the report continued, "frequent appearances in post-season play and national championship events." Significantly, the committee noted, as we reaffirm, "The academic expectations—including those concerning graduation rates—for student-athletes should not differ from those for students in general."

### **Guiding Principles**

1. Student-athletes who compete on varsity sports teams for the University of California, Berkeley, are *students first, athletes second*. Every student-athlete who is admitted to Berkeley is expected to be committed to obtaining a high-quality education and to graduating in a timely manner.
2. The admission of student-athletes shall be governed by the same general policies and procedures used in the evaluation and selection of applicants from the general admissions pool.
3. The standard of admission for student-athletes shall be uniform across all varsity sports. Student-athletes must be UC-eligible (a requirement that includes a 3.0 high school grade-point average) to be accepted, with rare exceptions<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See the section on Admission for our specific interpretation of what is meant by "rare exceptions."

(<http://admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/freshman/requirements/> or <http://admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/counselors/transfer/minimum-requirements/>).

Each student-athlete shall be judged individually and comprehensively, as stipulated by Berkeley's freshman or transfer admissions criteria, as applicable. This process, called holistic review, includes the following factors:

- The applicant's level of academic preparation and accomplishment.
  - The context in which the applicant learned and lived, as well as the opportunities available to the applicant and how he or she responded to challenges.
  - Evidence of the applicant's commitment to pursue college studies to graduation.
4. Admission shall be granted only to student-athlete applicants whose level of academic preparation is deemed sufficient to warrant strong confidence in their ability to graduate from Berkeley. The campus aspires to have the same high graduation rate for student-athletes as for all other students.
5. The number of student-athletes admitted by exception shall be very limited and highly regulated. The following factors shall play a crucial role in determining the admissibility of exceptions:
- The historic academic success rate of similarly prepared applicants on the teams that nominate them.
  - The availability of academic support resources for any applicant admitted by exception.

## **Procedures**

### *Overview*

This policy gives the faculty and specially trained admissions staff a central role in recruiting and admitting student-athletes.

It recognizes that the recruitment of student-athletes in many sports occurs on a different time scale than normal admissions, beginning as early as the sophomore year of high school in some cases. As a result, while the same holistic criteria will govern the admission of both student-athletes and applicants from the general admission pool, these criteria will be applied on an earlier and on-going basis for student-athletes.

This policy is part of a fully integrated approach that takes recruiting, admission, and academic support as comprising parts of a single system for educating and graduating students who compete for Berkeley in intercollegiate sports. Before a student can be recruited as an athlete, that person must be certified as someone who is likely to succeed academically at Cal and graduate in a timely manner.

## **Student-Athlete Admissions Committee (SAAC)**

SAAC is in charge of monitoring recruitment and the nomination for admission of student-athletes. SAAC also monitors academic support and is the final arbiter of whether academic support is sufficient for those admitted in exceptional cases.

SAAC is made up of six voting members, all of whom are members of the Academic Senate:

- The Chair of AEPE
- An additional member of AEPE as selected by that committee
- The Dean of the Undergraduate Division in the College of Letters and Science, or a tenured member of the Academic Senate in Letters and Science appointed by that dean as his or her representative
- The Faculty Athletic Representative
- A member of the Academic Senate Committee on Student Affairs
- The Associate Vice Chancellor for Admissions and Enrollment

A quorum is four voting members. A case must receive four votes to advance.

### *Recruiting*

Once coaches identify prospective student-athletes of interest, they must indicate this at the earliest possible time to designated staff in Intercollegiate Athletics (IA). The application deadline for fall admissions is June 1. The deadline for spring is November 1. IA will work collaboratively with a standing faculty committee, the Student-Athlete Admissions Committee (SAAC), to track the progress of the prospects through their high school or junior college careers to determine whether they are likely to be admitted.

The Office of Undergraduate Admissions (OUA) will work with the Recruitment Coordinator in IA to make a preliminary determination of the viability of the recruit. SAAC will make decisions about who should continue to be recruited, taking into account these factors:

1. Is the prospect likely to be UC-eligible (a requirement that includes a 3.0 grade point average) at high school graduation?
2. Does the prospect's current level of academic accomplishment and proposed study list suggest that he or she can succeed at Berkeley?
3. What is the level of academic engagement of the prospect?

SAAC will give IA feedback on adjustments to high school curriculum and levels of performance in the classroom and in standardized tests that would enhance the prospective student-athlete's chances of admission to Berkeley. Since admissions decisions depend on holistic evaluation, non-cognitive factors such as leadership, commitment, the

ability to overcome adversity and the like, will also play a significant role in reviewing the cases of student-athletes.

The qualities most of interest to SAAC for high-performing high school athletes are academic engagement and accomplishment. As an essential aspect of recruiting, coaches will be expected to make clear that Berkeley places high value on academic engagement and accomplishment, and enrollment at Berkeley constitutes a strong commitment to earning a degree. All coaches are expected to be energetic advocates of academic success in their programs and should communicate this attitude to their recruits.

In order to assess a candidate's qualifications against the general applicant pool, as well as to determine the types of academic support an individual student may need upon enrollment, each recruit is expected to meet in person with the directors of OUA and the Athletic Study Center (ASC), or their representatives, during the recruitment process.

If the recruits' performance in their final semesters makes clear to SAAC that they are likely to be admitted, SAAC will further assess the cases for impact on Cal's carrying capacity—its ability to provide adequate academic support services. SAAC will attend particularly to the following criteria:

1. The history of academic success for student-athletes whose profiles were similar to the prospects'.
2. The academic resources available to support the prospects, should they be admitted.

SAAC will be responsible for seeing that recruits facing academic challenges do not get clustered on a small number of varsity teams.

### *Admission*

Student-athletes must be UC-eligible, with rare exceptions.<sup>2</sup>

The process of admitting student-athletes shall consist of the following steps:

1. SAAC initially decides which athletic prospects are recruitable on academic grounds and are therefore likely, once they apply, to receive consideration as "special talent."<sup>3</sup>
2. The Office of Undergraduate Admissions evaluates these applicants in the same way as applicants from the general admissions pool.

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<sup>2</sup> We intend "exception" to be understood in the general sense, meaning that they have academic profiles significantly different from the average admit. These offers can total no more than 0.25% of all offers in an admissions cycle.

<sup>3</sup> Other special talents include debate, music, and art, among others. Such nominees who fail to be selected in normal review are subject to Director's review. But a Director's review is NOT a guarantee of an offer of admission for either non-athletic or athletic special talent.

3. Those student-athletes not selected through normal review will receive a review by the Director of Admissions as is the case with other special talent applicants who were not selected initially. This Director's review will involve consultation with the Director of the Athletic Study Center to determine if there is sufficient academic support to aid the student.
4. If the Director of Admissions decides the applicant is admissible, the case is referred to SAAC for a final up-or-down decision.

This new admissions process will require a transition period to minimize disruptions and give IA time to refocus its recruiting efforts.

In this transition period, for the academic year 2015-2016, no more than 60% of student-athletes shall be admitted by SAAC review. This percentage shall be reduced to 40% in 2016-2017 and 20% in 2017-2018. This means that by the 2017-18 academic year at least 80% of athletic admissions for each varsity sport will be realized through normal review, with a minimum high school grade-point average of 3.0.

Finally, SAAC can also impose conditions on the admission of any student-athlete, including, but not limited to, mandating Summer Bridge<sup>4</sup> and/or first-year academic redshirt.

### *Special Application Conditions*

Beginning with the 2014-2015 academic year, all prospective student-athletes will be required to include with their application a letter of recommendation from a teacher in a core academic subject taken in either the junior or senior year. For transfer applicants, the letter should come from an instructor who has taught the recruit in a UC-transferrable course.

In addition, beginning with the 2014-2015 academic year, at matriculation all recruited student-athletes will be asked to sign a letter of commitment to graduate as a condition of admission.

### *Junior Transfers*

Junior transfer athlete applicants are subject to the same kinds of conditions, oversight, and consideration as Freshmen athlete applicants. That is that they must be transfer eligible, and, if they are, and are nominated by SAAC, they receive a Director's review and referral to SAAC for final approval.

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<sup>4</sup> Summer Bridge is a six-week rigorous academic residential program that facilitates the transition of students from high school to the University.

### *International Students*

International students will be admitted through the same processes as U.S. students, but SAAC and the Director of Admissions are required to ascertain that the English proficiency of the international applicant is fully adequate for study at Berkeley.

### *Allotment*

In any one admissions cycle, up to 300 recruited student-athletes may be designated for special talent consideration under this policy.

### **Monitoring**

AEPE will monitor the admissions procedures, assess the outcomes on an ongoing basis, and report annually to the Divisional Council (DIVCO) of the Academic Senate. This report will summarize the admissions statistics for the recently completed cycle and the historical trends of 4- and 6-year graduation rates, timely declaration of major, progress toward degree, as well as average GPAs of student-athletes in each varsity sport. Should particular teams show unsatisfactory academic performance, AEPE will work with OUA and IA to determine if there is a systemic problem that needs to be addressed through a change in policy or practice.