

# SPORTS EXCELLENCE EDUCATION SCHEME & SPORTS EXCELLENCE CAREER SCHEME FACT SHEET

---

## **1.0 About the Singapore Sports Institute & Athlete Services Department**

Singapore Sports Institute (SSI) is the nation's premier institute for the development of high performance sports and nurturing of elite athletes. Athlete Services Department (ASD) carries out SSI's mission of developing Singapore's athletes holistically in key areas of education, career, life skills and community engagement.

ASD's mandate focuses on helping athletes strive towards the pinnacle of sporting excellence whilst preparing for a successful transition into life after sports. The **Sports Excellence (Spex) Education Scheme** and **Sports Excellence (Spex) Career Scheme** are customised schemes that develop a more holistic and robust system of support for athletes to cope effectively with the dual demands of sports and their education or career.

## **2.0 Spex Education Scheme**

### **2.1 Objective:**

To implement a comprehensive athlete support system designed to help athletes achieve their academic aspirations without compromising their pursuit of sporting excellence.

### **2.2 Flexible Academic Practices:**

One key aspect of this scheme promotes academic flexibility and comprises the following **EIGHT** flexible academic practices:

<b>Domain</b>	<b>Flexible Academic Practices</b>
Merit Admission	1. Preferential admission by virtue of sports achievements.
Staff Mentoring	2. Allocation of a specific mentor for each student-athlete to provide guidance in coping with sports and studies.
Flexibility in Education System	3. Provision of extended duration of study as long as it is within the maximum stipulated period.
	4. Customisation of academic study load premised on long-term planning which enables the student-athlete to complete the course of study within the stipulated period.
	5. Provision of multiple leaves of absence.
Flexibility in Education Delivery	6. Provision of alternative arrangements for exams.
	7. Provision of alternative modes and deadlines for assessment.
	8. Provision of distance learning & e-learning support.

### **3.0 Spex Career Scheme**

#### **3.1 Objective:**

To implement a comprehensive athlete support system designed to help athletes achieve their career aspirations without compromising their pursuit of sporting excellence.

#### **3.2 Spex Business Network for Athletes:**

The Spex Career Scheme will be primarily driven and operationalised through the Spex Business Network for Athletes. This network comprises a diverse group of employers who will offer career development support in the form of providing internships, apprenticeships, job placements and flexible workplace practices. Forming this specialised network of employers will strategically help prepare the athlete to transit into a successful post-sports career.

#### **3.3 Flexible Workplace Practices:**

One key aspect of this scheme promotes workplace flexibility and comprises the following **SEVEN** flexible workplace practices categorised under 2 domains:

<b>Domain</b>	<b>Flexible Workplace Practices</b>
Staff Mentoring	1. Allocation of a specific mentor for each athlete-employee to provide guidance in coping with sports and work demands.
Flexibility in Work Arrangement (FWA)	2. Provision for part-time work arrangements.
	3. Provision for flexi-time arrangements, whereby depending on the daily training requirement, the athlete should be allowed to negotiate alternative working schedules as long as the agreed working hours are fulfilled within the given work week.
	4. Provision for flexi-leave.
	5. Provision for compressed work week whereby the full-time hours are repackaged in alternative forms as long as the total number of hours is fulfilled (e.g. Employees work four 10-hour days and have the 5th day off.)
	6. Provision for job sharing.
	7. Provision for flexi-place arrangements, where the job is performed at a location other than the workplace using information and communication technologies.

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

---

### **(I) For both Spex Education Scheme & Spex Career Scheme**

#### **1. Are partner IHLs & Employers expected to implement all flexible practices?**

The maximum value of this collaboration is in the implementation of all practices in their entirety. Individual athletes will require different forms of academic/workplace flexibility at different stages of their sports career. These practices will therefore be provided on a needs basis and the adoption of these practices will usually be a phased-in approach, depending on the level of readiness of the partner.

#### **2. Do all athletes have access to these schemes?**

This scheme is intended to support only national athletes as carded by SSI. All national carded athletes will be able to access the benefits of these schemes where relevant and on a needs basis.

Our partner IHLs and Employers are welcome to extend these flexible practices to other athletes enrolled/working with them. However, this is not a requirement of the schemes.

#### **3. Will these schemes support all training and competition requirements of the athletes?**

Academic/Workplace flexibility offered by the partner IHLs/Employers is meant to support the athletes in being able to train and compete **in preparation for and/or to participate at only Major Games (e.g. SEA Games, Asian Games, Commonwealth Games and Olympic Games) and World Championships.**

To receive support through these schemes, the training and competition plan of the individual athlete must be endorsed by their respective NSA. SSI will emphasise to the athlete to establish sporting training and competition requirements with their NSA at the beginning of the academic/work year so as to plan for the flexibility required from the respective IHL/Employer.

#### **4. Are our partner IHLs/Employers expected to hire new staff to perform the role of the athlete mentor?**

Our partner IHLs/Employers have the discretion to appoint any qualified staff, new or existing staff, to perform the role of the athlete mentor.

## **(II) Spex Education Scheme**

### **1. What are the criteria for admission to partner IHLs? Are IHLs expected to admit all athletes recommended by SSI?**

All athletes will be required to meet the minimum requirements for admission as stipulated by the IHL. Any preferential admission provided by the IHL is premised on the basis of the athlete having met the stipulated minimum requirements.

### **2. How long can the student-athlete request for extension in duration of study?**

The student-athlete is allowed to extend the duration of study as long as it is within the maximum stipulated period for the IHL concerned. For example, this is 5 years for all polytechnics.

### **3. How many leaves of absence will be granted to the student-athlete?**

Leaves of absence will be granted based on the premise that the student-athlete is able to meet the minimum attendance requirements and that the student-athlete is able to complete the course of study within the stipulated period of study.

### **4. What are the obligations of student-athletes receiving support under this scheme?**

Athletes supported by the scheme are minimally obligated to:

- (i) Represent their IHL in Institute-Varsity-Polytechnic (IVP) and World University Games provided such competition schedules do not clash with competitions requiring the Athlete's representation as part of the Singapore National Team; and
- (ii) Act as an ambassador for their IHL, participating in not more than two publicity events for the IHL per academic year.

Other related commitments will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

### **5. If a student-athlete originally receiving support under this scheme is subsequently dropped as a carded athlete, will they still be offered support under the scheme?**

SSI will work with the IHL concerned to ensure the athlete receives a smooth transition with minimal disruption to their sporting and academic goals.

## **6. What are the benefits for SSI's education partners?**

- Athletes act as “Brand Ambassadors” to enhance institutional branding through appearances at publicity events
- Athletes act as exemplary “Role Models” to help impart core values for the institution
- Athletes help to build a culture of excellence through their demonstration of performance excellence attributes (e.g. resilience, discipline)
- Athletes contribute to the IHL's sporting achievements by representing the IHL in Institute-Varsity-Polytechnic and World University Games
- IHLs gain official recognition and publicity mileage as partners of the Singapore Sports Council (SSC) / Singapore Sports Institute (SSI)

### **(III) Spex Career Scheme**

#### **1. Are partner employers expected to hire all athletes recommended by SSI?**

All athletes are required to meet the minimum job requirements in order to be considered by the Employer. They will be required to undergo the standard recruitment process to be considered for the position for which they have applied.

#### **2. If the athlete-employee sustains a sports injury and is deemed not fit to perform in their current job role, how are employers expected to assist?**

SSI will facilitate the discussion with the athlete and his/her Reporting Officer to work out alternative work arrangements for him/her. In the event that the Employer is unable to offer alternative employment, SSI will further counsel and assist the athlete in their transition to other job opportunities.

#### **3. What are the obligations of athlete-employees supported by this scheme?**

Athletes supported by the scheme are minimally obligated to:

- (i) Represent their employer in corporate games provided the competition schedules of such games do not clash with competitions where the SSI athlete is representing the National Team; and

- (ii) Act as the 'Brand Ambassador' for the employer and participate in not more than two publicity events for the employer per year (provided the events do not clash with national competitions).

Additional commitments will be assessed on a case-by-case basis and they should not cause disruption to the athlete's national training and competition schedules.

#### **4. What are the benefits for partners of the Spex Business Network for Athletes?**

- Athletes act as "Brand Ambassadors" to enhance corporate branding
- Athletes act as exemplary "Role Models" to help impart core values for the organization
- Athletes help to impact organisational excellence through their demonstration of performance excellence attributes (e.g. resilience, discipline)
- Athletes help to create a diverse and vibrant workplace
- Athletes help to build strong team spirit through representing the company in Corporate Games and other sporting activities
- Employers gain official recognition and publicity mileage as partners of the Singapore Sports Council (SSC) / Singapore Sports Institute (SSI)

## **SPORTS EXCELLENCE EDUCATION SCHEME & SPORTS EXCELLENCE CAREER SCHEME ATHLETE STORIES**

---

### **Spex Education Scheme**

**Suzanne Seah (Canoeing, spexScholar)  
Undergraduate (2009-present)  
Nanyang Technological University (NTU)**

As a national canoeist and new SpexScholar, Suzanne has a hectic training and competition schedule that has required immense flexibility from NTU to help her manage school commitments whilst pursuing high performance sports.

Over the past 4 years, NTU has provided her with the following forms of support:

- Guidance from staff mentor Ashley Liew and internship co-ordinator Dr Yang Yifan to help customise her academic workload and register for courses
- Customisation of academic study load to accommodate multiple leaves of absence for competitions; this included special arrangements for internship requirements. This customisation has enabled her to meet graduation requirements despite her tight competition schedules
- Provision of extended duration of study to the maximum of 6 years
- Provision of multiple leaves of absence during her internship that have allowed her to prepare and participate in the Asian Canoeing Championships and upcoming SEA Games this year
- Provision of alternative exam dates to accommodate her competition periods
- Provision of alternative deadlines for assignment submission to accommodate her various competition requirements
- Provision of additional tutoring outside of scheduled class time

With NTU's support, Suzanne has achieved outstanding international results: she came 7<sup>th</sup> at the 2010 Asian Games, won gold at the 2011 SEA Games, and achieved 5<sup>th</sup> place at the 2013 Asian Canoeing Championships. She is grateful to have her school's understanding and support as she focuses on winning all her events at the SEA Games this December.

**Muhammad Iqbal Bin Abdul Rahman (Silat, spexScholar)**

**Student (2010-present)**

**ITE College East**

As a young aspiring Silat athlete, Iqbal feels that the flexible academic practices that ITE has offered him has enabled him to excel in both academics and sport.

ITE has been particularly supportive through:

- Provision of multiple instances of approved leave for Iqbal's competitions
- Provision of supplementary classes to help him catch up with lessons he has missed and to prepare for examinations

With this support from ITE, Iqbal went on to win gold at the 2011 Asian Championships and bronze at the 2012 World Championships. He feels confident in being able to focus on achieving his aspirations to win a SEA Games gold medal and become a world champion, knowing that his school will help him to cope with his studies.

**Sasha Christian (Wakeboarding, spexScholar)**

**Student (2009-Present)**

**Republic Polytechnic**

National Wakeboarder Sasha entered RP via the RP-SSP Diploma in Sports & Leisure Management programme. As a student-athlete, the strong support she received over the last 3 years has enabled her to make significant improvements in her sport.

RP supported Sasha through the following practices:

- Distance learning through the online 'Leo' system, which has allowed Sasha to keep up with classes whilst competing overseas
- Provision of multiple leaves of absence for Sasha to participate in her calendar of key competitions
- Customisation of academic study load which has enabled her to commit time to studies without compromising her training schedule
- Provision of alternative arrangements to help her complete her modules
- Provision of extended duration of study which will enable her to complete her studies without sacrificing her sports commitments

RP's support allowed Sasha to train for and compete at the 2011 SEA Games, where she won a gold medal. With the school's continued support, she is confident of being able to keep studying as she aims to defend her SEA Games title and win the Asian Championships.

## Spex Career Scheme

### **Jasmine Yeong-Nathan (Bowling)**

#### **Associate (Advisory Practice)**

#### **KPMG**

Jasmine first joined KPMG's Programme for Elite Athletes in KPMG (PEAK) in 2009. She has worked part-time in the Marketing Communications team and subsequently as an intern with the Corporate Finance unit where she gained valuable corporate exposure while competing at an elite level of sports. Jasmine is now working full-time in the firm's Advisory practice, having displayed excellent job performance during her earlier tenure at the firm.

KPMG has supported Jasmine through:

- A flexi-work schedule allowing her to leave work earlier for her daily training sessions
- Full pay competition and training leave
- Sponsorship for her tournament in Korea during her time of internship

With this strong support, Jasmine has gone on to win multiple medals at major tournaments.

**“Our athletes help to inject more vibrancy to our firm’s efforts to develop a supportive environment that plays a key role in motivating and empowering young talents. It also emphasises the importance of achieving an optimal and harmonious relationship between pursuing professional excellence and fulfilling one’s individual aspirations and potential.”**

Mr Stephen Tjoa, Partner for People, Performance & Culture at KPMG in Singapore

## **Audrey Yong (Sailing) & Tay Wei Ming (SDSC – Badminton)**

### **Charles & Keith**

Charles & Keith provided Audrey, Singapore's YOG 2010 Windsurfing Bronze Medallist, with an internship opportunity for 1 month in the Human Resource department. The internship opportunity took place during her Polytechnic term break.

During the internship, the company supported Audrey through:

- Staff mentoring – structured guidance and support was provided to help her to perform her assigned job duties, especially to understand the recruitment and selection process in the hiring of retail employees. During her 1 month internship, she independently conducted Recruitment & Selection for Charles & Keith and Pedro Retail and Warehouse positions.
- She was also involved in part of the on-boarding process for new retail employees, including preparation of employment letters, job offering, contract briefing, uniform distribution, and the preparation of P-files.

**“It has been a great opportunity working at CHARLES & KEITH. I was able to understand and learn about their hiring process and was given the opportunity to independently conduct interviews with the candidates as well.”**

-Audrey Yong

With this positive experience working with Audrey and a better understanding of the value propositions for the organisation, Charles & Keith formalised their partnership with SSI in July 2012. One of the immediate benefactors of this partnership is the 6th ASEAN Para Games Badminton Men's Singles Champion, Tay Wei Ming. Although he will only complete his current Nanyang Polytechnic Diploma studies in mid 2014, Wei Ming has already been offered a full-time employment opportunity upon his graduation.

**“Our company is open to provide job opportunities and internships, to allow athletes to be exposed to the corporate world and hopefully, join us eventually.**

**We are excited about forging this partnership with the Singapore Sports Institute. From the organisation's perspective, we look forward to tapping on this talent manpower pool to support our company's dynamic growth. We pledge our strong commitment to support working athletes in their pursuit of sporting glory.”**

Ms Chia Wai Jyy, HR Manager, Charles & Keith